

Absolute Monarchs in Europe

Section 4

Absolute Rulers of Russia

Terms and Names

Ivan the Terrible Ruler who added lands to Russia, gave it a code of laws, and also used his secret police to execute “traitors”

boyar Russian noble who owned land

Peter the Great Important leader of Russia who started westernization

westernization Use of western Europe as a model of change

Before You Read

In the last section, you read how Austria and Prussia became strong states.

In this section, you will learn how Russia developed into a powerful state.

As You Read

Use a cluster diagram to list the important events of Peter the Great’s reign.

THE FIRST CZAR (Pages 608–609)

Who was Ivan the Terrible?

Ivan III had begun centralizing the Russian government. His son, Vasily, continued the work of adding territory to the growing Russian state. Ivan’s grandson, Ivan IV, was called **Ivan the Terrible**. He came to the throne in 1533, when he was three years old.

At first, landowning nobles, known as **boyars**, tried to control Ivan. Eventually, he ruled successfully on his own. He added lands to Russia and gave the country a code of laws. After his wife, Anastasia, died, however, his rule turned harsh. He used secret police to hunt down enemies and kill them. Ivan even murdered his oldest son.

A few years after he died, Russian nobles met to name a new ruler. They chose Michael Romanov, the grandnephew of Ivan the Terrible’s wife.

He began the Romanov dynasty, which ruled Russia for about 300 years.

1. What good and bad did Ivan the Terrible do?

PETER THE GREAT COMES TO POWER (Page 609)

Who was Peter the Great?

The Romanovs restored order to Russia. In the late 1600s, Peter I came to power. He was called **Peter the Great** because he was one of Russia’s greatest reformers. He began an intense program of trying to modernize Russia. He also continued the trend of increasing the czar’s power.

Section 4, *continued*

When Peter came to power, Russia was still a land of boyars and serfs. Serfdom lasted much longer in Russia than it did in western Europe. It continued into the mid-1800s.

When a Russian landowner sold a piece of land, he sold the serfs with it. Landowners could give away serfs as presents or to pay debts. It was also against the law for serfs to run away from their owners.

Most boyars knew little of western Europe. But Peter admired the nations of western Europe. He traveled in Europe to learn about new technology and ways of working. It was the first time a czar traveled in the West.

2. Why did Peter the Great visit Europe?

PETER RULES ABSOLUTELY

(Pages 610–611)

What changes did Peter the Great make?

Peter the Great wanted Russia to be the equal of the countries of western Europe.

He wanted Russia to be strong both in its military and in its trade.

To meet these goals, Peter changed Russia. His first steps were to increase his powers, so he could force people to make the changes he wanted. He put the Russian Orthodox Church under his control. He reduced the power of nobles. He built up the army and made it better trained.

Peter also changed Russia through **westernization**. He took several steps to make Russia more western. He brought in potatoes as a new food, began Russia's first newspaper, gave more social status to women, and told the nobles to adopt Western clothes. He promoted education.

Peter also knew Russia needed a seaport that would make it easier to travel to the west. He fought a long war with Sweden to gain land along the shores of the Baltic Sea. There he built a grand new capital city, St. Petersburg. By the time of Peter's death in 1725, Russia was an important power in Europe.

3. How did Peter the Great increase his power?

Section 4, *continued*

As you read this section, complete the chart by explaining how Peter the Great solved each problem he encountered in his efforts to westernize Russia.

Problems	Solutions
1. Russian people did not believe that change was necessary.	
2. The Russian Orthodox Church was too strong.	
3. The great landowners had too much power.	
4. The Russian army was untrained and its tactics and weapons were outdated.	
5. Russian society had to change to compete with the modern states of Europe.	
6. To promote education and growth, Russia needed a seaport for travel to the West.	
7. The port needed to be built.	
8. The new city needed to be settled.	