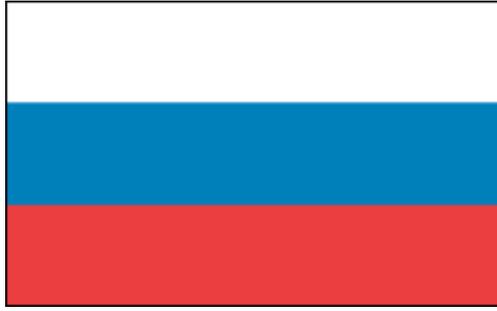
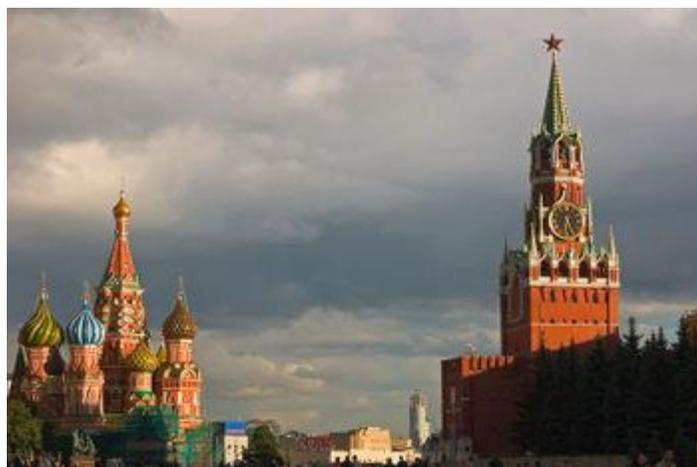


Russian Fun Facts

National Flag



Moscow is capital of Russia
55°45'N 37°37'E



Timeline

1812 – Napoleon invades Russia

In 1812, Napoleon took Russia and was headed to Moscow when fires broke out and forced the French retreat back to Europe. Almost 90% of the invading forces died as a result of on-going battles with the Russian army, guerillas and winter weather. The Russian armies ended their pursuit of the enemy by taking Paris. Napoleonic wars stirred the Russian people toward liberalism and a push toward restricting Tsar power.

1825 – Decembrist Revolt fails; Nicholas I crowned emperor

In 1833 the minister of education, Sergey Uvarov, devised a program of "**autocracy, Orthodoxy, and nationality**" as the guiding principle of the regime. People were to show loyalty to the unlimited authority of the Tsar, to the Orthodox Church, and the Russian nation. These principles led to repression in general and to suppression of non-Russian nationalities and religions in particular. Strict maintenance of Serfdom in Russia and the conservative policies of Tsar Nicholas I impeded the development of Imperial Russia in the mid-nineteenth century.

Two modes of thought were developing in the 1830s. There was a debate surrounding Russia's place in the world, meaning of Russian history, and future of Russia. "Westernizers" were looking forward toward Europeanization to leave the backwardness and primitiveness of the country behind. "Slavophiles" idealized old Russia as a source of wholeness, and thought a Russian peasant commune offered an attractive alternative to Western capitalism and could make Russia a potential social and moral savior.

1837 – First Russian railroad from St. Petersburg to Tsarskoye Selo opens

1853-56 Crimean War: Russia fights Britain, France, Sardinia, and Ottoman Empire

After a year's siege the most important military hold fell, exposing Russia's inability to defend a major fortification on its own soil. Nicholas I died before the fall of Sevastopol', but he already had recognized the failure of his regime. Russia now faced the choice of initiating major reforms or losing its status as a major European power. Russia was forced to accept peace settlement dictated by its opponents.

1855- Alexander II crowned emperor

During his reign from 1855–1881 he was forced to start on the path of reform, and so abolished serfdom from the country in 1861. Reforms of Alexander's reign spurred increasingly rapid capitalist development and Sergei Witte's attempts at industrialization.

1858-60 Treaties between China and Russia award more land to Russia's Chinese borders.

1861 Alexander II emancipated approx. 20 million serfs / Serfdom is abolished

Local commissions, which were dominated by landlords, effected emancipation by giving land and limited freedom to the serfs. Former serfs usually remained in village communes, required to make redemption payments to the government over a period of almost fifty years. Government compensated former owners of serfs by issuing them bonds. New peasants fell behind in payments to government because land they received was poor and agricultural methods were inadequate. Former owners often sold lands to stay solvent because most couldn't farm nor manage estates without former serfs. Value of bonds fell as the peasants failed to make redemption payments.

However, agriculture remained inefficient, industrialization proceeded slowly, and new social problems emerged. In addition to masses of peasants seeking land to till, a new class of industrial workers--the proletariat--and a small but influential group of middle-class professionals were dissatisfied with their positions. The non-Russian populations resented periodic official Russification campaigns and struggled for autonomy. Successive regimes of the nineteenth century responded to such pressures with a combination of halfhearted reform and repression, but no tsar was willing to cede autocratic rule or share power. Gradually, the monarch and the state system that surrounded him became isolated from the rest of society. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, some intellectuals became more radical, and groups of professional revolutionaries emerged.

1864 – Judicial system reformation and *Zemstva* created.

Zemstva are the provincial districts made up of representatives of all classes, responsible for local schools, public health, roads, prisons, food supply, and other concerns. In 1870 elected city councils, or *dumy* were formed. Dominated by property owners and constrained by provincial governors and the police, the *zemstva* and *dumy* raised taxes and levied labor to support their activities.

1867 – mounting debts led Russia to sell Alaska to the United States

Technology and industry continued to develop more rapidly in the West and there were new, dynamic, competitive great powers appearing on the world scene: Germany, United States, Japan. Expanding regional giant, Russia, could not generate enough capital to support industrial development. Russia's fundamental dilemma was that accelerated domestic development risked upheaval at home, but slower progress risked full economic dependency on the faster-advancing countries to the east and west. In fact, political ferment, particularly among the intelligentsia, accompanied the transformation of Russia's economic and social structure, but so did impressive developments in literature, music, the fine arts, and the natural sciences.

1873-74 – Army Reform (see Army history packet)

Before emancipation, serfs could not receive military training and then return to their owners, if they trained they stayed in service. One chief reason for serf emancipation was to facilitate transition from large standing army to a reserve army by instituting territorial levies and mobilization in times of need. The levy system introduced in 1874 gave the army a role in teaching many peasants to read and in pioneering medical education for women. But the army remained backward despite these military reforms. Officers often preferred bayonets to bullets, expressing worry that long-range sights on rifles would induce cowardice. In spite of some notable achievements, Russia did not keep pace with Western technological developments in the construction of rifles, machine guns, artillery, ships, and naval ordnance. Russia also failed to use naval modernization as a means of developing its industrial base in the 1860s.

Last half of the nineteenth century: economy developed slower than major Western European nations. Population larger than those more developed Western countries, but majority of people lived in rural communities using primitive agriculture. Between 1850 and 1900, Russia's population doubled, but it remained chiefly rural well into the twentieth century. Agriculture, still technologically underdeveloped was maintained by former serfs and state peasants. Serfs/State Peasants constituted about four-fifths of rural population. Large farm estates were rae and usually inefficient.

1881 – Alexander II assassinated by revolutionaries; Alexander III crowned Emperor

Alexander III (r.1881-94) initiated political reaction. Created Internal and Security Agencies with massive power. Konstantin Pobedonostsev appointed procurator of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church. Ivan Delyanov minister of education. In their attempts to "save" Russia from "modernism," they revived religious censorship, persecuted non-Orthodox and non-Russian populations, fostered anti-Semitism, and suppressed the autonomy of the universities. Their attacks on liberal and non-Russian elements alienated large segments of the population.

By 1890 about 32,000 km of railroads, 1.4 million factory workers (mostly textile industry) 1860-90, annual coal production increased about 1,200% to over 6.6 million tons, iron/steel more than doubled to 2 million tons per year. Unfortunately, until the state introduced high industrial tariffs in the 1880s, it could not finance trade with the West because its surpluses were insufficient to cover the debts.

1894 – Nicholas II crowned Emperor (reigned until 1917)

The accession of the pliable Nicholas II upon the death of Alexander III gave Witte and other powerful ministers the opportunity to dominate the government. Famine claimed a half-million lives in 1891, and Japanese/Chinese borders seemed threatened. Sergey Witte became the go-to-person for policy. Foreign loans, conversion to the gold standard, heavy taxation of the peasantry, accelerated development of heavy industry, and a trans-Siberian railroad; policies designed to modernize country, secure Russian Far East, and give Russia a commanding position.

1898 – Russian Social Democratic Labor Party est. holds first congress in March, led by Vladimir Lenin**

Economic depression: Russia's coal, iron, steel, and oil production tripled between 1890 and 1900; railroad mileage almost doubled, Trans-Siberian Railroad (completed from Moscow to Vladivostok in 1904). Witte's policies as improvements is debatable. But there was no economic growth. 1890s industrial development led to increase in urban bourgeoisie and working class, who were among the first to establish political parties. 1890s and early 1900s: abysmal living and working conditions, high taxes, and land hunger gave rise to strikes and agrarian disorder, prompting development of many different parties among various noble/bourgeoisie.

**Vladimir I. Ul'yanov: 1890s, he labored to wean young radicals away from populism to Marxism. Exiled from 1895 to 1899 in Siberia, where he took the name Lenin from the mighty Siberian Lena River. Master tactician organizer of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. December 1900, founded newspaper Iskra (Spark). Lenin had a theory that a newspaper published abroad could help organize a revolutionary party to overthrow an autocratic government. Worked to establish a tightly organized, party to do so in Russia. Young Bolsheviks, such as Joseph V. Stalin and Nikolay Bukharin, started to look to Lenin as their leader.



Climate

Average Winter temperature around -15°C (5°F) sometimes Moscow gets an average -25° to -30°C (-13° to -22°F)

Far north on the globe, majority of country is above 55° lat. Extensive regions experience six months of snow cover over subsoil that is permanently frozen to depths as far as several hundred meters.

The average yearly temperature of nearly all of European Russia is below freezing, and the average for most of Siberia is freezing or below.

Most of Russia has only two seasons, summer and winter, with very short intervals of moderation between them.

Russia has little exposure to ocean influences so most of the country receives low to moderate amounts of precipitation. Highest precipitation falls in the northwest, with amounts decreasing from northwest to southeast across European Russia. The wettest areas are the small, lush subtropical region adjacent to the Caucasus and along the Pacific coast. Along the Baltic coast, average annual precipitation is 600 millimeters (24 inches), and in Moscow it is 525 millimeters (21 inches).

Because of the high latitude of the country the Sunset/Sunrise varies drastically depending on the season. In the peak of Summer sunset could occur at midnight (12:00am) and sunrise begin at about 4:00 am. In the Winter sunrise could be at about 11:00 am followed by sunset at about 3:30 pm. At the autumn and spring equinox the sunset/sunrise is almost an even 8:00pm and 8:00am.



Culture

Etiquette

- Men in Russia always shake hands (or offer a wrist if a hand is dirty, wet or otherwise unavailable) when they greet for the first time during the day. TABOO: shaking hands with your gloves on. One glove must be removed, no matter how cold it may be. TABOO: shaking hands and giving things across the threshold. Come inside before shaking a host's hand and shake it before leaving
- Men to give flowers to women on nearly every occasion, but only an ODD number can be given. TABOO: giving an even number of flowers, even numbers are for funerals.
- Never go to someone else's house empty handed.
- Always toast when drinking. Refusing vodka can be considered very rude. Glass can not touch the table from the proposal of the toast to the drink. Glass remains on the table for refill.
- TABOO: whistling indoors. Old superstitions: used to be considered a sin, whistling entertains the devil, and just rude.
- Cheek kisses are done in threes.
- For a sneeze say, “Будьте здоровы” (“Bud’te zdorovy”) which means “Be Healthy”

Customs/Superstition

- Before leaving for a long journey the travelers and all those seeing them off must sit for a moment in silence before leaving the house.
- Breaking a mirror isn't considered bad luck, but looking at one's reflection in a broken mirror is.
- On examination day, you shouldn't make your bed, wear anything new or cut your fingernails. It's good luck.
- It is bad luck to use physical hand gestures to demonstrate something negative using oneself or someone else as the object. For example, when describing a scar you saw on someone's face you should not gesture on your own face or someone else's. If you must, you can demonstrate in mid-air. If one does it without realizing, it can be countered by making a hand motion towards the body part used and then an abrupt motion away (as if to pick up the bad energy and throw it away).
- Birthday parties should be celebrated on or after one's birthday, not before. So when one's birthday falls during the week, it's best to celebrate the following weekend.
- Returning home for forgotten things is a bad omen. It is better to leave it behind, but if returning is necessary, one should look in the mirror before leaving the house again. Otherwise the journey will be bad.
- Unmarried people shouldn't sit at the corner of the table. Otherwise they won't marry. This mostly applies to girls, and often only young girls. Sometimes it is said that you will not marry for 7 years, making it alright for young children to sit there.
- A funeral procession brings good luck. But one should never cross its path or it is bad luck.
- Bread should only be cut with a knife, not with your hands. Otherwise, it is said, that your life will be broken. The opposite is held true by some people.
- It's good luck to trip on your left foot.

"Cause and effect" Russian Superstitions

- If your nose itches, you'll be drinking soon. For children they might say, "You'll get hit in the nose."
- If your right eye itches, you're going to be happy soon. If your left eye itches, you'll be sad.
- If your lips itch, you'll be kissing someone soon.
- If a fork or spoon falls on the ground, expect a female guest. If a knife falls, expect a male guest.
- If it's raining when you leave a place, it means you'll return, and it is considered a generally good omen.
- If someone sneezes, it means he or she is telling the truth.
- If one or more birds defecate on you, it's good luck.
- If you find a bay leaf in your soup, it means you'll get mail from someone.

АНТОН ЧЕХОВ
Три Сестры
Драма в Четырех Действиях

Anton Chekhov's
Three Sisters
Drama in Four Acts

“So moved was the audience that the curtain fell in total silence.” – Donald Rayfield (525)

The Play

Written by Anton Chekhov from his home in Yalta over an almost two-year period.

Chekhov and manuscript arrived in Moscow on October 23 1900

First reading of script to Moscow Arts Theatre Company October 24 1900.

Three Sisters opened at the Moscow Arts Theater on January 31, 1901.

The Plot Time Line

Act I

- Sunday, May 5, 1900
- 12:00 Noon
- Spring

Act II

- Thursday, February 1902
- 8:00 PM
- Winter
- Bobik is about 3 months old

Act III

- 1903
- 2:00-3:00 AM
- Summer

Act IV

- 1904
- 12:00 Noon
- Autumn

The Pronunciation of Characters' Names (two tracks on the CD)

Andréi Sergéyich Prozorov

Ólga Sergéyevna Prozorov

María **Másha** Sergéyevna Prozorov

Irina Sergéyevna Prozorov

Natálya **Natásha** Ivánovna

Fyódor Ilých **Kulýgin**

Alexánder Ignátych **Vershínin**

Baron Nikolái Lvóvich **Túzenbach**((-Króne-Áltschauer)(35))

Vassíly Vassílich **Solyóny**

Iván Romanovich (Románich) **Chebutýkin**

Alexéi Petróvich **Fedótik**

Vladímir Kárlovich **Róhde**

Ferapónt

Anfísa, Nana

Sergey Prozorov

Protopópov

Bobik

Sophie

Moscow

KULYGIN

“From the beginning everything in *Three Sisters* is of a piece, mutual and reciprocal, the abstract embedded in the sensuous, physicality releasing thought.”

“Kulygin: pedantry, a desire to please, inability or refusal to see Masha’s contempt. (He is a little like a man married to an earlier Masha, Medvedenko in *The Seagull*.)”

– Richard Gilman *Chekhov’s Plays: An Opening into Eternity*

(p.3)“**high-school**”: Olga and Kulygin teach at a *gymnasium*, or four-year high school, open to all classes of society. Latin and Greek were forced upon the students in the government’s hopes of slowing down the learning and preventing too much progression in the young generations of the 1870s and 80s, thus Kulygin’s frequent Latin quotations.

(p.20) ***Feci quod potui, faciant meliora potentes***” From Cicero (Consul of the Roman Republic) when the Roman consulate conferred his powers on his successors. Cicero considered one of the greatest Latin orators and writers. Translation: “I have done my best; let others do better if they can.”

(p.21) ***Mens sana in corpore sano***” From *Satires* by Juvenal. *Satires* is the only known surviving work of Juvenal who was a poet known for his often lewd hexameter satire. Translation: “A healthy mind in a healthy body.”

“mothballs or naphtha” Mothballs were made of naphtha during this period. Mothballs were used in storage for clothing, fabrics, rugs, drapes, seasonal items that needed to be stored away for long periods of time. They have a very distinct odor and were used to prevent mold and insect/vermin damage. Because of naphtha’s extreme flammability it is no longer used in mothballs.

(p.43)**“o, fallacem...”** Latin for “oh, mistaken hope of men!” from Cicero, *The Orator* (III, ii) a recorded discourse on the art and technique of persuasion through language.

(p.60) ***In vino veritas***” Latin: “in wine lies truth”

(p.66) ***Omnia mea mecum porto.***” Latin: “All I own is what I carry with me,” Cicero in *Paradox*. Expression of a member of the family of the philosopher Bias fleeing their country before the Persians and refusing to take any worldly goods with him.

(p.74) **“Kokhany”** Polish for “beloved, dearest”

(p.76) ***modus vivendi***” Latin: a means of living, a temporary compromise.

(p.77) ***ut consecutivum construction***” The rule in Latin grammar that demands the use of a verb in the subjunctive mood within subordinate clauses beginning with the conjunction *ut* (that, so that, though, whereas). Instead of “If I was you, I would run.” the proper form is “If I were you, I would run.” Chekhov had trouble with it in school himself.

“certificate of merit” The Russian text has a “Order of Stanislas 2nd Class” In Russia this is one of the decorations bestowed in pre-Revolutionary Russia on civil servants and military men. The least important, the “Stanislas 3rd Class”, was bestowed on Chekhov in 1899 for his educational work with peasants.

Dramaturg’s IR

- + Kulygin’s entrance also has a huge effect on the rhythm of Act I. I enjoy his grand entrance for being a man who can seem small or insignificant (especially according to his wife). Though I think Kulygin is a wonderful man and in some ways he is stronger than most people seem to give him credit.
- + Kulygin’s optimism constantly amazes me. I can’t decide if its sweet optimism, ridiculous idealism, or denial, but I like it. I like what a good man he is, and that he is constantly looking for the best in these various situations.