



Russian expansion to the sea

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for World History

Target audience – World history learners

Time required – 15 minutes

Activity Discover when and how Russia acquired territory between 1553 and 1914 to become the largest country in the world.

Standards **C3: D2.His.1.9-12.** Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place, as well as broader contexts.
C3: D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple & complex causes & effects of events in the past.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will trace the expansion of the Russian Empire through time and space.
- Students will identify and explain the underlying causes of Russian expansion.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/worldHistoryGeoInquiry9>

Ask

What was the extent of Russia in the 1500s?

- Click the link above to launch the map.
- ? Which physical features defined Russian territory in 1533? [*Water to the north, mountains to the east*]
- Use the Measure tool. [*See the Use the Measure Tool tip on page 2.*]
- ? What was the west-east distance of Russia in 1533? [*~1,300 miles*]
- ? In what directions did Russia expand by 1598? [*South and east*]

Acquire

Why did Russia expand east?

- ? By what year did Russia reach the Pacific Ocean? [*1689*]
- ? What was the west-east distance of the Russian Empire by 1689? [*~4,000 miles*]
- ? Why does the line curve when measuring? [*To account for the curvature of the earth.*]
- With the Details button depressed, click the button, Contents.
- Click the checkbox to the left of the layer name, Territories Acquired.
- Click Pop-up #1.
- ? Why was the fur trade a motive for expansion? [*There was a market for fur in Europe.*]

Explore

What challenges did Russia's quest for a warm-water port meet?

- ? Turn on the Cities layer, and pan west so that you can see both Canada and Russia.
- ? What part of Canada is at the same latitude as Moscow? Murmansk? [*Far northern areas*]
- ? Which ports in Russia would you expect to be ice-free in winter? [*St. Petersburg, Novorossiysk, Astrakhan, and Vladivostok are possible answers.*]
- ? Why would the lack of ice-free ports be a disadvantage? [*Trade by sea could not occur all year.*]
- ? Click Pop-up #2.
- ? What geographic factors limit the port at Astrakhan? [*The Caspian Sea, surrounded by land, does not connect to other bodies of water.*]

Analyze

When and where did Russia expand west?

- ? Why would Peter the Great want to claim St. Petersburg? *[To increase trade with Europe]*
- Click Pop-up #3.
- ? When and how did Peter the Great acquire St. Petersburg? *[1703, through war with Sweden]*
- ? Why do you think St. Petersburg is called Russia's "Window to the West"? *[It faces Europe.]*
- ? Where was most of the territory acquired by Catherine the Great (1796) located? *[In Europe]*
- Use the Measure tool.
- ? What was the extent of the Russian Empire by 1796? *[~4,200 miles]*

Act

What geographic features impeded Russia's southward expansion in the 1800s?

- Read aloud, "In addition to warm-water ports, Russia sought lands in areas with milder climates more suitable for agriculture."
- Turn on the Other Empires layer.
- ? Which empires do you think were most likely to prevent Russia from acquiring ports on the Black Sea? *[The Ottoman and Persian empires]*
- Click Pop-up #4.
- ? What were the results of the Crimean War? *[Russia was defeated and lost Black Sea ports.]*
- ? Into what other areas did the Russian Empire expand by 1914? *[Caucasus and Turkestan]*

USE THE MEASURE TOOL

- Click Measure, select the Distance button, and from the drop-down list, choose a unit of measurement.
- On the map, click once to start the measurement, click again to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring.
- Hint: Position the area of interest on the map so that it is not obscured by the Measure window.

TURN A MAP LAYER ON AND OFF

- Make sure that the Details pane is selected, and click Show Contents Of Map.
- To show individual map layers, select the check boxes next to the layer names.
- Hint: If a map layer name is light gray, zoom in or out on the map until the layer name is black. The layer can now be turned on.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW? ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

THEN TRY THIS...

- Create a crowd-sourced story map including images of Russian ports during various seasons.
- Using an ArcGIS Online organizational account for schools, use the Buffer Analysis tool to identify cities and areas affected by the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from these high school texts.

- *World History: The Human Journey* by Holt — Chapters 10 & 16
- *World History by Glencoe* — Chapter 14
- *World History by Prentice Hall* — Chapter 16
- *World History: Patterns of Interaction* by McDougall Littell — Chapter 21