

Understanding Contemporary Russia through Technology

Kindergarten – Fifth Grade Curriculum Unit

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A. Unit Purpose

The purpose of this unit is for Kindergarten to fifth grade English Language Learners (ELLs) to discover more about contemporary Russia. After completing the unit, students will have a better understanding of Russia's vast culture. Two quotes help to shape the activities for this unit:

1. "Diversity is the one true thing we have in common. Celebrate it every day." Anonymous
2. "If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples, then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas." George Bernard Shaw

Different activities will be presented throughout the unit to implement the teaching of lessons using technology. Students will have the opportunity to create cultural suitcases, connect with students via Skype, blogs, websites, and email, and view PowerPoint presentations over various aspects of Russian culture.

Students will be introduced to an assortment of topics that will expand their knowledge level of Russia and its culture. Also, students will experience guest speakers and field trips to enhance their understanding of the unit.

This unit is designed to give students a better understanding and appreciation of Russia. By the end of the unit, students will have a well-rounded perception of "Mother Russia."

B. Rationale for Unit

The teacher will work diligently to implement Howard Gardner's eight multiple intelligences and will incorporate higher-order thinking skills in each lesson taught. All eight intelligences will be included within some section of the unit to ensure that all students' needs will be met. All lessons will be created around Kansas State English for Speakers of Other Languages Standards which are derived from the Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages National Standards.

C. Graphic Organizers

Planning Activities to Meet Learning Styles

Verbal-Linguistic

- View and Discuss PowerPoint Presentations
- Discuss cultural projects (cultural suitcases and kits)
- Interviews with guest speakers/Skype

Mathematical-Logical

- Creating graphic organizers (Venn Diagram, Concept Map, etc)

Spatial

- Photo Tour
- Russia Maps
- Wordle
- Blog/website
- Graphic organizers

Bodily-Kinesthetic

- Learn a Russian Dance
- Cultural Kits

Musical

- Listen to Russian Children's Music
- Sing a Russian song

Interpersonal

- Group discussions about our cultures
- Interviewing guest speakers
- Interviewing/emailing/blogging friends around the world

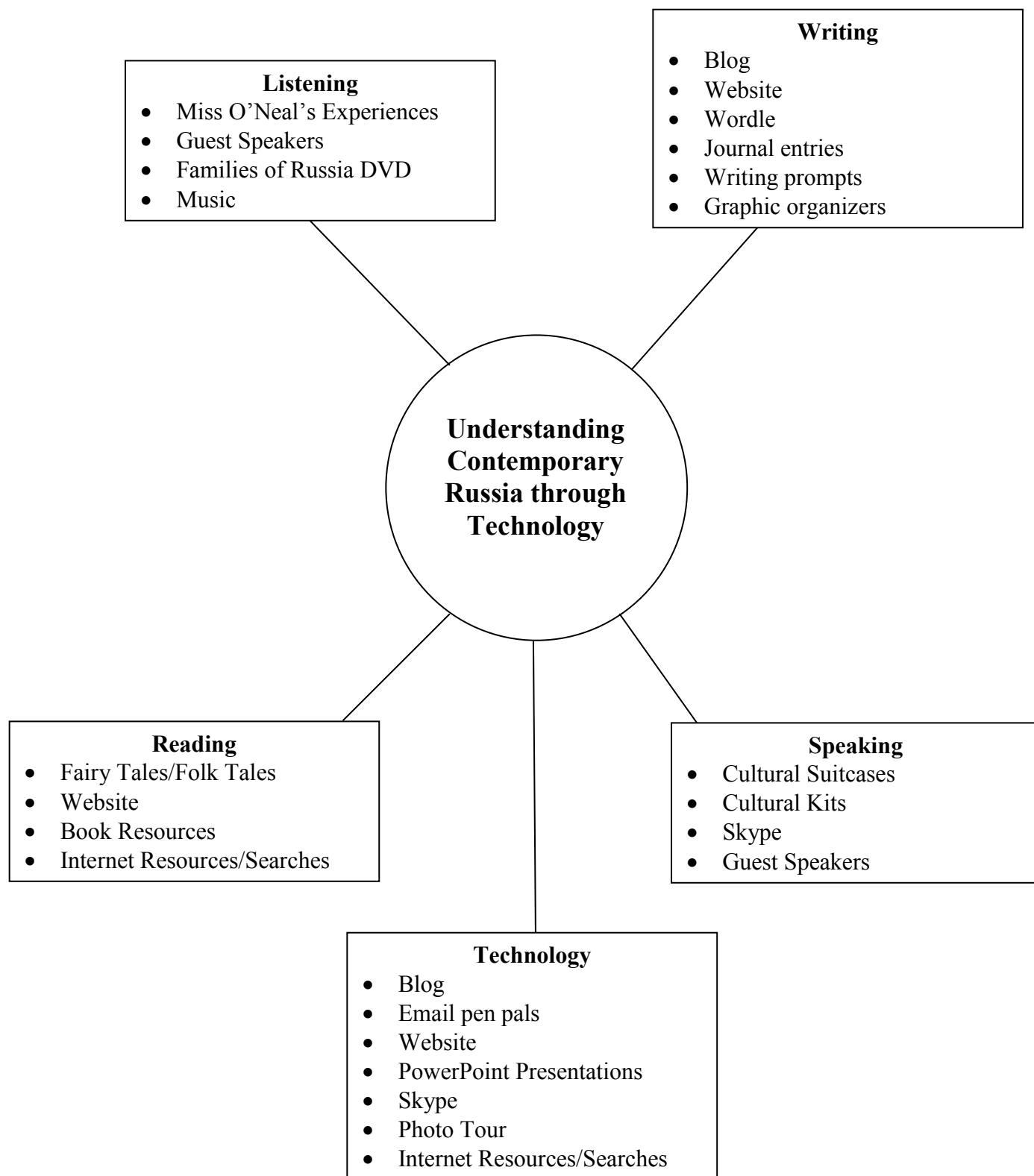
Intrapersonal

- Journal Writing

Naturalist

- Photo Tour of Russian ecology

Concept Map of Possible Activities



D. Outline of Unit

Pre-teaching:

Six Months – The teacher will contact field trip locations and the transportation director to plan for a field trip after the completion of the Russia unit. Fees, times, and dates will be discussed and finalized at this time.

One Month – The teacher will contact guest speakers to visit the classroom by sending personal letters asking for their assistance and describing the reasons/expectations for speaking. Also, the teacher will contact the field trip venue and transportation director double-checking times and dates.

One Week – The teacher will personally contact, by phone, the guest speakers to finalize all details about their presentations and answer any questions they may have regarding their talk. Letters will be sent to parents/guardians that highlight the upcoming unit and include a permission note to be signed by an adult to allow their child to go on the field trip(s). Notes will also be sent to the principal and other staff members to invite them to join in the festivities of our unit. The teacher will also start hanging up posters, put out appropriate reading materials, decorate bulletin boards, and make coloring packets for students connected to the Russian unit.

One Day – Introductory Activity

Post-teaching: Students will write thank you notes to guest speakers, field trip guides and bus drivers, and to parents/guardians and school personal who assisted with the Cultural Day Celebration. Also, students will share their writing projects and activities with other students in the school building.

Teaching Outline: 30 minute sessions a day for two – three weeks

Dear Staff,

We will be studying contemporary Russia through a thematic unit of study. I would love any suggestions and ideas you may have for lessons or projects.

At the end of the unit, we will host a Cultural Day Celebration. I want to personally invite each of you to stop by our classroom to admire the children's work and join in the festivities. It should be a wonderful day filled with fun, excitement, and guest participants. Thank you for your help and we hope to see you on this special day.

Sincerely,

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In the coming weeks your child will be participating in a two week study of contemporary Russia. During this time, students will learn about all aspects of Russia's culture. We will be completing various projects, hearing from guest speakers, and taking field trips. The final activity includes a Cultural Day Celebration. I would like to personally invite each of you to join us on _____ from _____ as we share our projects and celebrate the conclusion of our unit of study. Refreshments will be provided. Please complete and return the attached note to allow your child to attend the scheduled field trips and we hope to see you on _____.

Sincerely,

*Permission note must be turned in to allow child to attend the various field trips!

_____ I give my child permission to attend field trips under the supervision of his/her teacher.

_____ I do not give my child permission to attend field trips under the supervision of his/her teacher.

Child's Name (Please print) _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Emergency Contact #: _____

Date: _____

E. Unit Introductory Activities

1. The teacher will begin by reading *Russia ABCs: A book about the people and places of Russia* by Ann Berge.
2. Coloring packets will be distributed to students to use throughout the lesson when students have free time.
3. Students will participate in a cultural art activity to decorate the classroom and build excitement for the upcoming unit by answering the following question, “What does Russian culture look like to you?”

F. Unit Culminating Activities

Students will take part in a Cultural Day Celebration. All activities throughout the day will be tied to our unit theme of “Understanding Contemporary Russia through Technology.” Parents, teachers, and other students will be invited to stop by the classroom to see what fun we have planned. Activities include:

Art:	Display artwork for others to view.
Foods:	Sample Russian snacks and foods.
Games:	Play Russian games.
Poems/Riddles:	Read Russian folktales, poems picked by students.
Reading:	Read Russian folktales, poems picked by students.
Songs:	Listen to and sing Russian songs.
Speaking:	Describe for guests activities completed during unit.
Technology:	View PowerPoints, website, blogs completed during unit.
Writing:	Showcase writings.

G. Unit Evaluation

Part 1: The planning and implementation of the unit will be evaluated by student participation and interest/stimulation levels. Also, the teacher will give students rubrics to complete various projects.

Part 2: The teacher will distribute questionnaires to each student. The questionnaires will help the teacher better understand how the students felt about the overall unit and its relevance to each individual student.

Part 3: The teacher will complete a teacher evaluation form for each activity or lesson in the unit. The evaluation will show the effectiveness of each activity and lesson and will help to modify the unit for the future.

Student Questionnaire of Unit

Please answer the following questions about the Russia unit we recently finished. You do not need to put your name on the paper so please share your thoughts and ideas of the unit.

1. What was your favorite activity, lesson, field trip, guest speaker, or any part of the unit?
2. What was your least favorite part of the unit?
3. What is something you would change about the unit to make it better?
4. What field trip did you enjoy the most and why? The least and why?
5. Which guest speaker did you enjoy the most and why?
6. Any other comments:

Teacher Evaluation of Unit

Use the following questions to evaluate the effectiveness of each activity, and lesson for this unit. Make several comments so that the information will be easy to recall and correct when modifying this unit for future use.

What worked well for lesson/activity/field trip/speaker?

What didn't work, or didn't go as planned when performing this activity or lesson?

What should be changed to make this lesson or activity more effective?

Comments:

H. Lessons

Lesson #1

Title: What is my culture? What is contemporary Russia's culture?

Time: Two sessions

Standards:

Domain 1: LISTENING – English learners will listen to English to acquire language, comprehend and interpret meaning, and respond appropriately in interpersonal and academic contexts.

- Demonstrate comprehension of information presented orally.
- Listen to and participate in conversations and discussions.

Domain 2: SPEAKING – English learners will speak English fluently for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and nonverbal communication strategies.

- Express personal information and ideas.
- Participate in conversations and discussions on a variety of topics.

Objectives: The students will:

- Create cultural suitcases
- Describe for classmates what is in their cultural suitcases
- Discuss cultural suitcase of Russia
- Participate in cultural kit activities
- Fill in part of T-W-L chart

Materials:

- Suitcase graphic blown up to fill an 8½" X 11" piece of paper (one for each student)
- Crayons
- Markers
- Glue
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Teacher example of cultural suitcase
- Cultural suitcase of Russia
- Cultural kit of Russia including games, postcards, activities, books, CDs, toys, snacks, etc.
- T-W-L chart

Anticipatory Set: The teacher will play Russian music as students enter the classroom. As students sit, she will introduce a new unit for students asking students to listen and brainstorm ideas of what they will be studying. After a few minutes, the students will be shown the teacher's 'suitcase.' It will include shamrocks to represent her Irish heritage, books for her love of teaching and reading, suitcases for travel, a gorilla for Pittsburg State University, etc.

Modeling: Once students have had time to observe and discuss the teacher's example, students will be given materials to complete their own individual cultural suitcase. Each student will be instructed to use newspaper/magazine clippings, markers, crayons, etc. to fill their cultural suitcase with artifacts that represent their family/friends/native culture.

Check for Understanding: The teacher will monitor student participation as they complete the cultural suitcase and give assistance when needed. Younger students will be encouraged to find pictures while older students will be encouraged to include written words. Students will be asked to present their cultural suitcase to the group to provide speaking opportunities in English.

Guided Practice: After students have completed their individual cultural suitcases, the teacher will display a suitcase representing the Russian unit. Students will have an opportunity to discuss what is in the suitcase, and what they will be learning in the unit. The teacher will ask students to complete a T-W-L chart about Russia after looking at the cultural suitcase.

Closure: The students will open up the Russia cultural kit. In pairs, the students will complete various activities (reading, writing, listening activities) that give them opportunities to learn basic facts about Russia and its culture.

Lesson #2

Title: A Day in the Life of a Russian Child

Time: Two or three sessions

Standards:

Domain 1: LISTENING – English learners will listen to English to acquire language, comprehend and interpret meaning, and respond appropriately in interpersonal and academic contexts.

- Demonstrate comprehension of oral instructions, questions, and prompts.
- Demonstrate comprehension of information presented orally.
- Listen to and participate in conversations and discussions.

Domain 2: SPEAKING – English learners will speak English fluently for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and nonverbal communication strategies.

- Use Standard English grammar to speak clearly and accurately.
- Speak clearly using comprehensible pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.
- Express personal information and ideas.
- Participate in conversations and discussions on a variety of topics.

Domain 4: WRITING – English learners will write in English for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and Standard English writing conventions.

- Use vocabulary to communicate effectively in writing.
- Write to express personal information and ideas.

Objectives: The students will:

- View DVD
- Take a photo tour of Russian child's culture
- Compare their native culture with that of a Russian child's culture

Materials:

- *Families of Russia* DVD
- PowerPoint presentation of Russian photos
- Teacher example of journal writing
- Photos for students to view at their desk
- Journal paper/book
- Venn diagram
- SMARTBoard

Anticipatory Set: Students will watch *Families of Russia* DVD.

Guided Practice: After watching the DVD, the students will go on a photo tour of the teacher's trips to Russia. Using PowerPoint, the teacher will create a presentation of pictures focusing on a Russian's daily life. School, homes, transportation, food, games, work, etc. will be

highlighted for students to observe. Students will be encouraged to discuss what they see and how it is similar/different to their individual culture.

Modeling: Following the photo tour, the teacher will demonstrate for students how to keep a journal. The students will pick one photo from the tour (the teacher will have several of the photos printed for students to view at their desk) and pretend they are living in the picture. The students will describe what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. The journal writing will be as if they are visiting a location in Russia.

Check for Understanding: The teacher will monitor student progress and assist students as they complete their journal writings. Students will be encouraged to share their photos and corresponding journal entries when completed. Writings will be collected and kept to share with visitors during the culminating activities.

Closure: The students will create a Venn diagram of similarities and differences between the life of a Russian child and themselves. With various cultures being represented in our classroom, the teacher may use the SMARTBoard to create multiple diagrams for different cultures (ex. Saudi, Chinese, Guatemalan, German, etc.)

Extensions:

- Native Russians in the area could be contacted to come to the classroom as guest speakers to share their personal experiences while growing up in Russia. Students could prepare questions for the guest speaker(s) to answer while in the classroom.
- Take a field trip to visit a Russian tea room and grocery store. They would have an opportunity to taste Russian snacks and visit a typical European grocery store.
- Students could Skype and email with Russian children. Also, utilizing a blog or website, students could share activities, lessons, projects they are completing in their countries with students around the world.

Lesson#3

Title: Where in the World is Russia?

Time: Two sessions

Standards:

Domain 1: LISTENING – English learners will listen to English to acquire language, comprehend and interpret meaning, and respond appropriately in interpersonal and academic contexts.

- Demonstrate comprehension of oral instructions, questions, and prompts.
- Demonstrate comprehension of information presented orally.
- Listen to and participate in conversations and discussions.

Domain 2: SPEAKING – English learners will speak English fluently for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and nonverbal communication strategies.

- Participate in conversations and discussions on a variety of topics.

Domain 4: WRITING – English learners will write in English for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and Standard English writing conventions.

- Use vocabulary to communicate effectively in writing.
- Use writing conventions of Standard English to communicate clearly and accurately.
- Write to convey academic information.

Objectives: The students will:

- Determine ‘Where in the World Russia is’ using Google Earth
- Take a photo tour of Russian geography
- Complete a writing prompt about different Russian geographic regions

Materials:

- Google Earth
- SMARTBoard
- PowerPoint presentation of Russian photos
- Photos for students to view at their desk
- Writing prompts

Anticipatory Set: Using Google Earth, the students will answer the question, “Where in the World is Russia?”

Guided Practice: The teacher will take students thru a journey of Russian’s different geographical regions. Using photos taken on her trips to Russia, the teacher will create a PowerPoint presentation of various geographic regions to showcase for students.

Closure: Students will complete different writing prompts about Russia’s various geographic regions (Ex. Mountain vs. Coastal region, Siberia vs. farmland, etc). The teacher will create the writing prompts and distribute to students to complete. She will also include pictures for students to visualize the different regions being represented.

Lesson #4

Title: Russian Folk and Fairy Tales

Time: Two or three sessions

Standards:

Domain 1: LISTENING – English learners will listen to English to acquire language, comprehend and interpret meaning, and respond appropriately in interpersonal and academic contexts.

- Demonstrate comprehension of information presented orally.
- Listen to and participate in conversations and discussions.

Domain 2: SPEAKING – English learners will speak English fluently for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and nonverbal communication strategies.

- Express personal information and ideas.
- Communicate academic information with clarity and fluency.
- Participate in conversations and discussions on a variety of topics.

Domain 3: READING – English learners will read English to acquire language and comprehend, analyze, interpret, and evaluate a variety of literary and informational texts.

- Demonstrate comprehension of informational and literary texts.
- Demonstrate reading fluency.

Domain 4: WRITING – English learners will write in English for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and Standard English writing conventions.

- Use vocabulary to communicate effectively in writing.
- Write to convey academic information.

Objectives: The students will:

- Read Russian stories
- Compare Russian and English stories
- Create a Wordle of words describing different Russian stories shared throughout the lesson

Materials:

- Russian books and stories (see book resources in K. Extra Activities)
- Internet

Anticipatory Set: Before class begins, the teacher will place multiple Russian stories on student desks. When students arrive, they will be instructed to look through the books and look for similarities/differences to stories they have read before. The books will be in English and Russian.

Guided Practice: The students will read Russian stories as a group, in small groups, with partners, or individually. This is an opportunity for students to explore many different types of

Russian stories, folk tales, fairy tales, etc. Students will be encouraged to pick stories that interest them. The teacher will routinely work with different groups of students discussing what they have read. At the end of each session, the teacher will bring students back together as a whole group and discuss similarities/differences in the Russian texts to those in English.

Closure: After completing the activities, students will create a Wordle with words describing the various Russian folk and fairy tales shared during this lesson. Wordles will be collected and kept to share with visitors during the culminating activities.

Extensions:

- Students could complete story maps of Russian and English stories.
- Guest speakers could be invited to read stories in Russian. Students could ask the speakers questions about the stories.
- Students could research different stories and their origin. Also, they could research if other cultures have similar stories as Russia and the United States.
- Attend a ballet performance of a Russian story/tale.

Lesson #5

Title: Researching Russia

Time: Three or four sessions

Standards:

Domain 2: SPEAKING – English learners will speak English fluently for a variety of interpersonal and academic purposes using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and nonverbal communication strategies.

- Use vocabulary to communicate effectively in speaking.
- Express personal information and ideas.
- Participate in conversations and discussions on a variety of topics.

Domain 3: READING – English learners will read English to acquire language and comprehend, analyze, interpret, and evaluate a variety of literary and informational texts.

- Demonstrate comprehension of informational and literary texts.
- Use strategies to derive meaning from text.

Objectives: The students will:

- Research the internet for various ideas of Russian activities
- Complete projects for a culminating activities day
- Share projects with peers and visitors on culminating activities day

Materials:

- Internet
- Various materials needed to complete projects

Anticipatory Set: The students will discuss the upcoming culminating activities day. Students will be encouraged to invite their families and teachers to attend. Students will brainstorm ideas of activities to present at the event.

Guided Practice: Using the ideas from the brainstorm session, students will research activities, games, etc. to present for visitors during the culminating activities day. All activities must be approved by the teacher before starting. The teacher will locate resources needed when students have their projects approved. The students will use the internet, books, guest speakers, etc. to locate and create activities.

Check for Understanding: The teacher will monitor student progress and assist in researching projects. Students will check in with the teacher at the end of each session to show progress and to discuss the next day's goals.

Closure: Students will be allowed to showcase for their peers their game, song, dance, etc. Time will be set aside for all students to present their project for the culminating activities day.

Extension:

- Visit Pittsburg State University to do further research about Russia. Utilizing the resources at Leonard H. Axe Library or professors in the Modern Languages and Literature department, students could expand their knowledge of Russia.

- Invite Russians studying at Pittsburg State University to teach students their favorite games, songs, dances from their childhood.

I. Field Trip Possibilities

1. Pittsburg State University Modern Languages
Modern Languages and Literature Department
Leonard H. Axe Library
1701 S. Broadway
Pittsburg, KS 66762
2. Russian Ballet
Kansas City Ballet
Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
1601 Broadway
Kansas City, MO 64106
3. Tea Room and European Grocery Store
Country Keepsakes & Tea Room
501 Main St.
Belton, MO 64012

European Delights
8841 West 95th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212

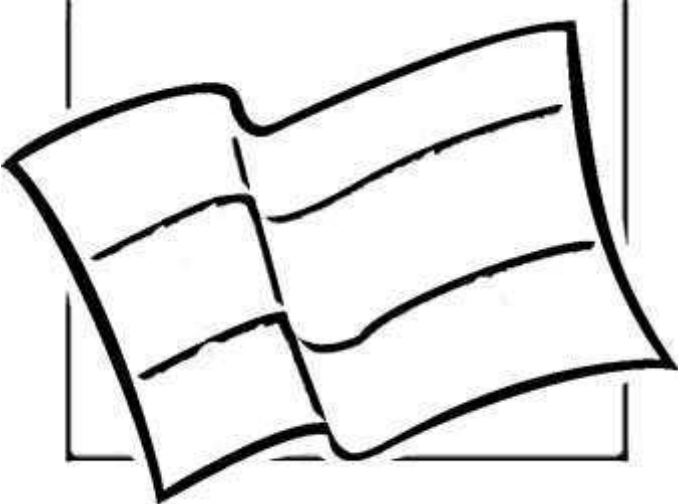
J. Guest Speaker Possibilities

1. Russian Parents
Contact current and past parents of students to visit school as guest speakers.
2. Professors/students from Pittsburg State University
Russian native to speak about home culture/answer questions we may have about Russia
3. Skype with Russian students and teachers
Make contacts through Russian trip experiences or through ePals.com

K. Extra Activities

1. Games
Boaire
P'yanitsa
Fipe
Who is Stronger?
Cossack & Robbers
2. Coloring Pages

Russian Flag



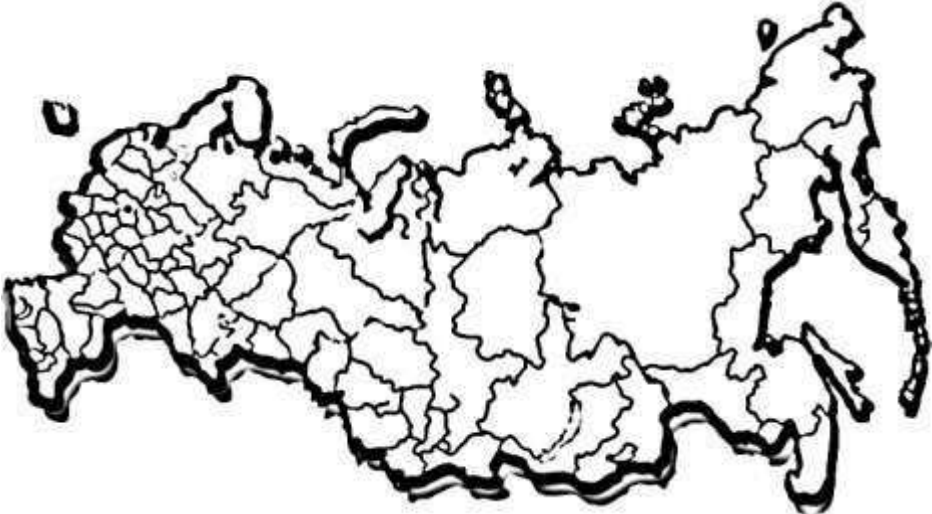
St. Basil's Cathedral



Capital of Russia – Moscow



Map of Russia



Matryoshkas



3. Maps of Russia

<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/ru.htm>

<http://www.russiamap.org/>

Google Earth – <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>

4. Book Resources

Baba Yaga & the Little Girl - Katya Arnold

Babushka Baba Yaga - Patricia Polacco

Babushka's Doll - Patricia Polacco

Eloise in Moscow - Kay Thompson

My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World - Becky Reyher

Peter the Great - Diane Stanley

Rechenka's Eggs - Patricia Polacco

Russia ABCs: A Book about the People and the Places of Russia - Ann Berge

Russian Girl: Life in an Old Russian Town - Russ Kendall

The Firebird - Jane Yolen

The Magic Nesting Doll - Jacqueline K. Ogburn

The Memory Coat - Elvira Woodruff

Thunder Cake - Patricia Polacco

Too Many Babas - Carolyn Croll

Vassilisa the Wise: A Tale of Medieval Russia - Josepha Sherman

5. Web Resources

<http://countries.mrdonn.org/russia.html>

<http://www.child-tea-party-game-ideas.com/russian-tea-party-games.html>

http://kids.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Games_Children_Play_in_Russia

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/russia/>

<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/hh/goplaces/main/0,28375,595847,00.html>

<http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/russia.html>

<http://www.wordle.net>

<http://www.epals.com>

<http://onealpurplepower.blogspot.com>