

## **Preparation Ideas For the Moscow Nights Residency**

Over the past few years we have developed this residency packet in order to better prepare students for the upcoming weeks. We have found that the better prepared the students are, the more fun they have and they gain a better appreciation of the culture and country. The ideal way to cover the material is as a cohesive unit incorporating the theme throughout: into social studies, geography, history, literature, government, art, music, and even math! For example, this may be a good time to introduce the concept of currency exchange using the math applications already mastered.

Initially we suggest doing a country report about Russia either as a classroom project, individual reports, or as a combination. We hope that the outline provided will lead to discussions, projects etc. The Franco book is ideal for the K-3's. A minimum of 4 weeks should be used at this grade level. For children from the fourth grade on, a 4-8 week unit should be implemented to include background, projects and activities and to become aware of myriad current events unfolding in Russia today. The two books by Susan Finney are very useful for this.

In answering the outline questions we encourage the use of materials that are readily available both as a source of information and as a way of developing research skills. A partial list of source material can be found on the following pages. Another marvelous source of photos and information is travel brochures available at travel agencies.

We have also found that the use of audio/ video materials such as Peter and The Wolf, Nutcracker Ballet, The Firebird, etc. (also check in your area for live performances of these popular works) reinforces the material.

Reading Russian Folk stories provides an insight into Russian superstitions, religion, and humor. We have included the folk story of the Giant Turnip (the Repka in Russian) in the form of a play. The Repka (Pronounced Ree-ep-ka) is as familiar to Russian children as Cinderella and the like are to us. There are also a few project and discussion ideas following the story.

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## *Important Note to Teachers*

Please use this study guide in preparation for your Moscow Nights program. *At the minimum we ask that students learn the English words to the song Volga Boatmen.* The words can be found on page 6, of this study guide. We will invite the children sing along with us during the concert. For more ideas and information for your program or residency, please feel free to use the resources found on our school web site. Here we have ideas for country reports, projects etc. involving history, literature, customs ... there are also *many* photos. Perhaps include this site as part of your computer classes and let the children explore. We can be found on the worldwide web at:

**[www.RussianFolk.com/studyguide.htm](http://www.RussianFolk.com/studyguide.htm)**

If you have questions regarding this or any future Moscow Nights visit please contact our agent:

Moscow Nights, Inc  
(216) 214-0828

You may contact Moscow Nights directly, via the web, if you are interested in purchasing any of our audio or video recordings. **[www.RussianFolk.com](http://www.RussianFolk.com)**

# Who's Who In Moscow Nights?



Hi! I'm **Vitaliy Bezrodnov**. I play the **Bayan** and will serve as your speaker/instructor. Who would ever have thought that someday I would be a speaker for American audiences? When I arrived in the U.S. I didn't know a single word of English! Well here I am.

I was born in the southern, desert region of Russia. (We had camels and scorpions in my village.) When I was nine years old, I was selected to go to a special children's school for gifted musicians. At this school, I had my regular subjects like reading and math, and also many hours of music lessons. I learned a lot, but sometimes it was very difficult. On top of my homework, I was expected to practice my bayan for 2 hours every day. Sometimes I wished that I could quit and spend my after school time playing and doing sports. Now I can look back and see how lucky I was. I'm glad my parents didn't let me quit. I went on to become an expert at my instrument and I have been able to travel around the world sharing my music. It is truly a pleasure to be able to play for you!

I'm **Oleg Kruglyakov**, the **Prima Balalaika** player. I'm from Siberia. Have you ever heard of it? It is the huge, cold, northern section of Russia. To give you an idea of how big it is, think of this. The Siberian forest alone is as big as the whole United States.

I guess I've always known that I wanted to be a musician. As a very young child I attended a balalaika concert in my village. I was so overcome by the beautiful sounds I heard, that I knew instantly this was the instrument for me. I started music lessons, worked extremely hard (sometime practicing for up to seven hours a day, in high school) and, went on to become a professor of music. I have competed in music competitions around the world and won many prizes. My music is so much a part of myself that my balalaika is virtually an extension of me!



Priviet! That's "Hi" in Russian. I'm **Boris Kipchakov**. I play the **contrabass balalaika**. It's the granddaddy of them all. I come from Moscow. This city of ten million people is the capital of Russia. Originally, I was a trumpet player. I played in many brass bands including the Red Army Brass Orchestra. This is the most prestigious brass orchestra in the country.

I can't quite remember when, but sometime during high school, I also developed an interest in folk music and decided to give the contrabass balalaika a whirl. Why this particular instrument? Well, to be honest it looked like a lot of fun, and you know what? It is! While the other two guys in Moscow Nights are busy playing serious melodies and complicated variations, I get to play the cool improvisations. I guess my role is as the spice. Spice is always nice. My favorite song in the program is the Cossack one called Varinka. In this song I get to make the sound of running horses on my instrument. It sounds so real it always gives me goose bumps. See if you can feel those galloping horses too. Hopa!



## **Russian Folk Music Overview**

What is folk music? Folk music at one time was the popular music of its day, but it is more than something from the past. Songs that express hopes, fears, cares, and concerns of a people can reach across the generations and are timeless.

One of the fundamental aspects of folk songs is that they came from personal experience, and show us a glimpse of a particular time, place and people. The songs were not composed by one person, they just grew out of the expressions of the people and no one knows who first sang them. Another is that they were passed from one person to the next. In earlier times, the common people could not read or write, so the songs had to be passed down from generation to generation orally. They survived because they became part of a group's oral tradition and were handed down from parents to children.

The folk music of Russia is very special. Why? Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia had only folk and church music! There were no musical scholars or composers to make music the property of the upper classes. Russia's music truly belonged to the people. For ages, there were only the strikingly beautiful folk tunes of this gigantic country. The songs consist of legends set to a music that is both, sad and lonely, yet wild and colorful.

Folk songs from around the world have several universal themes, among these are: love, war, patriotic, work, nature and the world around us, and lullabies. Russian folk songs are no exception. Let's explore a few of these themes and learn about some of the songs that you will be hearing in the Moscow Nights' concert!

## Love Songs

First let's look at love. More songs are written about love than about any other theme: From pop/rock, to country/western, to opera/classical, and to folk songs. Within the category of love, we find songs dealing with many different kinds of love – happy/sad, lost/found...Can you think of folk songs that you may know that fit these different types? If you have trouble, think of songs like *Oh My Darling Clementine*. Moscow Nights will be playing several different types of love songs.

One love song that you will be hearing is called **Korobochka**. This song is of the happy/found type. In the story we find a young peddler going to the market to sell his goods. On his way he passes a field where peasant girls are harvesting. One of these girls catches his eye and it is love at first sight! The peddler completely loses his head over this girl. He forgets about the market and gives her his box of goods just for one kiss, from her.

The music for this song is built upon a very simple theme that will be demonstrated for you. Listen for it to repeat throughout the song as the story unfolds through the music. At first the music is calm and carefree, as is the young man. It then builds as he notices the girl and finally takes off at a frenzied pace as the peddler realizes that he is in love. You will be able to feel the mood change as the song progresses – your feet will start tapping on their own and you will feel like clapping. Please, if you like, join us in clapping and tapping. Folk music is about pulling out our emotions in a free way. How is this different from classical music, which also plays with our emotions?

# Corobochka

Russian Folk Song



## War Songs

Unfortunately, war seems to have been a part of life, for as far back as history has been recorded. It follows, that the emotional impact of war has created an abundance of war type songs, worldwide. There are songs about invasions, revolutions, and foreign wars to name a few. In general, war songs are different than patriotic songs. Can you think how? Try to name some war songs and some patriotic songs and see how the words may differ. Is *Yankee Doodle* different than *America the Beautiful*?

Russia is a country with a long history of invasion and war. For many, many years they had to fight off invasions by the Tatars, the Turks and others. The special group of soldiers, who guarded the borders against invaders from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, was called **Cossacks**. The word “Cossack” comes from the Turkish language and means – 1) adventurer 2) predatory horseman, and refers to a distinct group of people, from the Steppe area of Russia. During the time of the czars, or Russian kings, a boy of a Cossack family would learn to be a great horseman and then go into mandatory military service from the ages of 18 to 50, as a cavalryman.

In times of peace, the Cossacks made their living by means of agriculture, fishing and trade, but in times of war they were fearless soldiers. These wonderful horsemen used whips and sabers as their chief weapons. They were easily recognizable, sitting high up on their horses, with great tall hats on their heads, and long sabers at their sides.

What do you think life was like for these soldiers and their families? As border soldiers they would have seen much more fighting action than regular army soldiers, as the borders of Russia are vast. Russia is three and a half times bigger than the United States! Imagine trying to guard that much territory from invaders. More often than not, the Cossack soldiers were gone for years at a time. Many of the Cossack folk songs deal with this theme of separation and longing for a return to home.

Moscow Nights will play a very traditional Cossack soldier’s song for you. It is called **Varinka**. In this song, the soldier dreams of his young wife, Varinka, and of the time that he will return home to her, hopefully alive. Through the music, try to hear the hoof beats of the horses and the shouts of the soldiers.

## Work Songs

Work songs are a part of American and other folk cultures. You may not even realize that you are already familiar with “work-type” folk songs, but you are. How about, *I’ve Been Working on the Railroad*, just to name one.

For centuries the Russian people had been oppressed, made to work as farmers and laborers, often to the point of death. They tried to ease their lot by singing songs, songs that they sang with the rhythm of their work, to make the time pass more quickly. Can you think of people in American history that may have sung work songs? Can you name some of their songs?

You may also be familiar with a Russian work song, *Volga Boatmen*. This is probably the most famous of all Russian folk songs. The melody often appears in books used in music lessons or compilations of world songs.

The Volga River is the longest river in Russia, running for 2325 miles. It’s importance, in Russia, ranks with that of the Mississippi River, in America. The “burlaks” or bargemen originally sang this song. A barge is a large, flat boat that is used to transport things on a river.

As we all know river water flows in only one direction. This creates a problem with river trade. How do the barges return to their starting point with the current running in the opposite direction? Before the invention of steam engines it was necessary to manually pull the barges back up river. American children have often heard the song *The Erie Canal*, that tells about mules pulling barges in the canal, across New York State, in the 1800’s. In Russia, people pulled the barges. Compare the words of these American and Russian work songs that deal with like subjects. How are they the same? How are they different?

The song *Volga Boatmen* expresses the hundreds of years of suffering, of these human beasts of burden, as they dragged the boats along the river, against the current. Through the simplicity and beauty of this chant, of the toiling boatmen, you can imagine, in your mind, these men trudging, under great weight, to reach their destination. While *Moscow Nights* plays this song, close your eyes and try to picture these people who lived long ago in old Russia.

## Volga Boatmen

Andante

**Chorus**

On we go, on we go, One more pull and  
on we go.

**Fine**

1. See the birch-tree's bend-ing bough!  
2. Now the mark we're pass-ing by,

Near the goal we're draw-ing now: Pull then the strong-er,  
To the next we turn the eye: Dis-tance may leng-then,  
D.C. al Fine

one mo-ment long-er, To the bur-sing den as bend-ing low.  
cour-age will strength-en, If we sing as on we go.

Moderato

## Erie Canal

I've got an old mule and her name is Sal, Fif-teen miles on the Er-ie Can-al. She's a  
good old work-er and a good old pal,- Fif-teen miles on the Er-ie Can-al - We've hauled some bar-ges  
in our day, Filled with lum-ber, coal, and hay, - And ev-'ry inch of the way we know From  
**Chorus**  
Al-ban-y to Buf-fa-lo - Low bridge, ev-'ry bod-y down! Low bridge, for now we're  
go-ing thro' town. You can always tell your neighbor. If you ev-er nav-i-ga-tes on the Er-ie Can-al -  
You can always tell your pal,

## Russian Folk Instruments That You Will Be Hearing

The Russians have folk instruments brought down from very early times, which are found today in no other country. These include instruments from the percussion, wind, and string families.

### ~PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS~

As in most countries, the percussion instruments are the earliest known of the folk instruments. Often very simple in form, they were used to keep a steady beat. What are some percussion instruments that you are familiar with? Think hard. Some may be from other countries.

Moscow Nights will play on three different percussion instruments. The first one will be well known to you. It is the **tambourine**. Did you include the tambourine in your list of percussion instruments?

The second is called **Loshki**. Loshki is the Russian word for spoon, but Russian music spoons are different than the normal metal eating spoons, although these spoons were originally used for eating too. They are made from the wood of the birch tree. Are you familiar with birch trees? They grow throughout Russia, and are very common. The birch is the national tree of Russia and many songs have been written about it.

Much work goes into making a birch loshki. First the spoon is hand carved, from the wood. It will have a wide, round end and a long thin handle. After carving, it will be dipped into a solution of liquid metal, to protect the wood and to give it a metallic sheen. Next it is carefully painted with several layers of shiny paint. Finally it is decorated with intricate designs usually involving a floral theme.

When used as an instrument, loshki are used in sets of three spoons. Two spoons are held in one hand and are clapped together, much as Spanish castanets are. (Did you include Castanets in your list of percussion instruments?) The third spoon is held in the other hand and beats the other two spoons. It is a lot of fun playing the loshki but it takes quite a bit of work to become a master of this very old percussion instrument.



The last percussion instrument that Moscow Nights will use is called **Treshotki**. This is a string of wooden clappers used to produce a slapping sound. It is a very simple instrument to make and to play but it can be used to create many different sound effects. No one is quite sure of the origin of this instrument but it has been around for a very long time, as evidenced by ancient Russian folk art pictures.



### ~WIND INSTRUMENTS~

The oldest of the Russian wind instruments is the **Birch Bark Whistle**. Have you ever picked up a blade of grass, held it between your thumbs and blown on it to produce a whistling sound. This is similar to the birch bark whistle. The bark of a birch tree is soft and thin, resembling a piece of sliced cork. To play it, a fresh piece of bark is held between your fingers and air from your mouth is passed over it to produce a variety of sounds. Listen carefully for the birch bark whistle. It is used in several songs. What does it sound like? Does it imitate something from nature?



Another, ancient wind instrument is the **Razhok**. This is a type of folk flute made from hollowed out wood and capped at the end by a cow's horn. It uses a reed to produce a loud wailing sound. Traditionally, shepherds and cowboys, signaled one another from across huge fields, using the razhok. Different sound patterns were used to mean different things: a wolf is coming, time for lunch, let's call it a day. Over time these patterns became more elaborate and the signals evolved into the folk songs we hear today.

Have you ever seen an **accordion**? Did you know that an accordion is part of the wind instrument family? In this instrument the air is produced by pushing and pulling on a set of bellows and the sound is produced by pushing buttons, that will in turn open valves and move the air across a set of reeds. Many countries around the world use accordions in their folk music. You have probably seen the piano accordion before. Russian folk music also uses an accordion but it is different from the piano type. It is known as a **Bayan**, which is a button accordion Russians love the Bayan and it is an integral part of every Russian folk group. You will find out many interesting things about the Bayan during the concert.

The Chromatic Button Accordion was invented in Vienna in 1829, and introduced to Russian musicians, by Austrian merchants, trading in Russia, around that time. Russian craftsman made changes and improvements to the original design until it evolved into the instrument that can be seen here. Today, all professional bayans are still made by hand. It takes 1 master craftsman and 2 apprentices approximately 1 year to make one of these 50-pound instruments!

When this accordion was introduced to Russia, people felt that the sound it made was so emotional as to be able to tell a story just through music alone. The people who heard it began referring to it as a Bayan. Historically, a Bayan was the name given to Russian minstrels, over 1000 years ago. A minstrel was a poet/singer who traveled from place to place singing and reciting, usually to the accompaniment of an instrument. In this way history and folk stories were passed on from generation to generation.



**Can you see a difference between these two accordions?**

## ~String Instruments~

The **balalaika** is a string instrument that is inextricably associated with Russia. Since the wildly popular movie *Dr. Zhivago*, people here automatically associate the balalaika with Russian music. It dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is of Tatar origin. It arrived in Russia, from Asia at the time of the Mongolian invasion. In medieval times, the balalaika was used by traveling entertainers, who passed it along to the peasants. They used it to accompany folk songs and country-dances. Later, noblemen adopted the instrument and it found a place in the czar's palace as a featured solo instrument. In 1888, an orchestra of approximately fifty balalaikas was founded in St. Petersburg, by a man called Vassiliy Andreyev, who began the movement, which resulted in the formation of large orchestras of folk instruments both in Russia and elsewhere.

The balalaika is a triangular instrument made from birch wood. The principle instrument sounds something like a banjo. It usually has three strings, two of which are tuned to the same note. How many strings do guitars and banjos usually have? How are they tuned? Balalaikas come in six different sizes. From the smallest to the largest, they are: piccolo, prima, secondary, alto, bass and contrabass. The "prima" balalaika, typically the melody instrument in an ensemble or orchestra, is played with the right index finger; the others are usually played with a plectrum or leather pick.

Moscow Nights uses two sizes of balalaikas. The prima balalaika that you will hear will be the smaller of the two. Watch carefully as it is strummed. No pick is being used. How do you think this feels on your fingers? The big balalaika is the Contrabass or granddaddy. This balalaika is similar to the string bass in classical orchestras and jazz bands. What differences do you notice about the way the two instruments are played?



# **Musical Craft Ideas**

*(for elementary children)*

## **~Tambourines~**

You will need per student:

2 plastic disposable plastic plates  
hole punch  
4 pipe cleaners  
8 small jingle bells

This is what you do:

Punch 4 holes in each plate  $\frac{1}{4}$  distance apart. Thread the pipe cleaners through the holes to connect the two plates. Put 2 bells on each pipe cleaner and twist to close. Now you have a tambourine that you can shake and hit just like the real thing.

## **~Loshki spoons~**

You will need per student:

3 plastic spoons  
Permanent markers

This is what you do:

Using the markers, color the spoons with whatever design you like. Gently tap and clap the spoons or use them as pretty decorations. Caution: Do not use painted spoons for eating!

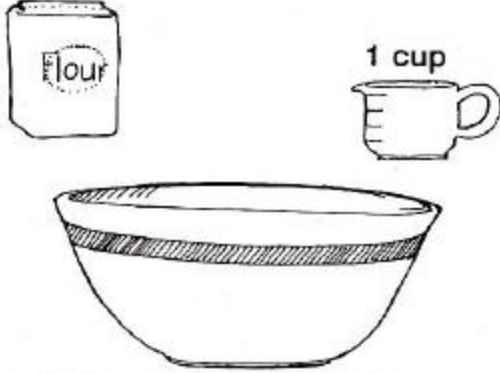
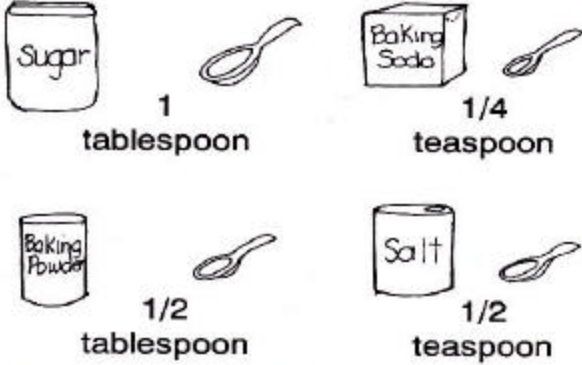
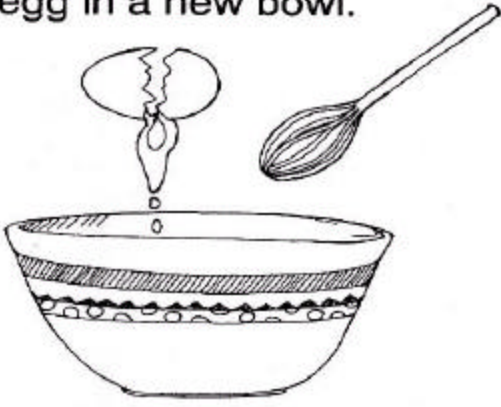
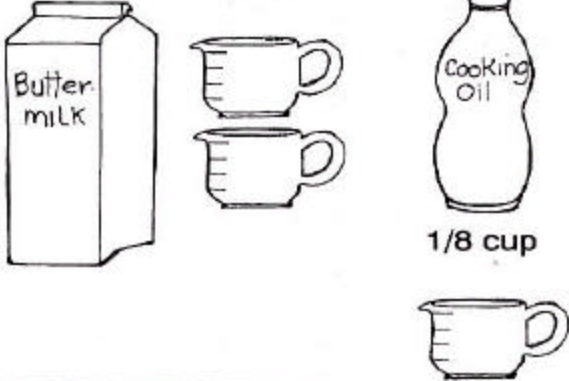
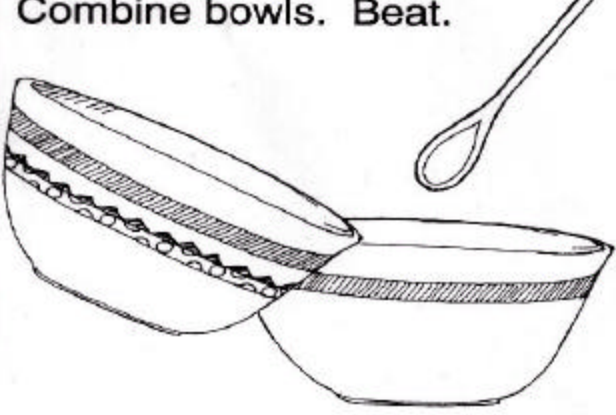

# Moscow Nights - Word Search

R A T A M B O U R I N E R T I H B O U  
 G U K S Q V U I U M T C R I O X C J P  
 D Y S L P Y O X I A U U Y E V C Z V R  
 A Q Z S V B D B S W R E T Z V T B W I  
 B C O K I Q C V B X F W Y G O G O P M  
 C O N T R A B A S S B A L A L A I K A  
 S S A R Z D H F F I U M O E G I B K B  
 D S F E J U K L I Y V R V Z A R X J A  
 Q A X S C Y W I K N N A Y A B E J H L  
 Z C X H N G K O H Z A R W C O B F G A  
 Z K G O H O P E S M I E P H A I I M L  
 S Q C T M O S C O W N I G H T S L Q A  
 O G J K S X F D L W G L Y K M S L U I  
 L A C I H T J E Q R T N N W A N A D K  
 O F H Z S A X M D V B R E K N T F R A

Words to find	Definitions
RUSSIA	<i>(Country in Eastern Europe in Northern Asia)</i>
TAMBOURINE	<i>(Percussion Instrument with Jangling metal disks)</i>
BAYAN	<i>(Russian Accordion)</i>
RAZHOK	<i>(Cow horn flute)</i>
MOSCOW NIGHTS	<i>(Russian Folk song and Band Name)</i>
CONTRABASS BALALAIKA	<i>(Largest Balalaika)</i>
SOLO	<i>(Musical Passage played by one person)</i>
COSSACK	<i>(Famous Cavalry Soldiers)</i>
TRESHOTKI	<i>(Percussion Instrument made of wooden clappers)</i>
LOSHKI	<i>(Wooden Spoons used as Percussion Instrument)</i>
VOLGA BOATMAN	<i>(Song sung by Volga River Bargemen)</i>
SIBERIA	<i>(Region of Northern Russia)</i>
PRIMA BALALAIKA	<i>(Three Stringed Triangular Instrument)</i>

# Blini

## Recipe for Russian Pancakes

<p><b>Put in a bowl.</b></p>  <p>Flour 1 cup</p>	<p><b>Add:</b></p>  <p>Sugar 1 tablespoon Baking Soda 1/4 teaspoon Baking Powder 1/2 tablespoon Salt 1/2 teaspoon</p>
<p><b>Beat egg in a new bowl.</b></p>  <p>2 cups</p>	<p><b>Add:</b></p>  <p>Butter milk 1/8 cup</p>
<p><b>Combine bowls. Beat.</b></p> 	<p><b>Cook in oil. Eat. Enjoy.</b></p> 

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Russians love to entertain guests. When visiting a Russian home you will always be invited to eat something and drink tea. Blini are a favorite dessert treat. These are very thin pancakes filled with fruit or sour cream and rolled up. Traditionally blini were served during the Maslenitsa holiday celebration. This holiday is similar to Mardi Gras and comes just before Lent.

### Directions:

If at school, the teacher should make the pancakes and then the students should fill them. Otherwise: follow the above. Blend until smooth. Pour ¼ cup batter into hot, non-stick skillet and cook quickly. (An electric crepe maker will also work.) Turn onto a plate and fill the center of the pancake. Roll it up and top with powdered sugar, whipped cream, or sour cream.

### Filling Suggestions:

Use jelly or jam. Or try sweetened finely chopped fresh fruit. Sour cream sprinkled with sugar is a Russian favorite.

## **Teacher Guidelines to Question Outline Sheet for Country Project or Report**

Depending on your individual school's curriculum it may not be possible to cover all of the topics suggested in this packet. To make this residency as meaningful as possible please share the following information with your students. Also if doing reports/projects make sure that these items are covered.

Discussion Ideas:

1. Discuss the size of Russia. Compare the size to the United States in terms of :
  - Physical Size – On 2 continents Europe and Asia
  - Population and Population distribution – Most in European part
  - Time Zones (11 in Russia) – 4 in US
  
2. Compare and contrast life for children in the US. Vs. Russia:
  - Age starting and finishing school – 7 and 16 in Russia for basic education
  - Clothing – uniforms required in Russia – black skirts/trousers, white blouses/shirts
    - children can be sent home for not dressing properly
  - How many days of the week do children go to school?
    - M-F 9:00AM-1:00PM Sat. till noon – there is a 5 minute break after each class
    - After 1:00 children either go home or to day care till 5:00. Day care time is used for homework, craft classes and organized sports teams.
  
- 3.

Also included in this packet is a recipe for a favorite Russian dessert called Bliny for home or school use. It is in a pictorial format and easy for children to try with the help of an adult. Also from the Evan Moor Book.

# Some Resources for Russian Study Unit

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- Finney, Susan. *Russia to The Revolution – Mongols to Moscow, Cossacks to Kiev*. Carthage, IL: Good Apple, 1987. Thematic unit with background information And class activities. An independent learning Unit for **grades 4-8**.
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- Harvey, Miles. *The Fall of the Soviet Union*. Chicago: Children’s Press, 1995. Covers the rise and fall of the USSR in 32 pages. Easy to understand With many photos.
- Holland, Lisa ed. *Lands and Peoples – Life After Communism*. Grollier Inc., 1993.
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- Smith, A. G. *Russian Nested Dolls*. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1994. A paper craft book.
- Swallow, John. *Country Fact Files*. Austin: Raintree, Steck-Vaughn Publishers. Materials packaged for doing a report.
- Williams, Susan. *Our Global Village – Russia*. St. Louis: Milliken Publishing Company, 1993. Great resource for all grades but especially for **K-3**. Covers language, holidays, festivals, costumes, dress, history, legends, foods, creative arts, lifestyles, and children’s games.

## • Literature and Other Sources

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*Baboushka Baba Yaga*  
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- San Souci, Robert. *The Firebird*. New York: Doubleday/dial, 1992.
- Stanley, Diana. *Peter the Great*. New York: four Winds Press, 1992.
- Tildes, Phyllis Limbacher. *The Magic Babushka*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, 1998. Beautifully illustrated, paying exquisite authentic detail to clothing, foods. A nice story with a must for illustrations.
- Tompert, Ann. *The Tsar’s Bird*. New York: MacMillan, 1990. Winthrop, Elizabeth and Barnard, Alexander. *Vasilisa the Beautiful*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.
- Winthrop, Elizabeth and Barnard, Alexander. *Vasilisa the Beautiful*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

### ○ Audio recordings

- Moscow Nights - Feel Yourself Russian* – Traditional Russian Folk Music, Cleveland, 2000.
- Tchaikovsky Discovers America – A Tale of Courage and Adventure*. Toronto: Susan Hammond’s Classical Kids, 1993. Tchaikovsky shares His stories with a young family. Includes excerpts from more than two Dozen of his works.
- Teach Me Russian*. Minneapolis: Teach Me Tapes, 1991. Hear Russian Children speaking and singing familiar songs in both Russian and English. Gives a feel for the language in a comfortable children’s Setting plus teaches counting and alphabet. Comes with a study Guide.

## CONTEST

**Moscow Nights will have a contest for all the children of this school. Each child should draw a picture of his or her impression of a Moscow Nights’ Concert. The winner of this contest will receive an autographed Moscow Nights CD and a Signed Color Poster. A minimum of 50 entries per school must be received. Please send all drawings in one envelope to: Moscow Nights School Contest, 4495 Valley Forge Dr., Fairview Park, OH 44126. Be sure to have the children sign their work and include their age and grade level. For students in grades 7-12 please submit a one page written essay in lieu of the drawing. All other contest rules apply. The winner’s first name and drawing will be announced on the Moscow Nights’ Website ~ 1 month after receipt.**

[www.RussianFolk.com/html/contest.html](http://www.RussianFolk.com/html/contest.html)

Prizes will be sent directly to the school.

# Алфавит

## Alphabet

**А а**  
ah

**Б б**  
b

**В в**  
v

**Г г**  
g

**Д д**  
d

**Е е**  
yeh

**Ё ё**  
yo

**Ж ж**  
zh

**З з**  
z

**И и**  
eee

**Й й**  
ee

**К к**  
k

**Л л**  
l

**М м**  
m

**Н н**  
n

**О о**  
o

**П п**  
p

**Р р**  
r

**С с**  
s

**Т т**  
t

**У у**  
oo

**Ф ф**  
f

**Х х**  
h

**Ц ц**  
ts

**Ч ч**  
ch

**Ш ш**  
sh

**Щ щ**  
shch

**Ъ ъ**  
hard sign

**Ы ы**  
ih

**Ь ь**  
soft sign

**Э э**  
eh

**Ю ю**  
yoo

**Я я**  
yah

The Russian alphabet has 33 letters. It was introduced in Russia by Christian missionaries in the ninth century. At that time Russia had no written language. The missionaries were from the Byzantine Empire where the Greek alphabet was used. Thus, the missionaries took the Greek alphabet and modified it to fit the Russian language. Over the years it has evolved to the form shown here. While these letters can look forbidding at first, they actually represent a written language that is very easy to read. All words are read phonetically with one sound for each letter. Each letter in every word is pronounced.

## **Question Outline Sheet for Country Project or Report**

Use this question sheet to help you with your report or project. In answering these questions you will have covered all of the basic topics for an organized and detailed report. Organize your information into paragraphs. Illustrate your report with pictures of the country, the people, the flag etc.

### **Geography**

- Where is Russia located?
- Which countries, oceans or seas lie to the north, south, east, and west?
- What does the land look like?
- What is the climate like?

### **Population**

- Do many people live there?
- What do they do for a living?
- Do some people farm?
  - What do they grow?
- What do others do for a living?
- Do the people live in villages or cities or both?
- Name the capital city and other large cities.
- What kind of homes do people live in?
- Does the type of home vary between village and city?

### **People**

- What do the people look like?
- What do they eat?
- What religion do they follow?
- What are the major holidays?
- What language do they speak?

### **Children**

- What ages do they go to school?
- What do they wear? Is it different than what we wear?
- What games and sports do they like?

### **Government**

- Who governs the country – a president, a king, an emperor etc.?
- What form of government is it?
- Has it always been this way?

### **Industry and Trade**

- What industries are found in Russia?
- Are the goods used in Russia?
- What goods are sold abroad and to which countries?
- What natural resources are found in Russia?

### **Transportation**

- What is the transportation like?

### **Wildlife**

- What kind of wild animals are native to Russia?
- Where are they found?

**Share some interesting facts that you have found out about Russia.**