Russia during the Early Modern Period

1450-1750
Let’s start with recall: What do you remember about Russia’s early development (800 CE–1450 CE)?
Recall: What do you remember about Russia so far?

- Most Russians are ethnic **Slavs** (people from eastern Europe north of the Black Sea)
- Explorers called the **Rus** (most likely **Vikings**) visited in the 800s CE- interacted and settled among the Slavs
- Early interaction with the **Byzantine empire** = trade connections, connection to Greco-Roman culture, Eastern Orthodox Christianity
- **Cyril and Methodius**- Byzantine missionaries that spread Orthodox Christianity, created the **Cyrillic alphabet** which is the basis of Russian and many other Slavic languages today
- 862- **Novgorod** founded- Russia’s first important city
- 880- **Kiev** founded- became an important trading city w/ Constantinople
Russian Orthodox wooden churches
Recall: What do you remember about Russia so far?

- **Prince Vladimir**: Prince of Kiev - Converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity in 980 CE - made it the official state religion
- **Kievan Rus**: First Russian state
- **Kievan Rus declined in the 1200s**: Crusades disrupted trade, then MONGOLS invaded and destroyed Kiev
- **Mongol rule (**Khanate of the Golden Horde**): 1240-1480
  - Initially led by Batu Khan (Genghis Khan’s grandson)
  - Mongols tolerant of Christianity, but demanded heavy tribute
  - Moscow became an important city - the princes there collected taxes for the Mongols
Growth of the Russian Empire: **Ancient Slavic Centers 800s - 1200s**

- **Novgorod**
- **Moscow**
- **Kiev**
Russia in the Early Modern Period (1450–1750)

• **Ivan III (Ivan the Great):** Ruled 1462-1505
  ○ Prince of Moscow
  ○ Challenged Mongols- succeeded in breaking Russia free of Mongol rule (refused to continue paying tribute, then led the Russians against the Mongols- Mongols left after a bloodless standoff)
  ○ Conquered much of the territory around Moscow
  ○ Began centralizing and consolidating Russian government and territory
  ○ Took the title czar- means “caesar” in Russian (Q: why do you think this title was chosen for Russia’s leaders?)
Russia in the Early Modern Period (1450–1750)

● **Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible):** Ruled 1533-1584
  ○ Early life: Boyars (Russian nobles) fought for power/influence—tried to control Ivan as he was very young
  ○ Took power at 16
  ○ 1547-1560—“Good period”:
    ■ Expanded Russia’s territory, ruled justly, won military victories, established a law code
  ○ 1560-1584—“Bad period”:
    ■ His wife, Anastasia, died—blamed the Boyars—accused them of poisoning her
    ■ Sent secret police to hunt down and kill traitors (sometimes with little or no evidence)
    ■ Demanded loyalty of new nobles he put in place
    ■ 1581: Killed his son and heir
Russia in the Early Modern Period (1450–1750)

- Ivan IV’s son was an incompetent ruler and died without an heir—time of uncertainty in Russian political history known as the **Time of Troubles**
- 1613- Representatives from Russian cities met to choose the next czar—chose **Michael Romanov** (grandnephew of Ivan IV’s wife Anastasia)
- This appointment of the new czar started a new dynasty of leaders in Russia called the Romanovs
- The **Romanov czars** would rule Russia until 1917
- Romanovs restored order in Russia, strengthened and consolidated the government further, put down revolts
By the 17th century, Russia had gained a reputation for being a “backwards” country. It also didn’t have much in common with the West. Why do you think that is?
Factors contributing to Russia’s “backwards” image and lack of contact/association with the West:

- Serfdom continued long after it was abolished in Western Europe- not abolished in Russia until the 1800s
- Mongols largely isolated them from developments happening in the West, such as the Renaissance and Age of Exploration
- Mongol rule was harsh- demanded heavy tribute, didn’t do much to advance Russia economically, politically, or culturally (essentially kind of held them back)
- Harsh geography led to a degree of physical isolation from the rest of the continent- did not lend itself naturally to much interaction
- Culturally different from the West- looked to Constantinople, not Rome, for inspiration
Russia in the Early Modern Period (1450–1750)

- **Peter the Great**: Ruled 1696-1725
  - Further increased the power of the czar - became an absolute ruler
    - Put the Russian Orthodox Church under his control, abolished the patriarch, established himself as leader (recall the Byzantine idea of *caesaropapism*).
    - Reduced the power of wealthy landowners by recruiting men from lower classes and giving them land grants.
  - Fascinated by the tools and machines that foreigners (mainly Dutch and Germans) would bring to Moscow - spent time touring Western European nations to learn their ways.
  - Upon his return from Western Europe, set upon a mission to modernize and “westernize” Russia - bring it “up to date” with the rest of Europe, compete economically and militarily with them.
Russia in the Early Modern Period (1450–1750)

- **Peter the Great**: Ruled 1696-1725
  - By attempting to modernize (westernize) Russia, many new reforms put into place:
    - Military was completely reformed- European officers taught Russians European formations, tactics, and how to use European weapons= new professional standing army created
    - Introduced **potatoes**- became a staple of the Russian diet
    - Started (and edited) Russia’s first newspaper
    - Improved status of women- could attend social gatherings
    - Nobles ordered to give up traditional clothes in favor of Western fashions
    - Advanced education- set up schools for navigation, the arts, and science
    - Encouraged Russians to travel abroad
Russia in the Early Modern Period (1450–1750)

- **Peter the Great**: Ruled 1696-1725
  - Saw having a warm-water port as essential to Russia’s future
  - Obtained a port on the Baltic coast from Sweden—established the city of St. Petersburg (Russia’s “Window to Europe”)
  - Serfs forced to work on the capital—bad working conditions and disease resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths
SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

1. Location: Locate the territories that Peter added to Russia during his reign, from 1682 to 1725. What bodies of water did Russia gain access to because of these acquisitions?

2. Region: Who added a larger amount of territory to Russia—Ivan III, who ruled from 1462 to 1505, or Peter the Great?