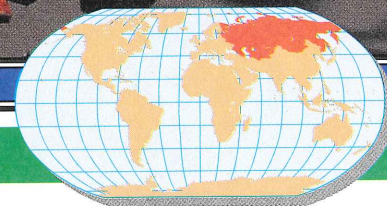


# The Cultural Geography of Russia and the Eurasian Republics



## CHAPTER FOCUS

### Geographic Setting

In the early 1990s, a number of independent republics arose in the area once occupied by the Russian Empire and later, the Soviet Union.



### Geographic Themes

#### Section 1 Population Patterns

**PLACE** Russia and the Eurasian republics once made up the world's third most populous nation.

#### Section 2 History and Government

**REGIONS** From the 1200s through much of the 1900s,

autocratic rulers expanded first Russian and then Soviet territory in all directions.

#### Section 3 Cultures and Lifestyles

##### HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT

**INTERACTION** Since the fall of communism, culture in Russia and the Eurasian republics has been changing.

▲ **Photograph:** Busy shoppers in St. Petersburg, Russia

# Population Patterns

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the diverse peoples who live in Russia and the Eurasian republics.
- where most people of Russia and the Eurasian republics live and why.

### Key Terms

- ethnic group
- nationalities

### Identify and Locate

Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Caucasus, Armenia, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Ural Mountains, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Tashkent

Moscow, Russia

My name is Anton Alexeev and I live in an apartment in Moscow. The school that I attend is

really small. We have a total of about 1,000 students and we have all grades - from first grade through eleventh grade. We have just 11 years in school. In my free time I hang out with my friends, ride bikes, and go to the park and to parties.

Anton Alexeev



**A**nton Alexeev is Russian and lives in Russia, the largest of the republics in a culture region known as Russia and the Eurasian republics. The vast lands of Russia and the Eurasian republics are home to diverse peoples.

### PLACE

## Ethnic Diversity

**E**ach people, or **ethnic group**, has its own unique heritage, customs, beliefs, and language. When Russia and the Eurasian republics were all part of the Soviet Union, boundaries were based on one of the country's major ethnic groups, or **nationalities**.

## Language

During the Soviet era, Russian was the official language and was taught in all Soviet

schools. It was the native language, however, of only about one-half of the people. Today Russian is still spoken and read in most of the republics, but now each republic has its own official language. The more than 100 nationalities who live in the region speak many hundreds of different languages.

Many people in Russia and the Eurasian republics are of Slavic background and speak languages that belong to the Indo-European family. Others are of Turkic background and speak one of the Turkic languages, which are part of the Ural-Altaic (YOR•uh•lal•TAY•ik) family. Still others speak either an Indo-European or Turkic language like Caucasian.

Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, for example, are Slavs. Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmenis, and most other peoples of the republics in central Asia are in the Turkic group. Georgians and Armenians, on the other hand, are Caucasian peoples and speak distinctive languages.

## The Slavs

Of all the ethnic groups in Russia and the Eurasian republics, the Slavs are most numerous. During their early history, all Slavs in the region shared a common cultural identity. In time, the different types of Slavs in different places developed customs and languages distinct from the others. The Slavs living in the south near the city of Kiev became known as Ukrainians. Those inhabiting the west near present-day Poland were called Belarusians. Another group of Slavs living in the north near the city of Moscow became known as Russians.

Together the Slavs now make up the greater part of the population of three of the European republics—Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The greatest number live in Russia, where 83 percent of the population are actually ethnic Russians, people who follow Russian customs and speak Russian as their first language.

There is only one Eurasian republic in which the Slavs are not the majority—Moldova. Sixty-four percent of the people are

Moldovans, most of them Romanians who came originally from the Bessarabia region of Romania. They speak Romanian and follow Romanian customs.

## Turkic Peoples

With the exception of the Azeri, whose land—now the Republic of Azerbaijan—was for several centuries part of the Persian Empire, most Turkic peoples live in the republics of central Asia. They are Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tatars, and Turks, and each is different from the other in a number of ways. But they all have one thing in common—language. All speak some form of a Turkic language. Almost all are Muslim, followers of the religion of Islam.

The Uzbeks are the largest group of Turkic people in the republics and the second-largest in the world. Only the Turks of Turkey form a larger group. Of all the Turkic peoples of the republics, only one—the Kazakhs—are a minority in their own country. For many years, more Russians than Kazakhs have lived in Kazakhstan. Since the end of the Soviet era,



### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Ukraine

Ukrainians shop for goods and produce in a Kiev department store. Nearly 52 million people live in the republic of Ukraine. *What Slavic republics border Ukraine?*





### Geographic Themes

#### Human/Environment Interaction: Russia

For centuries, the Slavic peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have used timber from the forests to build *izbas*, or cottages. What Eurasian republic in the region is not Slavic?

however, thousands of Russians have returned to Russia.

Another large non-Turkic group in the central Asian republics is the Tajiks, who make up most of the population of Tajikistan. They are descendants of Iranian-speaking people who entered central Asia many centuries ago. The Tajiks speak a language much like Farsi, the major language of Iran.

### Caucasian Peoples

One large group of diverse peoples are classified as Caucasian. "The Caucasus presents a living museum of languages and peoples who have lived there since pre-history," says a leading regional writer. Most of these peoples, though, are relatively few in number except for the Armenians, Georgians, and Azeris.

The Armenians, who migrated to the Caucasus many centuries ago, once had a king-

dom that stretched from the Mediterranean to the Caucasus. Today the Armenians make up more than 90 percent of the population of Armenia, the smallest of the republics. The Armenians speak their own language and have had their own alphabet and literature for more than 15 centuries.

The Armenian language is very different from the one spoken by Georgians. The Georgian language, also with its own alphabet, is considered a Caucasian language, which means that the Georgians probably originally came from the Caucasus. Language is one of the things in which Georgians take great pride. "Three divine gifts have been bestowed on us by our ancestors: language, homeland, faith," said one Georgian poet.

Like the Armenians, most Georgians are Christians and have their own church. Both are proud that their lands are among the world's oldest Christian countries. Armenia converted to Christianity around A.D. 300. Georgia did the same about 30 years later.



## HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

# Population Density and Distribution

More than 283 million people live in Russia and the Eurasian republics. Armenia, with about 3.8 million people, and Turkmenistan, with about 4.2 million, have the smallest populations of all the republics. Russia, still the largest country in the world in area, also has the region's largest population—147 million.

## Density

More than 283 million people translates into a population density of about 32 persons per square mile (about 13 persons per sq. km). There are not many people in the region compared to the number living in a square mile or kilometer in other parts of the world.

Take the United States, for example. Together Russia and the Eurasian republics are

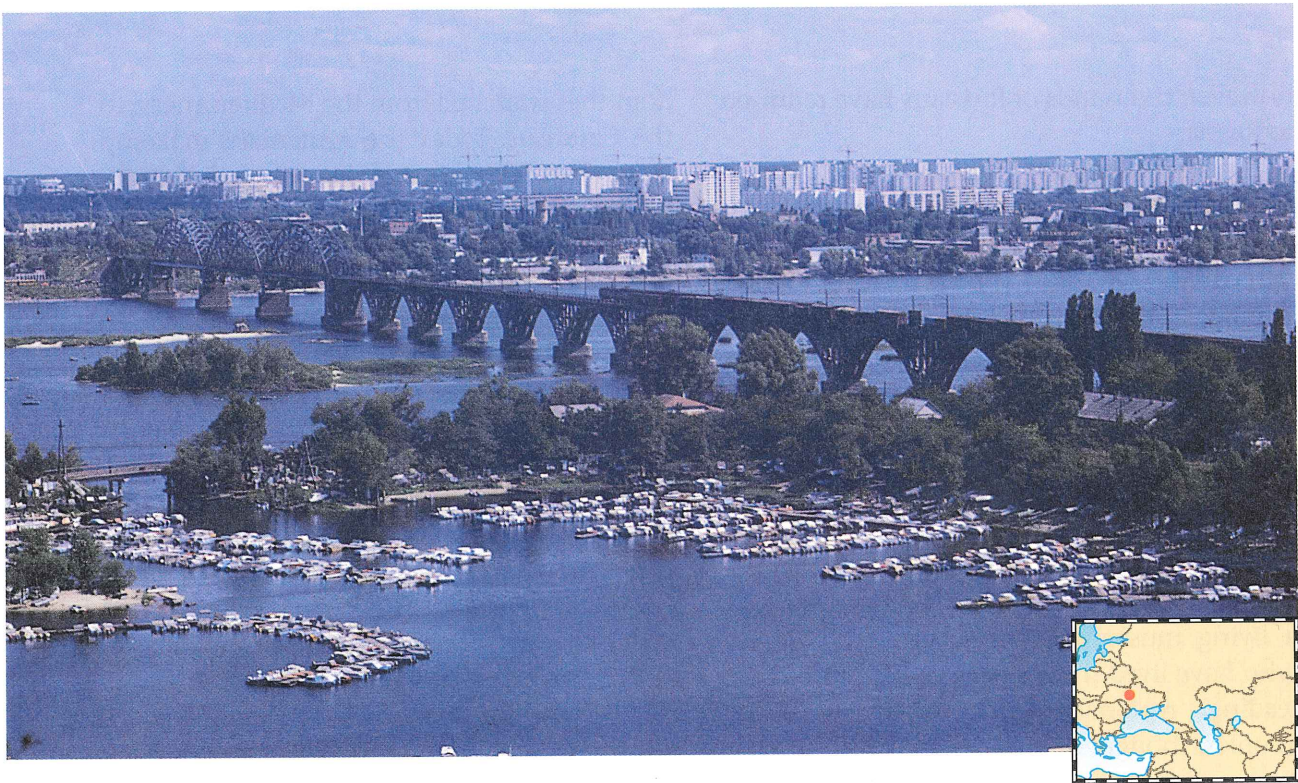
about two and one-half times its size. Yet the population of the United States is only about 13 million less than that of Russia and the other republics. This means that the population of the United States is a little more than twice as dense, with 76 persons per square mile (about 29 persons per sq. km).

## Distribution and the Environment

The population of Russia and the Eurasian republics is far from evenly distributed. Many people live in some areas, while hardly any live in others.

Environment has much to do with where people have chosen to live or not live. East of the Ural Mountains, for example, where the climate is harsh and much of the land is mountains or deserts, the population density is low.

However, this is not the case west of the Ural Mountains, between the Baltic and Black seas. Here is where most people of the region



### Geographic Themes

#### Location: Kiev, Ukraine

Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, is located on the banks of the Dnieper River, the major waterway of the republic. *How does environment affect where people live?*





### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Armenia

Armenians gather at a monument to remember the millions of their people who perished in the 1915 Holocaust at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. *What is the capital of the republic of Armenia?*

live, and where the population is most dense. The majority of the large cities and major industrial centers are located in this area, including the three largest cities of the region—Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev. The climate of this western part is the most moderate and cooperative, and here the richest and most fertile farmland lies.

A great many cities dot Russia and the Eurasian republics, especially in the western part. Many cities originally grew up along major rivers because even during the coldest part of the year people and goods could move along them. Even today, all three of the largest cities are linked to major waterways through rivers and canals. In the Caucasus region, the Armenian capital of Yerevan is located on the banks of the Razdan River in the Ararat Valley.

## SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

1. **Define** ethnic group, nationalities.
2. **Locating Places** In what part of the region is population the most dense?
3. **Region** What are three major ethnic groups of Russia and the Eurasian republics?
4. **Place** What are the three largest cities in Russia and the Eurasian republics?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Drawing Conclusions** Why are some areas of Russia and the Eurasian republics more densely populated than others?

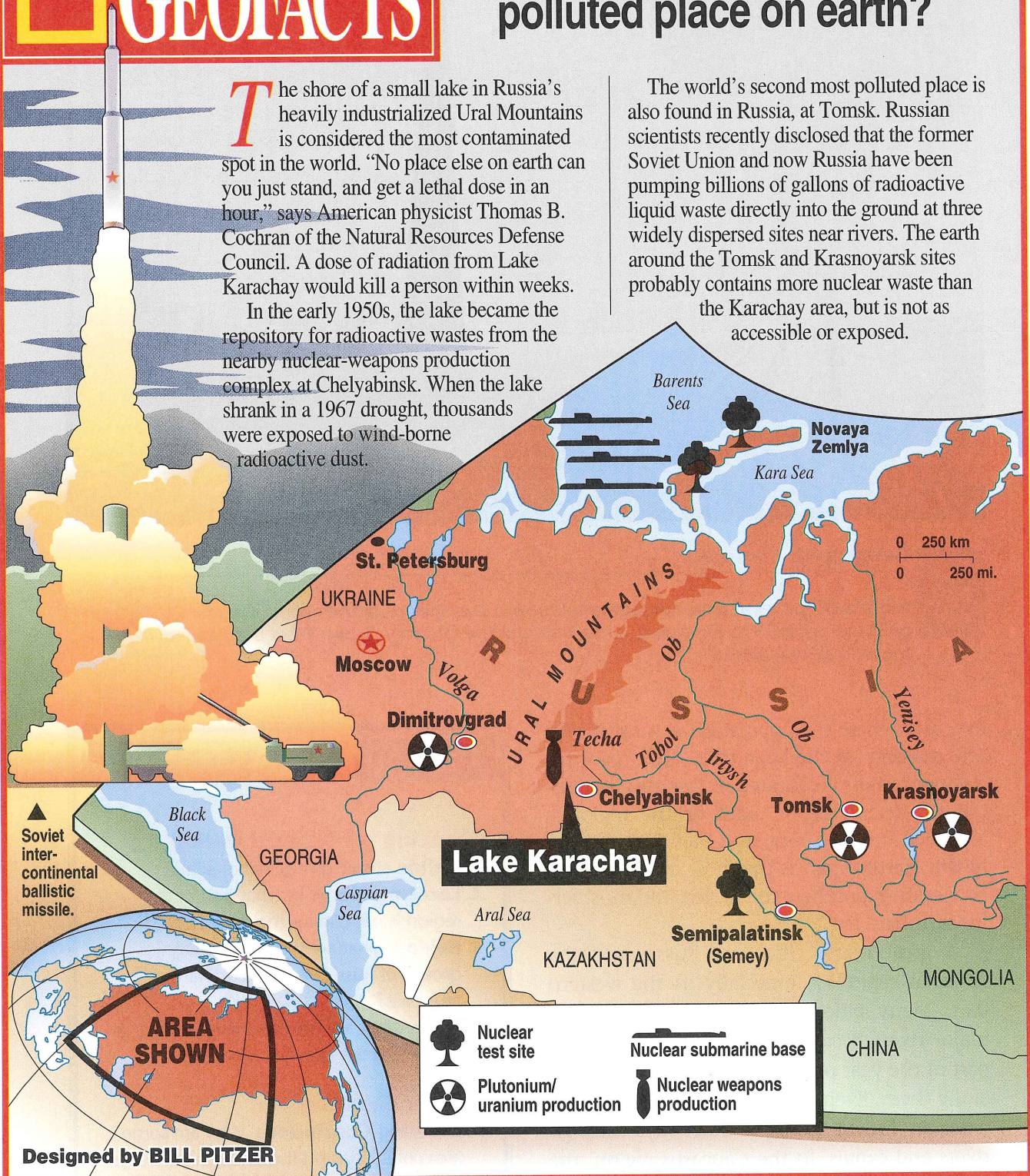


## Where is the most polluted place on earth?

The shore of a small lake in Russia's heavily industrialized Ural Mountains is considered the most contaminated spot in the world. "No place else on earth can you just stand, and get a lethal dose in an hour," says American physicist Thomas B. Cochran of the Natural Resources Defense Council. A dose of radiation from Lake Karachay would kill a person within weeks.

In the early 1950s, the lake became the repository for radioactive wastes from the nearby nuclear-weapons production complex at Chelyabinsk. When the lake shrank in a 1967 drought, thousands were exposed to wind-borne radioactive dust.

The world's second most polluted place is also found in Russia, at Tomsk. Russian scientists recently disclosed that the former Soviet Union and now Russia have been pumping billions of gallons of radioactive liquid waste directly into the ground at three widely dispersed sites near rivers. The earth around the Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk sites probably contains more nuclear waste than the Karachay area, but is not as accessible or exposed.



Designed by BILL PITZER



# History and Government

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the peoples who populated and created early Russia.
- the rule and power of the czars.
- the rise and fall of the Soviet Union.
- the new independence of Russia and the Eurasian republics.

### Key Terms

- czar
- serf
- socialism
- russification
- communism
- *perestroika*
- *glasnost*

### Identify and Locate

Dnieper River, Baltic Sea, Volga River, Caspian Sea, Kiev, Moskva River, Moscow, Siberia, St. Petersburg

**R**ussia and the Eurasian republics have a long history as rich and diverse as the land and the peoples who occupy it. Over thousands of years, different peoples have come and gone. Each has left its mark on the land, and each, in turn, was influenced by the land, the climate, and the environment.

### MOVEMENT

## Early Peoples and States

**I**n ancient times, people were living in and farming much of the land that is now Russia and the Eurasian republics. Over time, different groups came and went. Some were hunters and gatherers, others were nomads, and still others were farmers. Said one Russian expert:

*The picture we obtain from the written sources is that of a bewildering procession of tribes and nations which every few centuries succeed each other on the steppes, only to sweep each other off the map.*

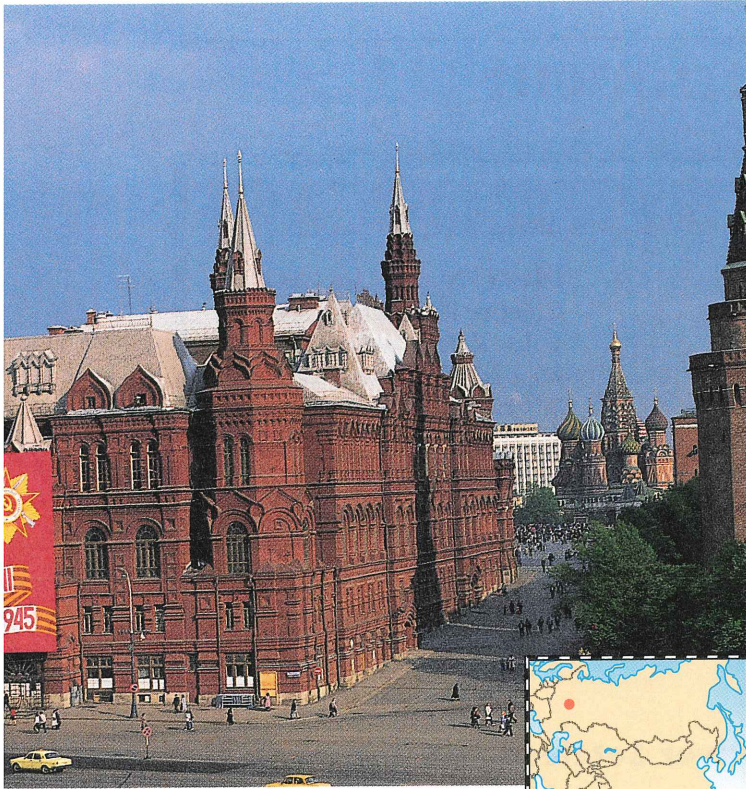
## River Settlers and Towns

Among the many groups who over the centuries cut through the mountain passes and crossed the valleys and plains of the region were Slavs, who came from the northernmost part of eastern Europe. Over time they spread throughout the western part of the region. Some settled near the Dnieper River, which was part of a chain of waterways that led to the Baltic Sea. Others settled near the Volga River, which was a trade route to the Caspian Sea. Before long the Slavs built trading towns along the rivers. These towns became links in a trade route that joined the Slavs with peoples in the Mediterranean, western Europe, and Scandinavia.

In the 800s, fierce warrior-traders from Scandinavia, called Varangians, settled near the Dnieper and the Volga. The area they settled became known as Kievan Rus. In time one of their leaders set up the first state in the region at Kiev, a trading town on the Dnieper.

By the 900s the Varangians had adopted the Slavs' language and many of their customs and had organized the trading towns into city-states. Before long the Slavs organized into a loose union in which each city-state was ruled by a prince. Kiev became the capital and its ruler the Grand Prince.





### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Red Square, Moscow

Early Russian rulers built a huge fortress called the Kremlin in the heart of Moscow. It later became the seat of government and a religious center. *Who was the first Russian czar?*

### Mongols

In the early 1200s warriors known as Mongols invaded from central Asia and destroyed Kiev. Ultimately they conquered much of the Slav territories and made them part of their vast empire. Although they allowed the Slavs self-rule, they continued to control the area for more than 200 years, cutting many of the Slavs off from European civilization.

When the Mongols first overran Kiev, many Slavs living there had fled into nearby forests. Later some of those people settled along the Moskva River. In time their settlement grew into the city of Moscow, known then as Muscovy (muh•SKOH•vee). For nearly two centuries, its princes kept peace with the Mongol rulers. Finally, in the 1400s, a Grand Prince of Muscovy named Ivan conquered other Slavic princes, set up a Russian state, and drove out the Mongols.

### PLACE

## The Rule of the Czars

Ivan became Ivan III, later known as Ivan the Great, the first czar, or supreme ruler, of all Russia. Moscow became the religious and political center of Russia.

In the late 1500s, Russia began to expand its territory and kept on expanding for the next several hundred years. With the new territories came new non-Russian peoples.

### A Window to the West

Europeans had made many achievements. They moved forward and left Russia far behind, especially in scientific knowledge and technology. Then, in the late 1600s, Czar Peter I came to power determined to modernize Russia and make it into a European nation.

Peter made war to get some of the things he wanted. From Sweden, for example, he won the seaports he needed along the Baltic Sea to give his country access to major sea routes and increase its trade with northwest and Mediterranean Europe. His hard-won seaports could be used year-round.

Under Peter, who came to be known as Peter the Great, Russia's territory expanded, its naval strength increased, its trade multiplied, and a new capital city—St. Petersburg—was carved out of the wilderness. Built on land along the Gulf of Finland, St. Petersburg was Peter's "window to the West."

### Seeds of Discontent

By the late 1800s, the Russian people were tired of war and resentful of the iron rule of the czars and their secret police. Peasants and serfs, laborers owned by nobles and bound to the land, lived in poverty and were treated like enslaved persons. The life of factory workers in the cities was not much better. Many thinkers were unhappy as well. They favored socialism, a philosophy that called for ownership of all land and factories by peasants and workers.





### Geographic Themes

**Place: St. Petersburg, Russia**

During the 1700s and 1800s, Russian czars built beautiful palaces on the outskirts of St. Petersburg. *Why did Peter the Great move the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg?*

Frustrated and discontented, many Russians took to heart the writings of a German philosopher, Karl Marx. He believed that in time the conflict between landowners and the working class would lead to a workers' revolution that would spread all over the world. Out of this revolution, he said, would arise a new, classless society.

The few reforms the czars made—freeing the serfs and promoting education—were not enough. To unify the people, the government began a program of **russification** that required everyone in the empire to speak Russian and to become Eastern Orthodox Christians. The policy only made matters worse.

World War I brought more hardship—and more protests. Food, clothing, fuel, weapons, and ammunition all were in short supply. Thousands of striking factory workers demanding “bread and freedom” overran the streets of Petrograd, previously St. Petersburg. After a few days, the government called in the army to end the demonstrations. Most of the soldiers, though, ended up joining the demonstrators. Finally, in March 1917, the czar abdicated, and the rule of the czars came to an end.

### PLACE

## The Soviet Era

The new government did not last. In November 1917, a group of revolutionaries known as Bolsheviks (BOHL•shuh•viks) took over the city of Petrograd and proclaimed a socialist revolution.

### Birth of a New Nation

The Bolsheviks set up a new government headed by a revolutionary named Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Lenin, whose political ideas were based on the teachings of Karl Marx, promised the Russian people “peace, land, and bread.” His government withdrew from World War I, moved the capital back to Moscow, took control of industry and church property, and promised workers an eight-hour workday.

Not all Russians agreed with **communism**, the teachings of Marx and Lenin, and war soon broke out between the Bolsheviks—Reds—and anti-Bolsheviks—Whites. In 1921 the Bolsheviks, now known as Communists, won the war. The next year they established a new nation—the Union of Soviet Socialist Re-



## RUSSIAN AND SOVIET EXPANSION



### FOCUS ON GEOGRAPHIC THEMES



- Location:** What effect did location have on the economic development of the earliest Slavic territories?
- Region:** When did the lands of central Asia come under Russian rule?
- Movement:** Why did Russian and Soviet leaders expand into new territories?

publics (USSR), or Soviet Union. Made up of Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and the Transcaucasus, its capital was Moscow.

### Building and Expanding the Communist State

In the late 1920s a new leader, Joseph Stalin, came to power and set about making the Soviet Union one of the world's greatest industrial powers. To accomplish this goal, his government took control of industrial and farm production. Millions of people, however, died or were sent to labor camps as Stalin ruthlessly strengthened his hold over the country.

By the end of 1940, the Soviet Union was a nation of 15 republics. By the middle of the next year, the Soviets found themselves under

attack by the Germans, caught in another world war. The war took more than 30 million Soviet lives, but the nation came out of it stronger than ever. The Soviets had expanded their territory and spread communism to eastern Europe.

Now a superpower in competition with the United States, the Soviet Union became involved in a cold war with non-Communist countries, a war in which it sought world influence by any means short of total war. The cold war continued well into the 1980s.

In 1985 a new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, took power. He thought that the country could not survive without "restructuring," which he called *perestroika* (pehr•ehs•TROY•kah), and a new openness, or *glasnost*. Gorbachev's reforms were not enough.



## New Republics

By 1990 many people were dissatisfied with the way communism was working. By the end of the year, the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia had declared their independence, and all the other republics had declared some freedoms.

In the summer of 1991, the Soviet republic of Russia held its first democratic election for president. The new president, Boris Yeltsin, backed Gorbachev when some others turned against him and tried to strengthen the government, but it was too late to save the Soviet Union. By mid-December, all the republics had declared their independence.

Russia's Yeltsin met with the leaders of Ukraine and Belarus, and they announced that they had united to form a new community—the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)—in which each member republic was independent and had its own government and constitution. They invited all the other republics to join. By late December all the former Soviet republics except Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Georgia had done so, making the CIS the largest federation of separate republics in the world. In 1992 Azerbaijan left the CIS, but later rejoined. Georgia also became a member. Today the Soviet Union and the cold war belong to the past, and the “new” republics are trying to come to terms with the changes brought by their independence.

In Russia, Yeltsin introduced economic reforms to move the economy toward free enterprise. A better future was promised to the Russian people; but in the short term, the reforms brought increased hardships. Taking advantage of widespread dissatisfaction, extreme nationalists and Communists tried to undermine Yeltsin, while Yeltsin sought to increase his powers.

In 1996 Yeltsin defeated his Communist rival in presidential elections. During Yeltsin's second term, however, Russia faced mounting social and economic problems. Reforms were stalled or had little impact. A prosperous new middle class was growing, but workers, the



### Geographic Themes

**Place: Moscow, Russia**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin emerged as the leader of Russia. *What organization replaced the Soviet Union?*

elderly, and the poor received few benefits. Street violence, organized crime, and ethnic unrest increased public fears about the collapse of law and order. In 1998 the fragile Russian economy steadily weakened under the impact of global economic troubles. Unable to solve the crisis, Yeltsin lost much power to his Communist and nationalist opponents.

## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

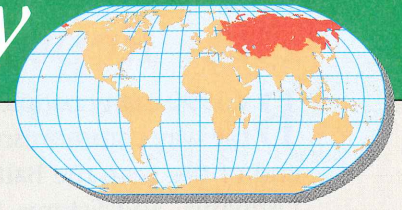
- Define** czar, serf, socialism, russification, communism, *perestroika*, *glasnost*.
- Locating Places** Where did the Slavs and Varangians settle?
- Movement** Why did Peter the Great want to acquire land along the Baltic Sea?
- Place** What did the Soviets gain from World War II?

### Critical Thinking

- Expressing Problems Clearly** Why were most Russians discontented under czarist rule?



# Geography and History



## THE UNCONQUERABLE RUSSIAN WINTER

As you read, examine how natural forces affected Napoleon's efforts to conquer Russia.

In the spring of 1812, French ruler Napoleon Bonaparte began an assault on Russia. Napoleon had signed an alliance with Russia's czar, Alexander I, in 1807. Alexander, however, had not stopped trade with Great Britain, as the pact demanded. Napoleon decided that Alexander needed to be taught a lesson.



### To Moscow

Leading an army of more than 600,000, Napoleon crossed into Russia from Poland, over the Nieman River. The Russians, outnumbered 3 to 1, fought fiercely and retreated slowly, destroying anything that Napoleon might have used as supplies for his troops. Led deeper and deeper into Russia, Napoleon found his supply lines getting longer, thinner, and less reliable. It was also getting later in the year: winter was approaching.

Napoleon and his forces pursued the Russians all the way to Moscow. When he arrived, however, Napoleon found himself the conqueror of a burning, deserted ruin. The Russians had set fire to Moscow and relocated to St. Petersburg. It took the French

Napoleon and his troops retreat from Moscow to face the long and bitter Russian winter.

army a month to stop the flames.

### The Russian Winter Wins

During that month, Napoleon offered Czar Alexander a truce. However, the Russian winter had set in. Knowing the Russian winter as Napoleon did not, the czar refused.

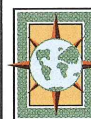
The days grew colder; supplies dwindled. When Napoleon learned that thousands of his soldiers were suffering from frostbite and freezing to death, he ordered his troops to abandon Moscow.

During the retreat, the horrendous cold and blinding snowstorms of Russia's winter

killed more than 90,000 of the 100,000 troops that left Moscow. A scant 9,000 straggled into Poland during the winter months. The Russian winter accomplished what Europe's leaders could not: Napoleon's defeat.

### Checking for Understanding

1. How did the Russians use the size of their country to defeat Napoleon?
2. **Location** How did Russia's location help defeat Napoleon?



# Cultures and Lifestyles

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the religions practiced in Russia and the Eurasian republics.
- changes in education in Russia and the Eurasian republics.
- the arts of Russia and the Eurasian republics.
- life and leisure in Russia and the Eurasian republics.

### Key Terms

- atheist
- icon
- patriarch
- pogrom
- socialist realism

### Identify and Locate

Black Sea, Kiev, Baltic Sea, Belarus, Mtskheta, Yerevan, Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Crimea, Minsk, Chisinau, Moldova

**F**or the more than 70 years that the Soviets were in power, they tried to convince the peoples of Russia and the Eurasian republics to abandon their religious beliefs. They made Russian the language of all the schools and worked to glorify communism. They influenced everything from the holidays celebrated to the quality of life. Now everything is different.

### REGION

## Religion

The Soviets thought that the peoples of the republics should be **atheists**, or nonbelievers, and closed down or destroyed many houses of worship. In 1988, when Mikhail Gorbachev allowed more religious freedom, people of all ages flocked to religious services. The religious revival has continued in the post-Communist era.

### Christianity

Many people who practice a religion in Russia and the Eurasian republics practice some form of Christianity. Although some Christians are Protestant or Roman Catholic, most belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church,

which is made up of separate, self-governing churches. Most Russians, for example, are members of the Russian Orthodox Church, and most Ukrainians belong to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. A cornerstone of both is the use of **icons**, or intricate religious images, many of which are hundreds of years old.



### Geographic Themes

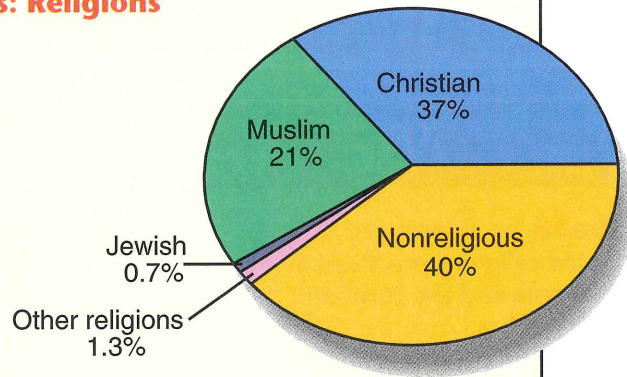
#### Place: Moscow, Russia

Russian Orthodox worshippers pray in one of Moscow's newly restored churches. *What art form plays an important role in Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox worship?*



### Russia and the Eurasian Republics: Religions

Christian	105,000,000
Muslim	60,000,000
Jewish	2,000,000
Nonreligious	113,000,000
Other religions	3,000,000



Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year, 1998*

Two other republics, Georgia and Armenia, have strong national churches whose membership grew even under Soviet rule. The center of Georgian Orthodoxy is Sveti Tskhoveli, the Pillar of Life church in Mtskheta, still in use today. Most Armenians, both in Armenia and in neighboring Azerbaijan, belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church. Although its rites are similar to Eastern Orthodox rites, the Armenian Church was founded in the 300s. Like Eastern Orthodox churches, it has a leader called a **patriarch**. The patriarch lives in a monastery not far from the Armenian capital of Yerevan.

### Islam

Islam has the second-largest number of followers in the region. Most Muslims live in the central Asian republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Together the republics of the region have a Muslim population of about 60 million. Most Kazakhs and Azeris also are Muslims. So are most people in the area of Ukraine called the Crimea.

Most Muslims in Russia and the Eurasian republics belong to a sect of Islam known as Sunni, the same sect as those of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Afghanistan. An exception is the Azeris. They are Shiite, the same sect as the Muslims of Iran.

### Judaism

Over many centuries the Jews in the region suffered from prejudice and discrimination. In

czarist Russia Jews were allowed to settle only certain areas, and they were often the target of organized persecution and massacres known as **pogroms**. This persecution continued under the Soviets and became particularly brutal when the invading Nazis shipped hundreds of thousands of Jews to death camps.

In recent years large numbers of Jews have been emigrating, often to Israel or the United States. Some, however, have fought hard to keep their religious and cultural identity and want to stay where they are.

### PLACE

## Education

The region's literacy rate is extremely high. This high rate is largely the result of the former Soviet rulers' emphasis on free education from grade school through college and the requirement that all children go to school for at least 10 years.

### The Soviet Legacy

After independence the republics faced some education-related problems that they have been working to resolve. Most textbooks, for example, must be replaced because they are outdated and were written from the Soviet Communist point of view. Some of the schools need repairs. Others do not have plumbing or running water. Many are short of supplies, especially modern equipment like computers.

As under the Soviets, there are several different kinds of schools students can attend. Vocational schools teach skills such as plumbing or carpentry; technical schools prepare students for jobs in areas like medicine or teaching; and some schools offer courses in farming or language skills. Which kind of high school a student goes to depends on how well he or she does on a national exam that every student must take at the end of ninth grade.

### Local and Regional Needs

Since becoming independent, most republics have been making changes that reflect their own local and regional needs. Ukraine, for example, revised the courses taught and made Ukrainian—instead of Russian—the language of the classroom. Children now start school when they are 6 years old and cannot quit until they have finished the ninth grade. High school graduates may go on to a vocational school, an institute, or a university.

Moldova, where most of the people are of Romanian heritage, has taken steps to reverse Soviet efforts to stifle Romanian culture. The Soviets, for example, did not allow the Romanian language to be used in the schools, and gave Russian and Ukrainian students in Moldova first choice of institutions of higher education. Now Romanian is the language of the schools, and the Moldovan educational system has close ties with the Romanian one.

Armenia's leaders also have been reforming their educational system. In Armenia most children start school when they are 6 years old. The government has opened many elementary schools, but there is still a shortage of high schools. Students do not have to pay for their university education, but there is not enough space for every student. Only those who pass difficult exams are admitted.

In Azerbaijan, where there are thousands of elementary and high schools and more than a dozen institutions of higher learning, religion has been returned to the schools. Copies of the Quran, the holy text of Islam, have been provided by some countries in Southwest Asia. Iran is even sending Islamic teachers to provide religious instruction.

### REGION

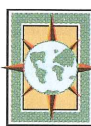
## The Arts

Russia and the Eurasian republics have a strong cultural tradition that dates back to times long past. The modern governments are attempting to encourage the arts as symbols of national pride.

### The Golden Years

The truly golden age of culture—a time when Russian painters, musicians, composers, and writers created works recognized and admired all over the world—was the 1800s and early 1900s.

During this period, Russian painters like Ilya Repin and Isaak Levitan used their talents not only to portray historical and contemporary scenes but also the beauty of the Russian countryside. In the early 1900s, Kasimir Malevich, Wasily Kandinsky, and other artists contributed to the rise of modern art. Meanwhile, Russian composers produced outstanding



### Geographic Themes

#### Human/Environment Interaction: Fabergé Egg

Russia's most famous jeweler, Carl Fabergé, crafted a series of these elaborate eggs from gold, silver, enamel, and precious stones. *When was Russia's golden age of culture?*







### Geographic Themes

#### Region: Central Asia

The people of Uzbekistan in central Asia enliven their festivities with traditional folk dancing. *Why do modern governments encourage the arts?*

musical works. Peter Tchaikovsky composed the dramatic *1812 Overture*, the light and playful *Nutcracker Suite*, and the romantic *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*; Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov wrote many of his symphonies and ballets; and Modest Mussorgsky composed the opera *Boris Godunov*.

Above all, this was an age of great Russian and Ukrainian writers who rank among the

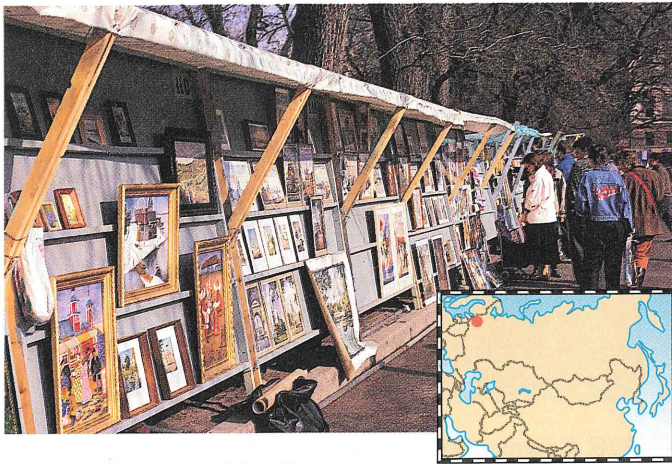
best in the history of world literature—Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Anton Chekhov, Ivan Turgenev, Alexander Pushkin, Nikolay Gogol, Maxim Gorky. Most wrote about the society, politics, and events of their times, mirroring both the extravagant life led by the rich and the sufferings of the poor.

### Contemporary Times

The people kept their passion for culture in Soviet times, and artists of all kinds continued to contribute. The Soviet government, however, severely limited artistic freedom.

The government believed that a work of art had to agree with and praise everything Soviet and ignore any Soviet faults. Writers, painters, and other artists who did not go along with this type of art, known as **socialist realism**, were punished in a number of different ways. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, for example, was forced to leave the country because his books criticized the government.

When the Soviet Union ceased to exist, so did most of the restrictions on artists. Now artists in Russia and the Eurasian republics have the freedom to be artistic, to freely express, exhibit, and publish their ideas and beliefs.



### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Outdoor Art Exhibit, St. Petersburg

Today Russian artists can freely paint and exhibit their works. *What was the artistic policy of Russia's former Communist leaders?*



## REGION

# Life and Leisure

During Soviet rule, the people of the region knew with some certainty what they could and could not do and what to expect or not expect. Whether they lived in the city or the countryside, lifestyle was controlled by the Soviet government.

## Way of Life

Under the new regimes, many people in the rural areas still cling to traditional ways. Uzbeks, for example, use the same farming methods that their ancestors used hundreds of years ago.

In the cities, most people live in high-rise apartments, often under crowded conditions. Even though the Soviets built huge numbers of new apartments over the years, there still are not enough to go around, especially in the large cities.

## Leisure-time Activities

The people of Russia and the Eurasian republics enjoy many different activities during their free time, from watching television to playing chess in the park to going to a concert, a lecture, a seminar, the theater, or a movie. Almost everyone enjoys reading, especially now that they can buy books, magazines, and newspapers that the Soviets once banned.

Many people enjoy outdoor activities such as skiing, ice skating, hiking, camping, mountain climbing, and hunting. They also relish sports like soccer, ice hockey, and tennis.

## Holidays and Celebrations

In most republics, families and friends enjoy celebrating holidays and other special occasions. During these festivities, they enjoy generous amounts of food and drink.

Holidays and celebrations are characterized by the blending of old folk practices with newer traditions. Most ethnic groups have their own traditional dances, costumes, and folk music, which are part of the festivities.

On May 1—May Day—when many nations traditionally celebrated the arrival of



### Geographic Themes

#### Location: Urban Russia

Many people in Russia and the Eurasian republics still have to cope with housing shortages. *In what kind of dwellings do most urban residents live?*



spring, people in the former Soviet Union celebrated the Communists and their achievements. Since independence, though, fireworks are set off, and people celebrate both the worker and the arrival of spring.

## SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** atheist, icon, patriarch, pogrom, socialist realism.
- 2. Locating Places** What are the major religions of Russia and the Eurasian republics?
- 3. Place** In what ways did the Soviets restrict religious freedom?
- 4. Place** What education-related problems do the Eurasian republics face?

### Critical Thinking

- 5. Making Generalizations** What generalization might you make about the role of the arts in Russia and the Eurasian republics?

Does the phrase "Russia's golden culture" refer to...

## Thinking

**Comparisons** What do Russians and Georgians have in common? How are they different? **Using Information** Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement: "The Soviet experience was 70 years on and 70 years to nowhere."

**Comparisons** In what ways is life in Russia like that in your country? In what ways is it different?

## Graphic Themes

**Environment Interaction** How did the cities of Russia and the Central Asian republics originally develop? How did the city of Moscow survive its long existence? **Conflict** What invasion disrupted the Silk Road's links to Europe?

## Practicing Skills

### Bar Graph

Read the bar graphs on page 322. How do the data in Graph B support the information presented in Graph A? In which sections of Russia and the Central Asian republics is the population growing most rapidly?

## Unit Atlas

Read the cultural geography section of the Unit Atlas on pages 284–285. How do you think so few people live in Siberia? How do the Central Asian cities that were ancient centers of trade? How do you think the second-largest group of people in the world live in Russia and the Eurasian republics?

## Graph

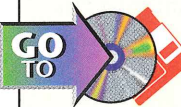
Bar graphs show relationships in a clear visual format. One of the most common types is the bar graph.

1. In 1993, which country had a larger population?
2. In 1991, which country had a larger population?
3. According to Graph A, which country is growing more quickly?
4. Of the countries shown in Graph B, which country is growing most slowly? Which is growing most quickly?
5. Which countries have actually declined in population?

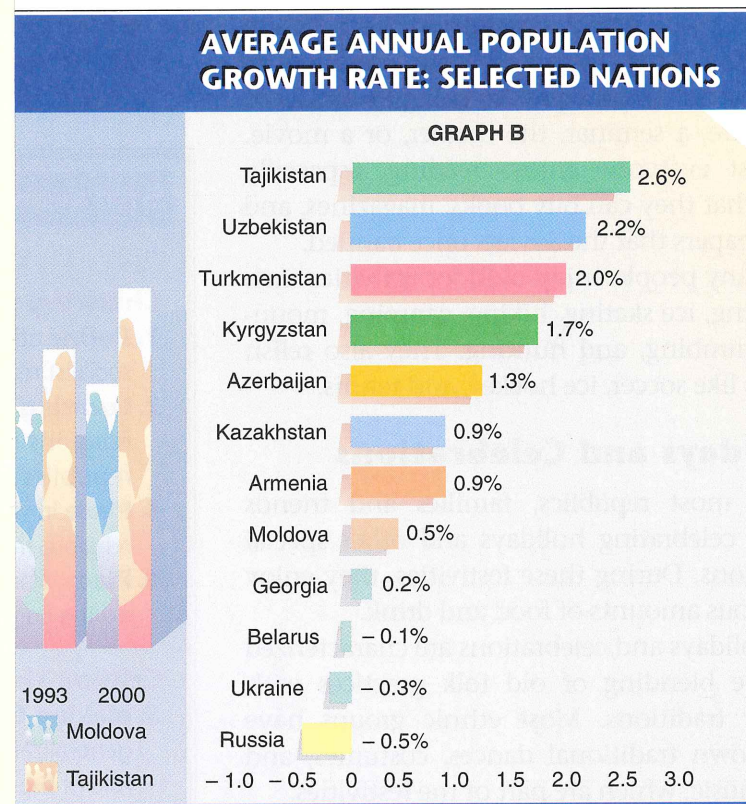
When reading a bar graph, follow these steps:  
1. Identify the title of the graph.  
2. Read the labels of the axes.  
3. Note the use of colors.  
4. Look for patterns.

For additional practice in reading a bar graph, see **Practicing Skills on page 324 of the Chapter 15 Assessment.**

**LL** Look for...  
...of the...  
...tions of...  
...?



The **Glencoe Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2** provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.



**Projects**

**Individual Activity**

Select one of the writers named in the chapter. Research the writer's life and then read one of his works. Then write a brief review of the work.

**Cooperative Learning Activity**

Working in a group of five, have each member do research to determine what territory Russia acquired during one of these periods: 1400–1500, 1500–1600, 1600–1700, 1800–1900, 1900–1945. Then, as a group, using a different color to represent each period, construct a map showing Russian expansion.

**Writing About Geography**

**Comparison** Select two capital cities, one in a republic west of the Ural Mountains and the

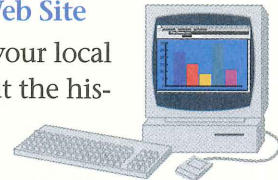
other in a republic east of the Ural Mountains. Using your journal record and resources available in your school or public library, research both cities. Then write a one-page comparison of the two cities.

**Technology Activity**

**Creating Your Own Web Site**

Search the Internet or your local library for sources about the history of Russian czars.

Create a genealogy chart of the Romanov dynasty. Include a short report explaining why the empire of the czars ended and how it impacted Russian culture. Share your genealogy chart and summary by placing it on the Web.



**Locating Places**

**THE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF RUSSIA AND THE EURASIAN REPUBLICS**

Match the letters on the map with the places and physical features of Russia and the Eurasian republics. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Black Sea      | 6. Dnieper River |
| 2. Moldova        | 7. Baltic Sea    |
| 3. Moscow         | 8. Yerevan       |
| 4. St. Petersburg | 9. Yenisey River |
| 5. Kiev           | 10. Volga River  |

