

Lesson Plan

Country Profiles

Book: *Vladimir Putin*

Series: World Leaders

Level: Voyager

Objective

To help students learn about the history of the Soviet Union and its dissolution by conducting a short research project about one of the former Soviet republics.

Supplies

- *Vladimir Putin* book
- Internet access for each student
- BBC Country Profiles for Europe: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17205055>
- BBC Country Profiles for Asia: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16924512>

Before the Activity

Have students read the *Vladimir Putin* book.

Activity

Have students turn to pages 14 to 15 of the *Vladimir Putin* book and examine the “Focus on Russia” feature. Ask students to make a list of what they know about Russia based on this feature alone. Their list should include the following things:

- the country’s size
- the country’s population
- the country’s capital
- the major religions
- the main industry
- the type of government
- what the country’s flag looks like

Explain that the country of Russia has only existed in its current state since the 1990s. Before that, Russia was part of the Soviet Union. Have students read Chapter 2 (“Russia Then and Now”). Then choose one student to summarize the main points of that chapter. (Possible answer: This chapter describes how the Soviet Union was made up of several republics and how the central Communist government eventually collapsed.)

Explain that the 15 Soviet republics all shared the same Communist government. When that government collapsed in 1991, these republics became independent countries. One was Russia. But several other countries were formed as well.

Have students turn to page 10 and look at the “Republics of the Soviet Union” infographic. Students should choose one of the other countries on this map (other than Russia) and create a Country Profile for that country. Similar to the “Focus on Russia” feature, the profile should include the following information:

- A brief explanation (100 to 200 words) of the country’s geography, economy, and government
- A picture of the country’s flag
- A timeline with five or six important events from the country’s history

Students should use the BBC Country Profiles to look up information about the country they selected. They should also consult at least two other reputable online sources. Students should record these sources (and their URLs) on a separate sheet of paper.

Then students should use a word processor to type their explanation and create a layout similar to the “Focus on Russia” feature, with the main paragraph on one side of the page and the photo and timeline on the other side of the page. Remind students that the events in their timeline should not repeat information from their explanation paragraphs.

Collect the students’ Country Profiles, as well as their list of sources.

Evaluation

Give students up to 26 points for their Country Profiles, using the following rubric:

- 10 points for accurately summarizing the country’s geography, economy, and government
- 10 points for accurately summarizing five or six major events in the country’s history
- 2 points for following the Country Profile format, including a picture of the country’s flag
- 2 points for using correct spelling and grammar
- 2 points for consulting at least two reputable online sources in addition to the BBC Country Profile

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards’ reading informational texts standards, grade 7 (W 7.7; W 7.8) and the National Council for Social Studies Standard 6.