

IV. Russian History 1.0

A. Russia and the World We Live In

1. Russia is the largest country in the world. It doesn't have an especially big economy (smaller than Texas, in fact), but it still manages to be a cardinal culture because it has a big military, and, especially nuclear weapons.
2. Russia also used to be champion of "communism." Communism was an idea that claimed it would create a perfect society where everyone is equal.
3. In reality communism made everyone poorer and was used to justify killing millions of people.
4. Because communism did not succeed, Russia's leaders abandoned it in **1991**. That year, the "Soviet Union" (the name for that version of Russia) collapsed and became different countries, like Russia and Ukraine.
5. Russia's leaders did not want to give up and simply copy America, so Russia became a "post-communist" country. This means that it is a country that *used to be communist*, but also that it is a country that doesn't know what to do now that it is no longer communist.
6. Russia is gradually declining, and will soon no longer be a cardinal culture. Its population is dropping fast, so Russia is becoming emptier and poorer. For Russia's leader Vladimir Putin, this decline is a tragedy that must be resisted.
7. That is the main reason why Russia notoriously invaded its neighboring country Ukraine earlier this year.
8. Ukraine, which used to be a part of the Soviet Union, has been independent since **1991**, and has been invited to join the European Union and America's military alliance NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).
9. When Putin saw that this was happening, he decided to force Ukraine to stay in the "Russosphere" (the group of countries that Russia still controls).
10. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is already a major war that will become an "anchor fact" of future history. Many people in Asia and Africa rely on Russia and Ukraine for grain that they can no longer get, and energy (oil & gas) from Russia is being cut off to Europe, which will lead to misery for Europeans.

B. The Rise of Mother Russia

1. The story of how Russia became the country begins around the same time as Charlemagne.
2. Around the year **862 AD**, land occupied by a tribal people known as Slavs was invaded and conquered by Vikings (people from the northern region around Sweden).
3. The Viking leader Rurik established a new kingdom which he called "Kievan Rus." ("Rus" is a viking word of unknown meaning, "Kievan" refers to its capital city, Kiev, which is the capital of Ukraine today, although it is now spelled "Kyiv" and pronounced "keev," which is the way Ukrainians pronounce it.)

4. In between Russia and Europe for hundreds of years was an unsettled tribal region. Russia's cultural contact with Europe was minimal, and it evolved into a distinct culture on its own.

