

Summary Description

This is the tenth in a series of eleven lessons that introduces the student to European American history.

Learning Objectives

To have the student learn a few key facts about Russian American history and culture.

Approximate Time for Lesson

40 minutes

Suggested Maturity Level for Instruction

Student should be able to read simple words and perform simple addition and subtraction. Also, student should be able to sit still and engage in one-on-one conversation.

References:

"Russian Americans", Paul Robert Magocsi, Multicultural America -

<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Pa-Sp/Russian-Americans.html>

"10 Most Famous Russians in the USA", CDI Russia Weekly, May 13, 2004 -

<http://www.cdi.org/russia/306-22.cfm>

Materials Needed

1. Internet Access - Pull up the following:
 - a. Russia Map (go to http://map.rin.ru/index_e.html)
 - b. United States Map (go to <http://maps.google.com/maps>)
 - c. Pacific Rim Map (go to <https://www.geo-carto.com/images/D/PACIFIC-ATLANTIC3156D.jpg>)
 - d. Alaska Map (go to <http://www.travelalaska.com/images/maps/AlaskaMap.jpg>)
 - e. Picture of Winona Ryder (go to <http://www.imdb.com/media/rm3143014656/ch0008131>)

Preparation

Make sure you have materials open, printed and/or available prior to beginning the lesson.

Script

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Teacher: Last week, we learned about the Norwegian and Swedish Americans, who moved to the United States because to find better opportunities for their families. Today, we will learn about the Russian Americans. The Russian Americans come from the country of Russia.

2. Teacher: You're going to learn that the Russians came to the United States for better opportunities for their families, but they had some interesting situations going on in Russia that made some of them move to the United States.
3. Teacher: So are you ready to learn about the Russians? [\[Get positive response from Student and begin lesson\]](#).

Lesson (30 minutes)

1. Teacher: Now, before we start, did you know that Russia is the biggest country in the world? Well it is. Here's a map of Russia [\[show Student Russia Map\]](#). Anyway, the first Russians actually came over long ago to the United States, to the State of Alaska. Alaska is way up here [\[point to Alaska in the Pacific Rim Map\]](#) and the most eastern part of Russia is right here [\[point to the closest point in Russia which is nearest to Alaska in the Pacific Rim Map\]](#)...see how close that is to Alaska? Here's even a closer map of Russia and Alaska. [\[Show Student the Alaska Map and point to where Russia is located, the Chutok region - zoom in by scrolling anywhere over the map and clicking the mouse button - when you zoom in you will be able to see the detail much better, as well as being able to see the "Russia/U.S. demarcation line\]](#).
2. Teacher: Anyway, the Russians actually claimed Alaska as part of Russia long ago. For the Russians, Alaska was great for hunting animals and selling their fur for money. This was really the first move for the Russians into North America (actually, the Russians sold Alaska to the United States, which then made Alaska a part of the United States).
3. Teacher: Well, the next time the Russians moved over to the United States was not to Alaska, but mostly to northeast side of the United States. Some Russians moved for religious freedom. Religious freedom means that you can believe in anything or anyone such as God, or something or someone different than God, or even more than one god. Anyways, others moved because they didn't like the new way that their country was being run by other Russians, who took power away from the Russians that were running the country before. Also, some Russians moved to the United States because they were fighting against the Germans in a war. But the biggest reason for moving was because money was too hard to make in their country and they heard that it was easier to provide food and clothes for their families in the United States.
4. Teacher: So for these reasons, the Russians moved to the United States. And like I said before, most of the moved to the northeast side of the United States [\[point to Northeastern United States on the United States Map\]](#).
5. Teacher: But one thing different about the Russians that came to the United States compared to other Europeans that came to the United States was that the Russian Americans worked in business, science, or some other job that paid more than farming. This was because a lot of the Russians, when you compared them to the other Europeans, had more education than the other Europeans did and so, they didn't have to work in farming. Having more education means that you went to more school than someone else.

6. Teacher: And finally, like all the Europeans we've talked about, there are many successful Russian Americans in every kind of job today that Russian Americans can be proud of. Some famous Russian Americans are Igor Sikorsky, who invented a very important vehicle that flies but is not the airplane. Can you guess what that is? [\[Engage the Student in conversation. If the Student does not say "helicopter", then give another hint that the flying vehicle has propellers on the top to make it fly\]](#).
7. Teacher: That's right. Igor Sikorsky invented the helicopter! And even today, the Sikorsky helicopter is one of the best in the world...even the President of the United States flies in a Sikorsky helicopter.
8. Teacher: Something else was invented by a Russian American by the name of Vladimir Zworykin. You may not have heard his name, but I'm sure you have heard of what he invented. This invention is something that almost everyone has today in their homes, in fact most people have more than one of these in their homes and they watch it everyday...do you know what this is? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that the invention is the television\]](#).
9. Teacher: That's right. Vladimir Zworykin was one of three people to invent the television. So the next time you watch T.V., you can thank Vladimir Zworykin for inventing it!
10. Teacher: Other well known Russian Americans are actor Harrison Ford, who played the role of Indiana Jones in all the Indiana Jones movies (he is part Russian), and actress Winona Ryder, who played the role of Lydia, the daughter of the family that moves into a haunted house with friendly ghosts in the movie, Beetle Juice. Here is a picture of Winona Ryder in Beetle Juice. [\[Show Student picture of Winona Ryder in Beetle Juice\]](#).
11. Teacher: OK - time for review. Get in front of the class. [\[Have the Student stand in front of you \(consider inviting other members of the family also to set the stage\) and ask her the following:](#)
 - a. [Why did Russian Americans move to the United States? Any one of the following: 1\) to find better opportunities for their families, 2\) to find religious freedom, 3\) to escape war, and 4\) to escape from the new way of running their country, taken over by other Russians](#)
 - b. [What was something different about the Russians compared to the other Europeans when they first came to the United States? The Russians did not work in farming. Instead they worked in business, science or another job that required some education.](#)
 - c. [What was something used almost everyday that was invented by a Russian American? The television](#)

[Teacher reviews any questions that the Student missed\]](#).

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People of America - European Americans Lesson 10 - Russian - Part I (4/29/09)

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Teacher: [\[Clapping\]](#) You did GREAT! Wonderful job! Are there any questions that you have regarding the Russian Americans? [\[Engage in conversation with the Student and resolve further questions by researching the Internet\]](#).