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В настоящем учебном пособии рассмотрены ключевые аспекты русской культуры, рассматривающей современное развитие в гуманитарном измерении.

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INTRODUCTION

Russian culture, the culture associated with the country of Russia and, sometimes, specifically with ethnic Russians. It has a rich history and can boast a long tradition of impressive achievements in many aspects of the arts, especially when it comes to literature and philosophy, classical music and ballet, architecture and painting, cinema and animation, which all had considerable influence on world culture. The country also has a rich material culture and a strong tradition in technology.

Russian culture started from the East Slavs, with their pagan beliefs and specific way of life in the wooded areas of Eastern Europe. Early Russian culture was much influenced by neighboring Finno – Ugric tribes and by nomadic, mainly Turkic, peoples of the Pontic steppe. The late 1st millennium AD the Scandinavian Vikings, or Varangians, also took part in the forming of Russian identity and Kiev Rus state. Kiev Rus had accepted from the Empire in 988, and this largely defined the Russian culture of next millennium as the synthesis of Slavic and Byzantine cultures. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Russia remained the largest Orthodox nation in the world and claimed succession to the Byzantine legacy in the form of the Third Rome idea. At different points in its history, the country was also strongly influenced by the culture of Western Europe. Since Peter the Great reforms for two centuries Russian culture largely developed in the general context of European culture rather than pursuing its own unique ways. The situation changed in the 20th century, when the Communist ideology became a major factor in the culture of the Soviet Union, where Russia, or Russian SFSR, was the largest and leading part.

Nowadays, Russian cultural heritage is ranked seventh in the Nation Brands Index, based on interviews of some 20,000 people mainly from Western countries and the Far East. That's with the fact, that due to the relatively late involvement of Russia in modern globalization and international tourism, many aspects of Russian culture, like Russian jokes and the Soviet Art, remain largely unknown to foreigners.

1. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

1.1. Russian Federation. Federal structure.

Russia also officially known as the Russian Federation is a country in northern Eurasia. It is a federal semi-presidential republic, comprising 85 federal subjects.

46 oblasts (provinces): most common type of federal subjects, with federally appointed governor and locally elected legislature.

22 republics: nominally autonomous; each has its own constitution, president or a similar post, and parliament. Republics are allowed to establish their own official language alongside Russian but are represented by the federal government in international affairs. Republics are meant to be home to specific ethnic minorities.

9 regions (territories): essentially the same as oblasts. The «territory» designation is historic, originally given to frontier regions and later also to the administrative divisions that comprised autonomous districts or autonomous oblasts.

4 autonomous districts (autonomous districts): originally autonomous entities within oblasts and regions created for ethnic minorities, their status was elevated to that of federal subjects in the 1990s. With the exception of Chukotka Autonomous districts, all autonomous districts are still administratively subordinated to a region or an oblast of which they are a part.

1 autonomous oblast: historically, autonomous oblasts were administrative units subordinated to regions. In 1990, all of them except for the Jewish AO were elevated in status to that of a republic.

3 federal cities: major cities that function as separate regions.

From northwest to southeast, Russia shares borders with Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (both via Kaliningrad Oblast), Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and North Korea. It also has maritime borders with Japan by the Sea of Okhotsk, and the U.S. state of Alaska across the

Bering Strait. At 17,075,400 square kilometers (6,592,800sq.mi), Russia is the largest country in the world, covering more than one–eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area. Russia is also the world's ninth most populous nation with 143million people as of 2012. Extending across the whole of northern Asia, Russia spans nine time zones and incorporates a wide range of environments and landforms. Russia has the world's largest reserves of mineral and energy resources and is the largest producer of oil and natural gas globally. Russia has the world's largest forest reserves and its lakes contain approximately one–quarter of the world's fresh water. And it has the biggest lake in the world Baykal.

2.1. Government

According to the Constitution of Russia, the country is a federation and semi–presidential republic, wherein the President is the head of state (Putin Vladimir Vladimirovich) and the Prime Minister is the head of government (Medvedev DmitriiAnatolyevich). The Russian Federation is fundamentally structured as a party representative, with the federal government composed of three branches:

- Legislative
- Executive
- Judiciary

The president is elected by popular vote for a six–year term (eligible for a second term, but not for a third consecutive term). In 2008, the state anthem was written.

2.1.1. The Flag of the Russian Federation

The Russian flag is sometimes called the Imperial flag. It consists of three equal stripes of white, blue and red. The first flag of this design appeared more than 300 years ago. Peter the Great adapted the flag from the National flag of the Netherlands. Later a black two–headed eagle on a golden background was added to the flag of Russia. The flag existed until the revolution in 1917. In the nineties, with the demo-

cratic changes, the three–color flag was restored again. On 21 August 1991, the flag was officially adopted by the Russian President and the Russian Parliament. In Russia the colors of the current flag symbolize:

white– frankness and generosity;

blue– honesty and wisdom;

red– courage and love.

2.1.2. The Emblem of the Russian Federation

The Russian National Emblem is the golden double–headed eagle with a horseman (St George) on a shield on the eagle's breast with a red background. Above the two heads of the eagle, there is an historical crown.

The first emblem of the double–headed eagle was introduced in 1480, by Prince Ivan III. It was at the time of the establishment of the Russian state system. It symbolized the supreme power and sovereignty of the state.

Since then, the double–headed eagle is the main part of the emblem of our country. But now the crown is a symbol of the sovereignty both of the Russian Federation (as a whole) and of its parts (subjects of the Federation).

2.2. General information

2.2.1. Climate

The enormous size of Russia and the remoteness of many areas from the sea result in the dominance of the humid continental climate, which is prevalent in all parts of the country except for the tundra and the extreme southeast. Most of Northern European Russia and Siberia has a subarctic climate, with extremely severe winters in the inner regions of Northeast Siberia (mostly the Sakha Republic, where the Northern Pole of Cold is located with the record low temperature of $-71.2^{\circ}\text{C}/-96.2^{\circ}\text{F}$), and more mod-

erate elsewhere. The strip of land along the shore of the Arctic Ocean, as well as the Russian Arctic islands, have a polar climate.

Throughout much of the territory there are only two distinct seasons—winter and summer; spring and autumn are usually brief periods of change between extremely low temperatures and extremely high. The coldest month is January (February on the coastline), the warmest usually is July.

2.2.2. Biodiversity

There are 266 mammal species and 780 bird species in Russia. A total of 415 animal species have been included in the Red Data Book of the Russian Federation as of 1997 and are now protected. Russian Red Data Book is a state document established for documenting rare and endangered species of animals, plants and fungi, as well as some local subspecies (such as the Ladoga seal) that exist within the territory of the Russian Federation and its continental shelf and marine economic zone.

2.2.3. Demographics

Ethnic Russians comprise 81% of the country's population. In all, 160 different other ethnic groups and indigenous peoples live within its borders. Though Russia's population is comparatively large, its density is low because of the country's enormous size. Population is densest in European Russia, near the Ural Mountains, and in southwest Siberia. 73% of the population lives in urban areas while 27% in rural ones. The results of the 2010 Census show a total population of 142,856,536.

2.2.4. Health

As of 2009, the average life expectancy in Russia was 62.77 years for males and 74.67 years for females. The biggest factor contributing to the relatively low male life expectancy for males is a high mortality rate among working-age males from preventable causes (e.g., alcohol poisoning, smoking, traffic accidents). As a result of the large gender difference in life expectancy and because of the lasting effect of high

casualties in World War II, the gender imbalance remains to this day and there are 0.859 males to every female.

2.2.5. Language

Russia's 160 ethnic groups speak some 100 languages. According to the 2002 Census, 142.6million people speak Russian, followed by Tatar with 5.3million and Ukrainian with 1.8million speakers. Russian is the only official state language, but the Constitution gives the individual republics the right to make their native language official next to Russian.

Despite its wide dispersal, the Russian language is homogeneous throughout Russia. Russian is the most geographically widespread language of Eurasia and the most widely spoken Slavic language. Russian language belongs to the Indo–European language family and is one of the living members of the East Slavic languages; the others being Belarusian and Ukrainian . Written examples of Old East Slavic (Old Russian) are attested from the 10th century onwards.

2.2.6. Religion

Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism are Russia's traditional religions, and all of them are legally a part of Russia's «historical heritage».

Easter is the most popular religious festival in Russia, celebrated by more than 90% of all Russian citizens, including large numbers of non–religious. According to one source, more than three–quarters of the Russian population celebrate Easter by making traditional Easter cakes, cottage cheese and colored eggs.

100million citizens consider themselves Russian Orthodox Christians. Estimates of the number of Muslims in Russia range from 7–9 million by local sources to 15–20 million by Western and Islamic sources. There are approximately 3 to 4 million temporary Muslim migrants from the post–Soviet states. Most Muslims live in the Volga–Ural region, as well as in the Caucasus, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Western Siberia.

Buddhism is traditional for three regions of the Russian Federation: Buryatia, Tuva, and Kalmykia. Various reports put the number of non-religious in Russia at between 16–48% of the population.

2.2.7. The largest cities

Rank	City name	Federal subject	Pop.
1	Moscow	Moscow	11,503,501
2	Saint Petersburg	Saint Petersburg	4,879,567
3	Novosibirsk	Novosibirsk	1,473,737
4	Yekaterinburg	Sverdlovsk Oblast	1,350,136
5	Nizhny Novgorod	Nizhny Novgorod	1,250,252
6	Samara	Samara	1,164,900
7	Kazan	Tatarstan	1,143,600
8	Omsk	Omsk	1,153,971
9	Chelyabinsk	Chelyabinsk	1,130,273
10	Rostov–on–Don	Rostov Oblast	1,098,991

2. NIZHNY NOVGOROD

2.1. The history of its origin.

Nizhny Novgorod is a city in the administrative center (capital) of Volga Federal District and Nizhny Novgorod Oblast in Russia. From 1932 to 1990, it was known as **Gorky** after the writer Maxim Gorky, who was born there. The city is an important economic, transportation, scientific, educational and cultural center in Russia and the vast Volga-Vyatka economic region, and is the main center of river tourism in Russia. In the historic part of the city there is a large number of universities, thea-

ters, museums and churches. Nizhny Novgorod is located about 400 km east of Moscow, where the Oka empties into the Volga.

The city was founded in 1221 by Prince Yuri II of Vladimir.

Originally the name was just Novgorod ("Newtown"), but to distinguish it from the other, older and well-known Novgorod to the west, the city was commonly called "Novgorod of the Lower lands". This land was named "lower" because it is situated downstream, especially from the point of view of other Russian cities such as Moscow, Vladimir and Murom. Later it was transformed into the contemporary name of the city that literally means "Lower Newtown".

In 1612 Kuzma Minin and Prince Dmitry Pozharsky organized an army for the liberation of Moscow from the Poles. In 1817 Nizhny Novgorod became a great trade center of the Russian Empire. In 1896 at a fair, an All-Russia Exhibition was organized. During the Soviet period, the city turned into an important industrial center. In particular, the Gorky Automobile Plant was constructed in this period. Then the city was given the nickname "Russian Detroit". During the World War II Gorky became the biggest provider of military equipment to the front. Due to this, the Luftwaffe constantly bombed the city from the air. The majority of the German bombs fell in the area of the Gorky Automobile Plant. Although almost all the production sites of the plant were completely destroyed, the citizens of Gorky reconstructed the factory after 100 days.

After the war, Gorky became a "closed city" and remained one until after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990. At that time, the city was renamed Nizhny Novgorod once again. In 1985, the metro was opened.

The Kremlin – the main center of the city – contains the main government agencies of the city and the Volga Federal District. The demonym for a Nizhny Novgorod resident is «*nizhegorodets*» for male or «*nizhegorodka*» for female, rendered in English as *Nizhegorodian*.

2.2. Government

The Government of the Nizhny Novgorod region is a regular supreme executive body in the region. The head of the government is the Governor of Nizhny Novgorod region, the supreme regional officer. The Government of the Nizhny Novgorod region has the authority to regulate all kinds of issues on state management and administration of social and economic development of the region. The Government is a collegial body to head the system of executive authorities in the region. The law of the Government of Nizhny Novgorod Region shall set the structure of the Government and procedure to nominate its members as well as the legal foundations of its operation, functioning and competence, its interaction with other state and municipal authorities forth. Members of the Government of Nizhny Novgorod include the Governor, the Vice-Governor, Deputy Governors and Ministers. Nomination of Deputy Governors shall be approved by Nizhny Novgorod Regional Legislative Assembly.

2.2.1. The Nizhny Novgorod coat of arms

The Nizhny Novgorod historic coat of arms was adopted on August 16, 1781. It represents an image of a quadrangular heraldic shield with rounded low corners. The deer is the symbol of nobleness, cleanness and greatness, life, wisdom and justice. The crown is the symbol of high development achievements. It shows that Nizhny Novgorod is the administrative center of the Nizhny Novgorod region. The framing ribbon points that the city was awarded with the Lenin's order.

The colors of the coat of arms are:

- Silver – a symbol of perfection, nobleness, cleanness of thoughts, peace;
- Dark red – a symbol of courage, bravery, fearlessness, maturity, energy and vitality;
- Black– a symbol of sense, wisdom, honesty, modesty, humility and eternity.

2.2.2. The Nizhny Novgorod Flag

The flag represents a rectangular white cloth with width-length ratio 2:3. The image of a deer is situated in the center. Its height is 4/5 of the flag width. The dark red deer is with black horns, eyes and hooves moving towards the flagstaff.

The colors of the flag are:

- White– a symbol of perfection, nobleness, cleanness of thoughts, peace;
- Dark red – a symbol of courage, bravery, fearlessness, maturity, energy and vitality;
- Black– a symbol of sense, wisdom, honesty, modesty, humility and eternity.

2.3. General information

2.3.1. Climate

The climate in the region is continental, specifically humid continental, which is similar to the climate in Moscow, although colder in winter, which lasts from late November until late March with a permanent snow cover. Average temperatures ranges from +25 °C in July to –20 °C in January.

A maximum temperature of +38.2 °C (100.8 °F) was recorded during the 2010 Northern Hemisphere summer heat waves. The central and southern parts of the province are rather warmer. Precipitation averages 500-550mm yearly. Rain falls unevenly across the province, however, with the north-west receiving more rainfall than the south, which experiences occasional droughts. The northern frontier of Russia's celebrated «black earth» runs across the province. As one moves southwards, the European dark coniferous taiga gives way to areas of mixed broadleaf forests, and large open meadowlands.

2.3.2. Demographics

According to an official estimate, from the 1st of January 2014, the population of Nizhniy Novgorod is 1,250,615. The absolute numbers of most of these peoples reached its highest level since the beginning of the 1990s. Since 1992, natural growth in Russia has been negative and the numbers of all the peoples of European Russia were lower in 2010 than in 2002. Government measures to halt the demographic crisis was a key subject of Vladimir Putin's 2006 state of the nation address. As a result, a national program was developed with the goal to reverse the trend by 2020. In September 2009, the Ministry of Health and Social Development reported that Russia

recorded a natural population growth for the first time in 15 years. In April 2011, the Russian Prime Minister (Russian president as of 2012) Vladimir Putin pledged to spend 1.5 trillion rubles (£32.5 billion or \$54 billion) on various measures to boost Russia's declining birthrate by 30 per cent over the following four-year period. In 2012, the birth rate increased again.

2.3.3. Culture

Nizhny Novgorod's culture serves as one of the most important factors of social development that reflects the level of the people's self-consciousness and their emotional state, which is deeply rooted in the past.

The life and deeds of Saint Prince Alexander Nevsky, Rev. Makary Zheltovodsky, Rev. Seraphim Sarovsky, Patriarch Nickon, archpriest Avvacum, Kozma Minin, Ivan Kulibin, Nikolay Dobrolyubov, Maxim Gorky, Pyotr Nesterov, Valery Chkalov, Andrey Sakharov and many other successful people in the world are closely connected to the Nizhny Novgorod region.

It is the region where the estates of some of the most famous Russian noblemen and merchants, such as Stroganov, Rukavishnikov, Sheremetiev, Bestuzhev-Ryumin, are situated.

The three autumns spent by Alexander Pushkin in the village of Bolshoe Boldino in the Nizhny Novgorod region inspired him for creating his 50 best masterpieces.

The beauty of the Nizhny Novgorod land gave inspiration to V. Korolenko, P. Melnikov-Pechersky, M. Balakirev and I. Repin.

Upon the territory of the region lies unique historic settlements and monuments of culture, many of them have status of federal significance. There are more than six hundred unique historic, architectural, and cultural monuments in the city. Among them there is the Nizhny Novgorod Kremlin, the ensembles of the Holy Trinity Seraphim of the Diveevo monastery and the Makariev monastery, the country estate of Alexander Pushkin in the village of B. Boldino and the house of the famous aviator Valery Chkalov amongst many others.

In the Nizhny Novgorod region the folk art crafts, handicrafts and holiday traditions are carefully maintained.

The rich historical and cultural traditions provide an explanation of how the Nizhny Novgorod region plays an important role in the modern social and cultural life of the country.

Many art festivals have gained a reputation all over Russia, and some of them have become world renowned. These are Art Festivals named after A. Sakharov; Russian Art and the World; Boldino Autumn, the festival of the international charity program, New Names; the First Performances of the Season, Theatrical Festival; the International Scientific Conference, Boldino Readings and The Pushkin Poetry Festival in the village of B. Boldino.

2.3.4. Cultural sights

Within Nizhny Novgorod, there are more than six hundred unique historical, architectural, and cultural monuments in the city.

There are an estimated two hundred municipal and regional art and cultural institutions within Nizhny Novgorod. Among these institutions include eight theaters, five concert halls, ninety–seven libraries (with branches), seventeen movie theaters (including five movie theaters for children), twenty–five institutions of children optional education, eight museums (sixteen including branches), and seven parks.

2.3.5. Economy

Nizhny Novgorod is one of the centers of the IT Industry in Russia. It ranks among the leading Russian cities in terms of the quantity of software R&D providers. Intel has a big software R&D center with more than 500 engineers in the city, as well as a major datacenter. In Nizhny Novgorod there is also a number of offshore outsourcing software developers, including Itseez, Tecom, Luximax Systems Ltd., MERA Networks, Real East Networks, Auriga, SoftDrom, and Teleca, and many other smaller ones that specialize in delivering services to telecommunication vendors.

There are 25 scientific R&D institutions focusing on telecommunications, radio technology, theoretical and applied physics, and 33 higher educational institutions, among

them are Nizhny Novgorod State Medical Academy, Nizhny Novgorod State University, Nizhny Novgorod Technical University, as well as Nizhny Novgorod Institute of Information Technologies(former MERA Networks training center), that focuses on information technologies, software development, system administration, telecommunications, cellular networks, Internet technologies, and IT management.

Nizhny Novgorod has also been chosen as one of four sites for the building of an IT-oriented technology park. Which is a special zone that has an established infrastructure and enjoys a favorable tax and customs policy.

The engineering industry is the leading industry within Nizhny Novgorod economy. It is mainly oriented towards transportation, i.e., the auto industry, shipbuilding, diesel engines, aircraft manufacturing, and machine tools, with the auto industry being the leading sector (50%). The largest plants include:

- JSC «Gorky Automobile Plant»– personal cars, trucks, armored personnel carriers, and other autos;
- JSC «Krasnoye Sormovo»– river and sea ships, submarines;
- JSC «Sokol»– airplanes, jets;
- JSC «Hydromash»– hydraulic actuators, landing gears
- JSC «Nitel»– TV sets;
- JSC «RUMO»– diesel generators.

2.3.6. Education

Nizhny Novgorod is one of the most renowned centers for higher education and science in Russia. There are a lot of differently specialized institutions of higher education in Nizhny Novgorod and its region. History of the higher education system in Nizhny Novgorod started in the pre-revolutionary time. Since then Nizhny Novgorod has glorified many times as a citadel of scientific schools as well as top-ranking individual scientists and inventors. At present, there are many research institutes and laboratories working in Nizhny Novgorod that all-Russian and world significant research programs, in very different scientific areas, are running in.

The University of Nizhny Novgorod was inaugurated on January 17, 1916 as one of Russia's three People's universities in the emerging system of "free" universities. In 1918 it acquired the status of a state university. Today the University of Nizhny Novgorod (UNN) is one of the leading universities in Russia and a major education and research complex globally.

The University of Nizhny Novgorod comprises 27 faculties, including the Centre for Distance Education with its 9 faculties in a number of cities in the Nizhny Novgorod region and the Preparatory faculty – Centre.

In official national ratings, UNN was ranked amongst the top Ten Russian Universities. The total enrolment is over 40 000 undergraduate and graduate students.

Other Higher Educational establishments In Nizhny Novgorod include:

- R.Y. Alekseev Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University;
- Nizhny Novgorod State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering;
- Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University;
- Nizhny Novgorod Commercial Institute;
- Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University;
- Nizhny Novgorod State Medical Academy;
- Nizhny Novgorod State Agricultural Academy;
- Volgo–Vyatsky Region Civil Service Academy and etc.

2.3.7. Sports

The city's ice hockey team Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod play in the KHL. The city is represented at football by FC Volga Nizhny Novgorod which plays in the Russian second tier of competition. The other football team from Nizhny Novgorod, FC Lokomotiv Nizhny Novgorod which had played in the Russian Premier League and the Intertoto Cup became defunct in 2006. The city's field hockey team are HC Start. The city's bandy team Start plays in the highest division of the Russian Bandy League. BC Nizhny Novgorod is a professional basketball club. The team participates in the VTB United League and Euroleague.

Russia became the host nation for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, and it has been decided that some matches will be played in Nizhny Novgorod in a stadium. The stadium has a capacity of 44,899 people, total area of the stadium building is 127,500 m².

3. CITY LAYOUT AND DIVISIONS

3.1. General information.

The city of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, is divided into two parts (Upper City and Lower City), eight districts, which are in turn subdivided into micro-districts, and municipal settlements.

Upper City - historical and cultural part. located on the right hilly bank of the Oka River. It is divided into three districts:

- Nizhegorodsky;
- Prioksky;
- Sovetsky.

Lower City - an industrial and commercial area, located on the left lowland bank of the Oka River. It is divided into five districts:

- Kanavinsky;
- Moskovsky;
- Sormovsky;
- Avtozavodsky;
- Leninsky.
-

All of today's lower city was annexed by Nizhny Novgorod in 1929–1931.

3.2. Nizhegorodsky City district

The Nizhegorodsky district is the Central administrative district of Nizhny Novgorod. The district is located in the mountainous part of the city.

The Area of the district is 6700 hectares (13,7 % of the city) with a population of 125 820 people (2012). This number included in the district of the resort village Green city which has a population of 1 800 people.

Almost all universities of Nizhny Novgorod are in this area.

3.2.1. The district history

The Nizhegorodsky district was formed in accordance with the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR of December 9, 1970 «On education of Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod regions, in Gorky», by the decision of the Executive Committee of the Regional Council of 14 December 1970 boundaries of the administrative district.

However, the district itself is the core around which the original fortress and settlement, in the year 1221, was created. On the territory of the district there are many architectural and historical monuments and memorable places. Among them stands out the Nizhny Novgorod Kremlin – a unique and picturesque monument of ancient architecture (founded in 1500); and one of the oldest monasteries in Russia – Pechersky ascension monastery, founded in 1330.

In addition to the historical part of the city in the district entered villages and village (settlement Pechory and etc.) attached to Nizhny Novgorod in the Soviet era, when the city's population grew, and its territory was expanding.

In the area is the majority of administrative, public, educational, cultural and business institutions.

3.3. Prioksky City District

Prioksky City District is one of the eight districts of the city of Nizhny Novgorod. It is located in the upper part of the city on the high right bank of the Oka River and has a land border only with Sovetsky City District along Meditsinskaya Street. It is also connected by the Myza Bridge with the Avtozavodsky City District in the lower part of Nizhny Novgorod across the Oka.

The district is essentially residential but it has some industrial enterprises. The latter include radio, electric, and electronics state-owned Frunze Plant as well as JSC Thermal and NITEL, which are in the same line of business. A number of scientific institutions are also located in the district. Their scope of interests are also connected with telecommunications and radar applications. A lot of small private-owned enterprises offer service and employment opportunities for the residents of the district and the entire city.

3.3.1. Transportation

The main north-south transportation line of the district is Prospekt Gagarina, which forks into the Arzamas and Bogorodsk roads after crossing the city border. The public transportation in Prioksky City District includes regional city bus routes, municipal trolleybus routes, municipal tram routes, and many privately owned marshrutka («fixed-route taxis») vans. There is the Myza commuter train rail station and the Shcherbinki bus station for interurban transportation.

3.3.2. Sights and culture

The culture institutions include three movie theaters, one of which is specialized for children, the large Switzerland Park and the Shchyolokovsky Khutor forest, attractive places to rest, and the Districts history museum nearby of the authorities headquarters. There are two monuments in the Switzerland park, dedicated in memory of the fallen Russians veterans in local armed conflicts and to the participants of the workers' movement in the early 20th century.

The Nizhny Novgorod Andrey Sakharov Museum is located in his apartment in the Shcherbinki neighborhood where the scientist lived in the 1980s.

3.4. Sovetsky City District

The Sovetsky City District is one of the eight districts of the city of Nizhny Novgorod. The districts administration is located on Sovetskaya Square. The Sovetsky district is situated on the steep right Bank of the Oka river. The district is bordered on

the North and the East of the Nizhny Novgorod region, to the West (on the river Oka) of Leninski district, in the South – Prioksky district.

3.4.1. Culture and leisure

Parks, gardens, green areas and recreation areas Landscaped Park named after A. S. Pushkin. The decision on creation of the Pushkin garden in Nizhny Novgorod, was adopted in 1899, at the same time the modern territory of the Park was surrounded by a fence and prepared for planting. Five-year birch and the acacia bushes were planted in 1907, with the participation of youths. Nowadays the Park area is 9,9 acres (Belinskogo street).

Recreation zone, Zhchelkovskiy Khutor. The Park is located on the border of the Soviet and Priokskiy areas. It received its name from the surname of the owner of a grocer schelokova in the 1870s. The area represents the remains of the ancient lime forests and oak forests. On the territory of the forest Park, Zhchelkovskiy farm, in the Sovetsky district is located the Museum of Architecture and Everyday Life of the peoples of the Volga region (Gorbatova, 41).

3.4.2. Theaters

- The Nizhny Novgorod state academic Opera and Ballet Theatre named after A.S.Pushkin (St. Belinsky street, 59)
- The House of culture, Entertainment and Leisure Centers.
- The House of culture, Star (St. Beketov, 73).

3.4.3. Museums

- The Museum of Architecture and Everyday Life of the Peoples of the Nizhny Novgorod Volga region and branch of Nizhny Novgorod state Historical–Architectural Museum–reserve(Gorbatova, 41)
- Museum of the History of Electric (St. Generala Ivlieva, 1)
- Museum of the History of Lobachevsky. N. I. Lobachevski (Gagarina, 23, building 2)
- The Zoological Museum of Lobachevsky. N. I. Lobachevski (Gagarina 23, building 1)

- The Museum of Radiophysics of Lobachevsky. N. I. Lobachevski(Gagarina, 23,building 4)
- The Geological Museum of Enterprise, Volgageologia (Vaneeva street, 18).

3.4.4. Sports facilities

- The Nagorny sports Palace of trade unions (Gagarin Avenue, 29)
- The Dolphin Swimming Pool (Gagarina Prospekt, 25)
- The NNSU Sports complex (Gagarin Avenue, 25V)
- THE FSO trade unions Sports complex, Spartak (Gagarin Avenue, 25A)
- The Swimming pool Olympus (St. Veterinary, 2A)
- The Center of Martial Arts and Fitness (Nartova, 2)

3.5. Kanavinsky City District

The Kanavinsky City District is one of the eight districts of the city of Nizhny Novgorod situated in the Lower City. The area of Kanavinsky district spans across 47,54 sq. km (11.6% of all territory of the city).

3.5.1. The district history

The Kanavinsky district of Nizhny Novgorod is the original place of the Nizhny Novgorod fair. The main trade life of the city in the 19th century was concentrated in this Arrow area, where the Volga flows into the Oka.

The Kanavinsky district is one of the most ancient in Nizhny Novgorod. The first mention of Kanavinsky settlement dates from 1599 year. Philologists believe that the name, Coonavino, comes from the monetary unit Coons, which was used to pay visiting merchants. The year 1928 is considered the official date of formation of the Kanavinsky district.

Today Kanavino is one of the largest industrial districts of the city, the transport hub of external and internal ways of nationwide importance. Here is the cargo port, railway station and bus station. It has a large shopping center where there is an extensive network of eateries and a department of markets, shops and consumer services enterprises.

3.5.2. Modern condition of the district

Running through the Kanavinsky district is a number of major highways, including the Moscow highway and Railways. Here is the hub station of Nizhny Novgorod Metro system, Moskovskaya and the Express buses to the international airport. On the territory of the Kanavinsky district is number of industrial enterprises, including the widely known Nizhny Novgorod vegetable oil and fat integrated factory, the 1st of May Confectionery Factory and the Management of the Gorky Railway. Near the location of the districts center is the all-Russian exhibition complex, Nizhegorodskaya Yarmarka, which is well known not only in Russia.

The Metro bridge across Oka River links the Kanavinsky district with the mountainous part of the city.

The territory adjoining directly to the Moscow railway-station is characterized by unusually high pollution and noise, but it has good commuter accessibility.

The Social infrastructure of the district is presented by a large number of trade enterprises, public catering, cultural and entertainment facilities, hotels and recreation areas. These, in particular, include city Department Stores and Shopping Centers under the name Republika, Aurora and METRO, the Hotel Central, the Nizhny Novgorod Circus and The 1st of May Garden. There also are a number of administrative buildings, which are institutions of State power.

3.6. Moskovsky City District

The Moskovsky City District is an administrative formation in the structure of Nizhny Novgorod. It borders in the North with Sormovsky district and to the South with the area of Kanavinsky. Due to the floodplain boundaries in the district of village of Berezovaya the area has significantly stretched from West to East. The northeast border of the district reaches of the River Volga. The district has a population of 124515 people (2012) and an the of 3000 hectares with a population density of 46.6 people per hectare. The Name of the district originates from the Moscow highway, city street, which is part of the Federal highway (M7). The Moskovsky region is located

in the middle of Lower part of the city and is the only region in the city which has no access to the rivers Volga or Oka.

3.6.1. The district history

In the second half of the 19th century the territory of the district was included into the Balakhna and was represented by five villages: Burnakovka, Gornushkino, Knyazhiha, Kostariha and Ratmaniha. Residents of these villages were engaged in forging (the layout of the spikes) and crafts, production of bells and chimes, weaving fishing nets, dressing of leather and etc.

In February 1929, the towns on the outskirts of the city, Sormovo and Kanavino with adjacent villages, were annexed into the cities territory forming a larger Nizhny Novgorod.

By the decree of the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR of December 9, 1970 was formed in the Moscow area in its present borders.

3.6.2. Modern condition of the district

In the Moskovsky area is concentrated engineering and woodworking industries, aerospace and other industries. Moskovsky City District is one of the main industrial areas of the city with several factories: aviation them. S. Ordzhonikidze, «Orgsintez» (production of paints) and others. In the area is 160 large and medium-sized enterprises and organizations, 26 enterprises of the basic kinds of activity (industry, science, construction), 1300 enterprises of small business and about three and a half thousand individual entrepreneurs.

3.7. Sormovsky City District

The Sormovsky City District is one of the eight districts of the city of Nizhny Novgorod. It occupies the northwestern corner of the city, adjacent to the Volga River and has a population of 168,761 people (2010 Census).

3.7.1. The district history

The village originally known as Soromovo had existed from 1542. In 1849, the Sormovo once of Russia's most important machine-building plants, later known as

Krasnoye Sormovo was founded; its owner had the village renamed to more euphonic Sormovo. Although legally a village, it soon grew into a large workers' settlement; in 1922, Sormovo became a city; in 1929, it was amalgamated into the city of Nizhny Novgorod, becoming one of its districts.

It is one of the city's industrial districts. Besides Krasnoye Sormovo, its well-known enterprises include the Volga Shipyard (which was spun off from Krasnoye Sormovo in 1970, and is geographically adjacent to its parent plant) and the Sormovo Confectionery Factory.

3.7.2. Recreation and sports

The district does not have good, conveniently accessible beaches on the Volga shoreline, due to much of it being used by shipyards and flood lands. Instead, the locals prefer to use sand beaches on several artificial lakes, which formed several decades ago in the pits left from defunct sand quarries. The Sormovo airfield, Sokol Aircraft Plant and its airfield are located just south of the border of Sormovsky City District, within the neighbouring Moskovsky District of Nizhny Novgorod. Between 1956 and 1970, the territory of today's Moskovsky District was part of the Sormovsky District, meaning that during that time the Sormovo Airfield was actually within the Sormovsky District.

The sights and culture of the Sormovskiy Culture and Leisure Park is one of the favorite rest places of Sormovsky citizens. On the territory of the park is an open space area for summer discos, a pond with swans and the stadium Trud. There are also numerous cafes, attractions and a children's town. Also in the Park is the Limpopo zoo and an aqua park.

3.8. Avtozavodsky City District

The Avtozavodsky City District is one of the eight districts of the city of Nizhny Novgorod. It is located in the southwest of the Lower City of Nizhny Novgorod, on the low left bank of the Oka River and has a land border with the Leninsky City District to the north. It is also connected by the Myza Bridge with Prioksky City District

in the Upper City (the right bank of the Oka). District has a population size of 303,054 according to the 2010 Census.

3.8.1. The district history

The name of the district literally means "automotive plant district", as it grew around the production facilities of the Gorky Automotive Plant, which was constructed in this area between 1930-1932. The administrative district was created in 1931 from the land that formerly had been part of the Kanavinsky City District and the suburban Dzerzhinsky District.

Initially, the district consisted of a working town car plant with related settlements.

3.8.2. Gorky automobile plant

In 1932 a car plant was built, which gave life and has become an integral part of the district. The giant plant was built in record time. On the 1st of January 1932 it entered into operation forming one of the biggest enterprises in the country. On January the 29th 1932, the first truck GAZ-AA rolled off the production line. Construction, creation of production and personnel training was carried out in close cooperation with the American company Ford. In Soviet times, the plant had trained personnel, talented engineers, skilled workers and experienced leaders. The Gorky automobile plant is the largest company, which made famous the Avtozavodsky district of Nizhny Novgorod and far beyond the region. At present JSC GAZ faces significant difficulties which has led to mass reductions in personnel.

JSC GAZ is one of the largest exporters in the Nizhny Novgorod region. The leading place in commodity structure of export enterprises occupy trucks. Over the years it has developed more than 100 different models of cars and has manufactured over 15 million automobiles.

In the early thirties, simultaneously within construction of the plant, was built a large residential area next to the Sotsgorod automobile plant. This expanded to the North and into other settlements within the area. One of the first streets of the district Kirov Avenue and Lenin Avenue preserves these houses in timeless motion. Now this area is subject to new heights and beauty as this part of the city begins to modernize.

The most urgent need of housing in the early years within the district led to the fact that along with major housing was built a large number of temporary dwellings of barrack-type. Along with such constructions was built a number of buildings which still amaze with their majestic beauty, original architecture. To them, first and foremost, you must include the so-called radius house (built in the years 1935–1937), the building of the cinema Mir (1933) and the Palace of culture, which was built later at a later date.

Currently the area adjacent to the Palace, is the composite center of the district to which converges main highway.

3.8.3. Sights and culture

- Park Named 777 (Park Avtozavod)–anniversary of the city of Nizhny Novgorod
- Museum of history and development of the city railway (Gorohovezkaya, 12)
- Museum of the history of OAO «GAZ»(Lenina prospect, 95)
- Aviation Museum of Nizhny Novgorod (airport)

3.9. Leninsky City District

Leninsky City District is a region with the prevailing industrial buildings in the Lower City of Nizhny Novgorod, stretching from the banks of the river Oka in the direction of Sormovo. Leninsky district one of the largest industrial districts of the Nizhny Novgorod. It offers 18 large and medium industrial enterprises, employing approximately 10,000 people.

3.9.1. The districts history

On the 21st February 1935 the Leninsky district was established. Before the revolution the territory of Leninsky district was on the outskirts of Nizhny Novgorod. All that laid around were thick forests, impassable swamps, loose Sands.

In the 19th century in village Borzovka was based three plants: steel, cast iron, nail-making, two rope plant. In 1897–98, on the left Bank of the Oka river in the begin-

ning of the village Molitovka was erected weaving factory crafting Flax factory produced sacking.

3.9.2. Modern condition of the district

The basis of the economic potential of the district is 140 large and medium-sized enterprises of the manufacturing industry, science, communications, transport, construction and housing and communal services, trade and logistics. A significant part of these enterprises oriented to the needs of the military-industrial complex of the Russian Federation. Products manufactured by enterprises of this district is well known not only in Russia, but also abroad. Among large manufacturing and scientific-production enterprises –«Krasnaya Etna», «Polet», «Coca-Cola HBC Eurasia», «Plant of stamps and press-forms» and others.

The industry of the district is very diverse. Here is brewery Volga, the country's largest factory of milling machines plant «Engine of revolution». Among the industrial enterprises are allocated allied automobile plant «Krasnaya Etna», the plant of specialized automobiles (supplier vans and shops-trailers), plants gearbox and molds and others. In the Leninsky district there is a Department of the Gorky railway.

3.9.3. Sights and culture

Modern Leninsky district is relatively well maintained and a quiet place to relax. It has a Park, Dubki Park, and a cinema named Russia which is a great place to play video games, sit in a cafe and of course to watch a movie. Along with modern buildings in the Leninsky district you can see buildings of the late 19th-early 20th centuries.

In the Leninsky district there is the Spaso-Preobrazhenskaya Karpovskaya Church.

4. TRANSPORTATION

4.1. General information.

The transport network of the Russian Federation is one of the world's most extensive with the national web of roads, railways and airways stretching almost 4,800 miles

(7,700 km). From Kaliningrad in the west to the Kamchatka Peninsula in the east all of major cities, such as Moscow and Saint Petersburg, are served by extensive rapid transit systems.

4.2. Types of transport in Nizhny Novgorod

4.2.1. Railway transport

The Russian Railways department, the Gorkovskaya Railroad, which operates some 5,700km of rail lines throughout the Middle Volga region (of which some 1,200 are in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast), is headquartered in Nizhny Novgorod. Since 1862, there has been a railway connection between Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow. Overnight trains provide access to Nizhny Novgorod from Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kazan, Yaroslavl and cities across Russia. Since December 2002, a fast train has been in operation transporting passengers between Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow in less than five hours. One can continue from Nizhny Novgorod eastward along the Trans-Siberian Railway, with direct trains to major cities in the Urals and Siberia, as well as to Beijing, Pyongyang, and Ulan-Bator.

The first high-speed rail Sapsan train to Moscow (Kursky Rail Terminal) and Saint Petersburg (Moskovsky Rail Terminal) was launched on July 30, 2010.

Suburban commuter trains (elektrichka) connect Nizhny Novgorod with Vladimir, Dzerzhinsk, Murom, Kirov, Arzamas, Zavolzhye, Balakhna and others.

4.2.2. Airport

Nizhny Novgorod International Airport is the international airport serving the city of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. It is located on the outskirts of the city's Avtozavodsky district, 14 km southwest of city center. It was founded in 1936.

The civil terminal offers a large apron that can accommodate 44 aircraft. The airfield supports 24-hour flight operations, several Ministry of Interior Ilyushin Il-76 aircraft are based there.

Nizhny Novgorod Strigino Airport has direct flights to the majority of major Russian cities, as well as to Frankfurt (five flights a week by Lufthansa), Dubai and Prague.

The air base Sormovo was an important military airlift facility, and the Pravdinsk air base was an interceptor aircraft base during the Cold War. S7 Airlines, UTair Aviation fly to Moscow Domodedovo airport and Vnukovo airport daily.

4.2.3. Waterways

Nizhny Novgorod is an important center of Volga cargo and passenger shipping. In the summer, cruise vessels operate between Nizhny Novgorod, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Astrakhan. In 2006 a small number of class hydrofoils resumed operations on the Volga River.

The River station is a complex of buildings and facilities for service of passengers by river transport in Nizhny Novgorod. It is located on the right Bank, at the confluence of the Oka and the Volga. It was built in 1964. Architect M. I. Churilin.

The River station of Nizhny Novgorod is built in the shape of a ship. Located on the right Bank of the Oka, directly before flowing into the Volga. On the opposite bank of the river is the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.

Before the station is the arranged area of the Markin square, and in one of the arches of the building behind it (the high porch) is the address table.

4.2.4. Highway

The city is served by the Russian highway M–7, and is a hub of the regional highway network. The Russian Route M7 (also known as the Volga Highway) is a major trunk road running from Moscow through Vladimir and Nizhny Novgorod to Kazan in Tatarstan and Ufa in Bashkortostan. It generally follows the route of the historic Vladimirka road and, to a large extent, forms part of the European route E22.

4.2.5. Aerial tramway

Nizhny Novgorod's cable car line is a gondola lift cable car link across the Volga River in Russia connecting the city of Nizhny Novgorod with the town of Bor. The air tramway station is located in Nizhegorodsky district near Sennaya square.

It is a 3660 meters long gondola lift across the Volga River. It was inaugurated in 2012 and crosses the Volga River in a 900 meters long span on two 82 meters high

towers. Nizhny Novgorod Volga Aerial Tramway was built by Poma. A trip on it lasts 13 minutes.

4.2.6. Public transport

Although for locals car ownership is a highly desirable sign of success and social status, Nizhny Novgorod's public transport network is actually extensive and efficient, if often overcrowded. The metro is undoubtedly the best bet for visitors, and covers nearly the entire city, with new stations opening almost every year. It also has some spectacular station architecture.

Over ground transport is bewilderingly varied, but not difficult to use with the help of a few pointers (see individual pages below), and Nizhny Novgorod's latest transport project means that you can even use the city's waterways to get around. The only real disadvantage of the public transport system is the lack of night services, so if you plan to stay out after midnight, you will have to rely on taxis or your own two feet to get home.

Fares for all forms of public transport are comparatively low (around \$0.5 or less for any single journey).

Public transport within the city consists of a subway system containing 14 stations (Nizhny Novgorod Metro), tramways, marshrutkas or minibuses, buses and trolley-buses. Electric and diesel commuter trains run to suburbs in several directions.

Free shuttle buses run from several points in the city to the MEGA shopping complex, which opened in October 2006 in Fedyakovo, a few kilometers to the east of the Nizhny Novgorod city line.

- **Metro**

Nizhny Novgorod's metro is perhaps not quite as majestic as Moscow's, but architecturally it's still a cut above nearly any other public transport system in the world. It is also the world's deepest subway, so be prepared for vertiginous views from the top of the escalator. It has 14 worked stations, one of which is located in the upper city on Gorkovo square.

The system is also remarkably efficient. During the day, trains arrive every 3-5 minutes, with slightly longer waiting periods early in the morning and late at night. On average, the stations open at about 5:45am and close midnight.

The fare for a single journey to anywhere in the city is around \$0.5. Nizhny Novgorod's metro still uses a system of tokens ("zheton") the size of larger coins. These can be purchased from the cashier windows operating in every station vestibule. The easiest way to make yourself understood is just to pass through exact change and/or use your fingers to signal the number of tokens you require. In theory, you need to buy separate tokens for larger baggage, but this rule is rarely enforced.

There are also vending machines of two types in nearly all stations. The smaller orange machines allow you only to insert a set denomination of note (currently 100 rubles) and obtain a set number of tokens plus change. If no light is showing, the machine is not working. The second type, which are computerized with a touch screen, allow you to choose the number of tokens you require and to pay with different denominations of note or coin, and can also be used to buy or top up cards.

- Tram

Tram stops are marked with signs above the tracks (with a letter "T" on them). Since January 1998 all trams have conductors on board. You should pay in cash to a conductor, unless you have a monthly pass. Conductors normally wear special uniform (and/or red arm bands). They check whether everybody has paid and sell tickets to those who need them. Don't be surprised to see an occasional inspector, who might ask you to show your ticket.

- Bus

The bus network of Nizhny Novgorod is extensive, but can be a bit confusing for a foreigner. Bus stops are marked by signs with the letter "A", which stands for autobus. Routes are listed on signs (double-sided) at most bus stops, but only in Cyrillic.

Currently the city has several types of buses:

Regular buses are usually green-and-white and nearly always have conductors on board, although on a few routes you will need to pay the driver as you enter the bus. Normally, you should pay for your ticket in cash to a conductor or check your electronic pass on a card reader (the conductor may then check your card again).

T-buses are privately operated commercial buses. They can charge more for tickets, and will not accept travel cards.

- Trolleybus

Trolleybus stops are marked with signs with blue letter "T". They operate exactly the same way as Nizhny Novgorod's buses and they are in the upper city only. The only disadvantage of trolleybuses is that they cannot change lanes, and are therefore more prone to delays when congestion gets bad.

All trolleybuses have a conductor on board, and you can either pay them for a single journey or use a magnetic travel card, which you need to check on a card reader as soon as you have boarded.

- Marshrutka

A marshrutka is a privately owned minivan or small bus that follows a fixed route, collecting and depositing passengers anywhere along the way. Anyone who has traveled in the Middle East or Asia will be familiar with the concept, although they are particularly widespread in Russian cities.

Route numbers, usually copying numbers of government buses, are prominently displayed on the front and side of the bus, often alongside the most important stops along the route. Rules have changed in recent years, and marshrutka drivers are now only supposed to pick up passengers at official bus stops. They will normally stop anywhere to let you off, however, provided you give them reasonable warning. If you have the language skills, then explain exactly where you wish to be dropped. Otherwise, just shout "Остановите, пожалуйста-

ста" - "stop, please!" - when you get close to your destination. Before your bus stop you should push the button above the exit door.

It is the norm to pay as soon as you have boarded a marshrutka, passing your money to the driver through the passengers in front of you and tell «Передайте, пожалуйста» - «pass it, please». For this reason, it is best to avoid the seats at the very front of the cabin, otherwise you will find yourself passing money backwards and forwards throughout your journey. Unless you are traveling to the end of the route, you will need to request the driver to stop at your destination.

Fares on marshrutki are under \$0.5 within the city, and only slightly more for suburban trips.

- Taxi

If you wish to take a taxi, you will need to call a reputable cab company, a list of which you can find in the Internet. Most companies will now be able to get a car to you anywhere in the center in 10-20 minutes. There is usually a minimum fare of around \$ 2, which covers the first 5km of your journey. After that, you pay per kilometer, and the price will be calculated when you book. You will need to give the operator a phone number that you can be contacted on.

Although it is still possible, flagging a car in the street is not advisable unless you have good Russian and a reasonable knowledge of the city. Apart from the obvious safety risks of getting into a stranger's car, the majority of "gypsy cab" drivers are now recent immigrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus who do not necessarily know the topography of Nizhny Novgorod and rarely have GPS. A yellow sign or light on the roof of a car does not mean that it is an official taxi, whatever the driver may tell you.

If you do decide to risk it, and it is still common practice among locals, then never get into a car with more than one person, always agree on a fare before you get in (if you don't have the language skills to haggle, just show the driver how much you are willing to pay and state your destination clearly), and do not

feel compelled to get into any car that stops - if you don't like the look of the driver, just wave them on and wait for somebody else to stop.

5. EDUCATION SYSTEM IN RUSSIA

5.1. General information.

Russia has a long-standing tradition in delivering high quality education for all citizens. It probably has also one of the best mass education systems in the world producing a literacy rate of 98% exceeding most Western European countries. Education is split into a compulsory Basic Education and an ongoing Higher Education.

Education in Russia is provided predominantly by the state and is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science. Before 1990, the course of school training in Soviet Union was 10 years, but at the end of 1990, an 11 year course was officially entered. Education in state-owned secondary schools is free as well as first tertiary level education. A substantial share of students is enrolled for full pay. Male and female students have equal shares in all stages of education, except tertiary where women lead with 57%.

The literacy rate in Russia, according to the 2012 census, is 99.4% (99.7% men, 99.2% women).

5.2. Pre - school education

According to the 2012 census, 68% of children aged 5 are enrolled in kindergartens. Kindergartens, unlike schools, are regulated by regional and local authorities. The Ministry of Education and Science regulates only a brief pre-school preparation program for the 5-6 year old children. In 2004 the government attempted to charge the full cost of kindergartens to parents but widespread public opposition caused a reversal of this policy. Currently local authorities can legally charge the parents not more

than 20% of cost. Twins, children of university students, refugees, Chernobyl veterans and other protected social groups are entitled to free service.

The Soviet system provided nearly universal primary (nursery, age 1 to 3) and kindergarten (age 3 to 7) service in urban areas, relieving working mothers from daytime childcare needs. By the 1980s there were 88,000 preschool institutions. As the secondary education study load increased and moved from ten to eleven-year standard, the kindergarten programs shifted from training basic social skills and physical abilities to preparation for the school.

5.3. Secondary school

There were 59,260 general education schools in the 2007–2008 academic year. According to a 2005 UNESCO report, 96% of the adult population has completed lower secondary schooling with most of them also have an upper secondary education.

Eleven year secondary education in Russian has been compulsory since September the 1st 2007. Until 2007, secondary education was limited to nine years with grades 10 and 11 being optional. A student of 15 to 18 years of age may drop out of school with approval of his or her parents and the local authorities, or without their consent upon reaching the age of 18. Expulsion from school for multiple violations disrupting school life is possible starting at the age of 15.

The eleven-year school term is split into elementary (grades 1–4), middle (grades 5–9) and senior (grades 10–11) classes. The absolute majority of children attend full program schools providing eleven-year education. Schools limited to elementary or elementary and middle classes typically exist in rural areas.

Children are accepted to first grade at the age of 6 or 7, depending on individual development of each child. Until 1990, starting age was set at seven years and schooling lasted ten years (all compulsory). Continuously an increasing load in middle and senior grades motivated the switch from ten to eleven-year term. In the 1960s, it resulted in a “conversion” of the fourth grade from elementary to middle school. Children of elementary classes are normally separated from other classes within their own

floor of a school building. They are taught, ideally, by a single teacher through all four elementary grades (except for physical training and, if available, foreign languages). 98.5% of elementary school teachers are women. Starting from the fifth grade, each academic subject is taught by a dedicated specialty teacher. The Pupil to teacher ratio is 21:1. A teachers' average monthly salaries in 2008 ranged from 6,200 rubles (260 US dollars) in Mordovia to 21,000 rubles (900 US dollars) in Moscow.

The school year extends from September the 1st until the end of May and is divided into four terms. Study programs in schools are fixed unlike in some Western countries, schoolchildren or their parents have no choice of study subjects. Students are graded on a 5–step scale, ranging in practice from 2 («unacceptable») to 5 («excellent»). 1 is a rarely used sign of extreme failure. Teachers regularly subdivide these grades (i.e. 4+, 5–) in daily use, but term and year results are graded strictly 2, 3, 4 or 5.

5.4. Vocational training option

Upon completion of a nine–year program the student has a choice of either completing the remaining two years at normal school or of a transfer to a specialized professional training school. Historically, those were divided into low–prestige (PTUs) and better regarded technical and medical (nurse level) schools. In the 2000s, many such institutions, if operational, have been renamed to colleges. They provide students with a working skill qualification and a high school certificate equivalent to 11–year education in a normal school. The program, due to its work-training component, extends to 3 years.

All certificates of secondary education (Maturity Certificate), regardless of the issuing institution, conform to the same state standard and are considered, at least by law, to be a full equivalent. The state prescribes a minimum (and nearly exhaustive) set of study subjects that must appear in each certificate. In practice, extension of study terms to three years slightly disadvantages vocational schools' male students who intend to continue. As if they reach conscription age before graduation or immediately

after it, they must normally serve in the army before applying to undergraduate level institutions.

Though everyone is eligible to postpone their conscription to receive higher education, they must be at least signed up for the admission tests into the university the moment they get the conscription notice from the army. Most of the military's commissariat officials are loyal to the potential recruits on that matter and usually allow graduates enough time to choose the university and sign-up for admission or enroll there on paid basis. This is despite the fact that the spring recruiting period does not end by the time most schools graduate their students and the graduates may legally be commanded to present themselves to the recruitment centers the next day after the graduation.

Males of conscription age that chosen not to continue their education at any stage usually get notice from the army within half a year after their education ends, because of the periodic nature of recruitment periods in Russian army.

5.5. Unified state examinations

In 2003 the Ministry of Education launched the Unified state examination (USE) program. The set of standardized tests for high school graduates, issued uniformly throughout the country and rated independent of the student's schoolmasters, akin to North American SAT, was supposed to replace entrance exams to state universities. Thus, the reformers reasoned, the USE will empower talented graduates from remote locations to compete for admissions at the universities of their choice.

University heads, notably the Moscow State University rector Viktor Sadovnichiy, resisted the novelty, arguing that their schools cannot survive without charging the applicants with their own entrance hurdles. Nevertheless, the legislators enacted USE in February 2007. In 2008, it was mandatory for the students and optional for the universities. It has been mandatory since 2009. A few higher education establishments are still allowed to introduce their own entrance tests in addition to USE scoring. Such tests must be publicized in advance.

5.6. Russian System of Higher Education

Public and non-public (non-State) accredited higher education institutions provide Higher Education in Russia. There are two levels of higher education:

Basic higher education (4 years) leading to a Bachelor degree, the first university level degree. This is equivalent to the B.Sc. degree in the US or Western Europe

Postgraduate higher education (5-6 years or more). After two years, students are entitled to receive a Master degree. This is equivalent to a Master degree (M.Sc, M.A.) in the US or Western Europe. After a Master's degree, students can continue to study towards a doctoral degree including a Ph.D.degree and a Doktor's degree (the second, highest level, equivalent to Professor).

The Bachelor degree programs last for at least 4 years of full-time university-level study. The programs are elaborated in accordance with the State Educational Standards which regulate almost 80% of their content. The other 20% are elaborated by the university itself. The programs include professional and special courses in Science, the Humanities and Social-economic disciplines, professional training, completion of a research paper/project and passing the States final exams. Having obtained the Bachelor degree, students may apply to enter the Master degree program or continue their studies in the framework of the Specialist's Diploma programs. The Bachelor degree is awarded in all fields except Medicine after defending a Diploma project prepared under the guidance of a supervisor and passing the final exams. In Medicine, the first stage lasts for six years.

Holders of the Bachelor degree are admitted to enter the Specialist Diploma Master degree programs. Access to these programs is competitive. The Master degree is awarded after successful completion of two years' full-time study. Students must carry out a year of research including practice and prepare and defend a thesis which constitutes an original contribution and sit for final examinations.

Access to the Ph.D level again is very competitive. Candidates must hold a Specialist Diploma or a Master degree. Studies last for 3 years. The Ph.D. prepares for research

and professorial activities. Students must learn teaching methods, ICTs, and pass qualifying exams. They carry out independent research and prepare and defend a dissertation in public. They are then awarded the scientific degree of Ph.D.. The Ph.D. student is specific and its duration is not fixed. It follows the Ph.D. and is awarded after preparation and public defense of a dissertation.

6. CULTURE SHOCK

6.1. General information.

Culture shock is the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, or to a move between social environments, also a simple travel to another type of life.

6.2. The four phases.

One of the most common causes of culture shock involves individuals in a foreign environment. Culture shock can be described as consisting of at least one of four distinct phases: Honeymoon, Negotiation, Adjustment, and Mastery are the most common attributes that pertain to existing problems. Further hindrances include; information overload, language barriers, generation gaps, technology gaps, skill interdependence, formulation dependency, homesickness (cultural), infinite regression (homesickness), boredom (job dependency) and response ability (cultural skill set). There is no true way to entirely prevent culture shock, as individuals in any society are personally affected by cultural contrasts differently.

6.2.1. Honeymoon phase

During this period, the differences between the old and new culture are seen in a romantic light. For example, in moving to a new country, an individual might love the new food, the pace of life, and the locals' habits. During the first few weeks, most people are fascinated by the new culture. They associate with nationals who speak

their language, and who are polite to the foreigners. This period is full of observations and new discoveries. Like most honeymoon periods, this stage eventually ends.

6.2.2. Negotiation phase

After some time (usually around three months, depending on the individual), differences between the old and new culture become apparent and may create anxiety. Excitement may eventually give way to unpleasant feelings of frustration and anger as one continues to experience unfavorable events that may be perceived as strange and offensive to one's cultural attitude. Language barriers, stark differences in public hygiene, traffic safety, food accessibility and quality may heighten the sense of disconnection from the surroundings.

While being transferred into a different environment puts special pressure on communication skills, there are practical difficulties to overcome, such as circadian rhythm disruption that often leads to insomnia and daylight drowsiness; adaptation of gut flora to different bacteria levels and concentrations in food and water; difficulty in seeking treatment for illness, as medicines may have different names from the native countries and the same active ingredients might be hard to recognize.

Still, the most important change in the period is communication. People adjusting to a new culture often feel lonely and homesick because they are not yet used to the new environment and meet people with whom they are not familiar every day. The language barrier may become a major obstacle in creating new relationships: special attention must be paid to one's and others' culture-specific body language signs, linguistic faux pas, conversation tone, linguistic nuances and customs, and false friends. In the case of students studying abroad, some develop additional symptoms of loneliness that ultimately affect their lifestyles as a whole. Due to the strain of living in a different country without parental support, international students often feel anxious and feel more pressure while adjusting to new cultures, even more so when the cultural distances are wide, as patterns of logic and speech are different and a special emphasis is put on rhetoric.

6.2.3. Adjustment phase

Again, after some time (usually 6 to 12 months), one grows accustomed to the new culture and develops routines. One knows what to expect in most situations and the host country no longer feels all that new. One becomes concerned with basic living again, and things become more normal. One starts to develop problem-solving skills for dealing with the culture and begins to accept the culture's ways with a positive attitude. The culture begins to make sense and negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced.

There are three basic outcomes of the Adjustment Phase:

- Some people find it impossible to accept the foreign culture and integrate. They isolate themselves from the host country's environment, which they come to perceive as hostile, withdraw into a “ghetto” and see return to their own culture as the only way out. These “Rejecters” also have the greatest problems re-integrating back home after return.
- Some people integrate fully and take on all parts of the host culture while losing their original identity. They normally remain in the host country forever. This group is sometimes known as “Adopters”.
- Some people manage to adapt to the aspects of the host culture they see as positive, while keeping some of their own and creating their unique blend. They have no major problems returning home or relocating elsewhere. This group can be thought to be somewhat cosmopolitan.

Culture shock has many different effects, time spans, and degrees of severity. Many people are handicapped by its presence and do not recognize what is bothering them.

6.2.4. Mastery phase

In the mastery stage assignees are able to participate fully and comfortably in the host culture. Mastery does not mean total conversion. People often keep many traits from their earlier culture, such as accents and languages. It is often referred to as the bicultural stage.

6.3. Symptoms of culture shock.

Learning the symptoms and knowing ahead of time of how to prepare yourself and how to deal with Russian culture shock can make it a lot easier to overcome. The symptoms of cultural shock can appear at different times and show in different ways.

Below are some of the symptoms you should look out for:

- Insomnia or a desire to sleep too much or too little.
- Changes in your temperament, getting angry easily at things that usually wouldn't bother you, depression, feeling vulnerable, feeling powerless.
- You have a preoccupation with your health.
- You start having aches, pains, stomachaches, headaches, or allergies that you usually didn't have before arriving
- Anger, irritability, resentment, and an unwillingness to interact with other people.
- A feeling of sadness or loneliness.
- A feeling of being lost, overlooked, exploited or abused.
- Identifying only with your own culture and comparing the host country negatively to your own country.
- You wish you were home and have a strong longing for your family and friends back in your country.
- Unable to solve simple problems.
- You are trying too hard to absorb everything in the news about the culture in Russia
- Feelings of inadequacy, lack of confidence, insecurity, loss of identity, not fitting in, and doubting your ability to succeed.
- You start developing stereotypes about Russian's culture and the country.
- You may start developing different obsessions such as: over-cleanliness; over-tidiness; over-eating; over-drinking.
- You feel you can't have a normal conversation with anyone.

- Having a feeling of helplessness, and thinking you need help from people in your own country.
- Being afraid to do new things or go to new places.

6.4. How to help yourself.

Most people who come to Russia have the ability to positively deal with the difficulties of a new environment and overcome culture shock. So if you are thinking about going home or only spending time with people from your own culture, don't. You have to realize that you are not alone. Many other foreigners in Russia have experienced what you feel, talk to your friends or other teachers at your school they can help you feel better.

Here are some tips for dealing with the stress produced by culture shock:

- Be aware of the symptoms. Once you realize you are experiencing culture shock, you can then take steps to deal with it.
- What are the situations which confuse or irritate you the most in the new country? Are you misunderstanding the host people's treatment of you? Where can you find more information about this aspect of the culture? Behavior, which seems rude to you, may not be intended as rude. Polite customs are different for each culture. When situations seem senseless, remember the hosts may be following social rules unknown to you. Ask questions about social customs.
- If you are still bothered by a situation, find ways to minimize the irritation. Is the situation necessary? If not, you may be able to avoid or minimize involvement. Example: If women's swimwear offends you, then spend shorter periods of time at the pool. Or remind yourself that swimming apparel does not reflect moral looseness as it might in your home culture.
- What do you miss the most which was enjoyable in your home country? Look for ways to meet these desires or replace these with something new. For example, if you miss your favorite food, go to a store or ask a relative to mail some to you.

- Develop friendships with both Russians and people from your own country. At times the friendships with culturally different people will seem very taxing. That is why it is important to have people from your own country or area to spend time with also. This helps you re-energize for interacting cross-culturally. However, isolation in either group alone causes more adjustment problems.
- Talk to people from your country about your stresses and ask how they have dealt with the same situation.
- Take a course or read a book on cross-cultural communication. Ask hosts questions like, “As I understand it, you are saying that.... Is that correct?”
- Continue improving your language proficiency (watch TV, listen to the radio, read books in Russian).
- Have a sense of humor. Allow yourself to see the humor in misunderstandings or embarrassments.
- Exercise and a nutritional diet also help to reduce stress.
- Remember that some culture shock is a normal part of adjusting to a new country. However, the more severe symptoms mean the adjustment process is blocked and you need help to move into a more comfortable stage.
- Find a place where you feel comfortable and spend time there.
- Have certain times during the week or day when you do not think about your research or problems just have fun.
- When problems seem to be building up, mentally step back from them. Divide your problems up, understand each one, and work on them one at a time.
- If headaches and stomach aches become a constant problem, realize that they may be a sign of emotional problems, not just physical problems. If medical doctors and medication do not work, it might be time to see a counselor.
- It is important to maintain regular life patterns, for example eating meals at regular times and sleeping and exercising regularly.
- When you begin to feel depressed, ask yourself: “What did I expect? Why? Was my expectation reasonable?”

- Learn the culture and customs of the country you are in and respect them.
- Disregard your old assumptions and expectations. Be open to learning new things. Explore new ways of living and compare these to your own. Become more aware of both your values and attitudes and those of your host country.
- Don't be afraid to take risks.

Adjusting to a new culture requires a good amount of re-examination of your own values and outlook. Try to do that as you live in the new culture.

There are several things you can do to help yourself through the stages of culture shock, fight the urge to retreat and join a club, try out for a sports team, volunteer, attend a local church or take a language class. Mixing, meeting new people and forcing yourself to become part of the community will help you.

Get out! Walk around your neighborhood. Be seen. Smile. Visit the same coffee shop or book store or market. You'll soon be recognized. There is nothing that says you are at home, like a neighbor saying "good morning" in any language.

Go on tours! Be a tourist in your own town. Sign up for local excursions. Get to know your city, its history and culture.

7. THE RUSSIAN MIND-SET

7.1. General information.

Mindset is a set of assumptions, methods, or notations held by one or more people or groups of people that is so established that it creates a powerful incentive within these people or groups to continue to adopt or accept prior behaviors, choices, or tools. This phenomenon is also sometimes described as mental inertia, "groupthink", or a "paradigm", and it is often difficult to counteract its effects upon analysis and decision making processes.

7.2. Russian personality.

Because the Russian personality has so many faces, it is difficult to define. Defeated by harsh weather, a tumultuous history and the general malaise that ensued, Russians seem to value the status quo and are reluctant to change. Security, stability, and conservatism has always been held in high regard, but at the same time, you will see new phenomena's such as the absence of concern about the future, free spending and easy and quick adaptation of foreign practices within the younger generations in larger cities. Many foreigners find Russian people an enigma, surprisingly nostalgic about their past yet cautiously optimistic about the future, patient but curious about the possibilities of freedom.

As some things in Russia are almost impossible to explain, there is a very good saying that you will hear repeatedly as first response to your questions, "Russia cannot be understood with your mind," which is a quotation from Tyutchev's poetry.

Russians are strong people, able to endure hardship and extreme climate with submission and patience. Generally, Russians are very well educated and have a sound knowledge of literature, history and politics. The majority of the country's population lives in European Russia (the part of Russia lying west of the border with Siberia) with the largest population centers being Moscow and St. Petersburg. Most families have one or two children, who are the center of the family focus.

Traditional Russian values and core beliefs include the love of children, respect for the old, a sense of humor, strong people orientation, the importance of friendship, generosity, pride, patriotism, love of literature and arts, nostalgia, self-sacrifice, apathy, conservatism, aversion to change, caution, collectivism, pessimism and cynicism. There is widely accepted notion in Russia that there is a 'soul' that makes Russians different which is a sort of sadness born of oppression that demands a different social order. Whether or not this proud melancholia is fact or fiction is arguable, but the belief is almost universally held with great pride. Acres of print have been devoted to the topic, with no very firm conclusions.

Russians love and value going to the theatre, opera, ballet and concerts. The arts are

avidly devoured by all sections of society. The idea that plays or classical music could be difficult or unpopular is rarely encountered. They also enjoy attending readings of literature and poetry. Russians love reading everything from classical literature to translations of contemporary foreign authors. They read on the metro, while they wait, and at home. You will find that your Russian friends can easily recite entire poems or passages from their favorite books. They generally have a very good knowledge of world history and literature, geography and the arts. This is true regardless of a person's education or occupation.

7.3. Behaviors you may find puzzling.

There are some behavior patterns you may find very different from those you are used to. Some things may shock you initially, but they can usually be explained through Russia's history and your Russian friends will make efforts to help you understand why things are done the way they are. Always remember that what you consider normal behavior may seem strange to your Russian friends.

Two things that newly arrived expatriates often find particularly troubling are the fact that Russians can seem very rude and that they rarely smile in public. Rudeness in public situations is still common. You may encounter it at supermarkets, at the post office, in public transport. Please do not let this discourage you and always remember that this is nothing personal.

Smiling at strangers is a rarity in Russia. 70 years of history taught people not to trust anybody and to guard their own territory. Just recall the famous Soviet poster "Do not Chatter" and you will understand the roots of not smiling at unfamiliar persons. There is also an inherited notion from Russian villages that people who smile for no reason must be simpletons. However, while people tend to be introvert or aggressive on the outside, you will find that they are extremely kind and helpful if you get beyond their first suspicion. Keep going to the same supermarket, the same bank and the same dry cleaners repeatedly, keep smiling and do say «hello and goodbye every time you arrive and leave. People will eventually start remembering you and most will start

smile back. They are often not used to people being polite and nice to them and your efforts will be appreciated. It may just take some time, so don't give up.

Russians seem to have very different concept of what it means to stand in a line. They tend to be pushy while getting on public transport and in the metro you will find that people try to get on while others are still trying to get off. The same applies to lines at meat and cheese counters in supermarkets, where it can be difficult to figure out where the line starts and who is there first. When you go to pay utility bills at a Russian bank, you may find that when it is almost your turn one or two people show up who had “reserved” a place in the line and then took care of something else at another counter or just sit down while waiting for their turn. It is common practice to reserve a place in a line simply by telling the person in front of you that you are behind them. This practice dated back to Soviet times when lines for just about everything were so long that it was impossible to get something done if you just occupied one single line. House entrances, rest rooms and some other public areas may not be well treated. You may, for example, see a beautiful apartment in a building with a dilapidated entrance and filthy staircase. In Soviet times, this was not the case. The streets and public areas were clean and littering was unheard of. Today people do not seem to care for anything that happens outside of the limits of their apartments. However, things are slowly starting to improve.

Drivers in Moscow are generally very aggressive, and you may find this pretty daunting if you come from a country where drivers are polite and abide by the rules. There seems a comprehensive spirit involved in driving. Everybody wants to be the first one to take off from a red light.

Russians love to comment and give advice. Don't be surprised to get unsolicited advice on how to dress your children in winter or on the necessity of wearing a hat in cold winter.

People, both men and women, still drink beer in public. While this is not publicly frowned upon, the government is trying to change this habit, but so far the efforts have not led to any noticeable results. Restriction of shopping hours for alcohol was

never previously known in Russia, but sterner measures have been introduced from 2009 onwards, mostly by individual cities. In Nizhny Novgorod there is a 22:00 total ban on all alcohol sales in shops.

While Russians devote considerable time and cost to their own personal wardrobe and grooming, they are relatively unjudgemental about others, figuring that a person's soul is most important, and taking a very liberal line on allowing for differing customs elsewhere. An odd Soviet throwback, however, is a private habit of awarding unmentioned merit marks to the quality and shine of the shoes other people wear. You can make a good first impression with very little effort in this field. Sports footwear is poorly regarded in general, and is often cited (by doormen) as fair reason to deny entrance to fashionable clubs or restaurants.

While Russians can be secretive when dealing with foreigners, they can also be very curious. You may find yourself in situations when people just met ask you how much money you make. In the vast majority of cases there is absolutely no criminal interest behind these questions, but you may still not want to divulge too much personal information about your family and yourself unless you know your conversation partner very well. Very often, such questions arise from fellow professionals who are keen to know how their profession might be valued abroad.

When you come into a Russian home, you will most certainly be offered tea or coffee along with something to eat. If you arrive around lunch and dinner time, you may be invited to join the family for the meal. When inviting Russian friends over your house for drinks make sure, you have some good food to offer, drinks accompanied by cheese and grapes just do not do.

7.4. Concepts of space and personal space.

On the one hand, Russians live in the world's largest country and think big in many ways. They tend to make big plans, even if they know that they will never be able to implement them. At the same time, they usually stand very close to each other in conversation or when standing in line. This may be a remnant from the Soviet past

when people had to be very careful about what they said and always made sure that no one else was listening. Standing close to each other allows you to speak more quietly and to feel that others aren't able to hear what you are talking about. When someone has something very important to tell you and you are speaking to that person over the phone, you may still hear them say “this is not a phone conversation”, meaning that they prefer to tell you in person because they are still afraid of someone else may be listening. The reason why people stand close to each other in lines is more difficult to explain. It might have something to do with a feeling of getting to the front of the line sooner as there is less distance to the target. Touching, hugging, and kissing friends and close acquaintance is common. You may find this uncomfortable if you come from a non or little contact culture.

7.5. Attitudes.

7.5.1. General attitudes.

The mindset of the younger Russian generation is not as much pro–anything, as it is anti–communist. Difficult times and general uncertainty are accompanied by the feeling that democracy is better. This does not mean that Russians are not complaining. While they are critical of the slow pace reform and of the new leaders, they are nonetheless loyal and optimistic about the future of their country.

Making the transition from a society completely dependent upon the state to one in which the individual shares responsibility has been a very difficult and traumatic process for Russia and her people, and the Russians don't yet seem to have a clear picture of their selves. The demise of communism has hugely affected life in Russia, and the sometimes halting democracy that has taken its place is still developing. Under communist rule, the State was responsible for everything, even for piffling things. Today people must make decisions and take responsibility for them, which is not an easy task for those who have been raised to follow, not to lead.

7.5.2. Attitudes at the workplace.

The older generation of Russians, although for the most part well–educated, hard–

working and disciplined, is a product of the communist system in which workers were not rewarded for personal incentives nor punished for being nonproductive. Not having been raised to get ahead and to amass personal fortunes, they may respect these traits in foreigners but generally abhor them in their Russian colleagues. You may hear the phrase “initiative is punishable” from members of the older generations. It can be difficult to convince them that personal initiative, and doing your own thinking is not only welcomed, but is a necessity in the new Russia.

The attitudes of the younger generations are for most part, very different. Achievements in the workplace are highly regarded. You will find many highly trained young Russians who, on top of having an excellent education, speak fluent English and/or other foreign languages. Many choose to further their education and qualifications voluntarily at evening classes at their own expense.

7.5.3. Attitudes to savings.

As people still pay very little money for electricity and hot water, these resources are literally wasted. Russians will do the dishes under running hot water instead of letting them soak in the sink. Nobody will complain if you take a hot shower for half an hour or a hot bath twice a day. At the same time that electricity is still very cheap, Russians seem to prefer dim lighting. You will notice this in the metro, on the streets, in staircase, and even in people's homes where the lighting could often be a lot brighter. Street lights are not very bright, and often entire yards have no lighting for weeks on end.

These days light bulbs in public areas of apartment buildings usually have to be replaced by residents, who are often hesitant about replacing something that is not for their own use exclusively. If you want the housing department or your neighbors to replace the broken light bulbs, you may be in for a very long (and dark) wait. If you encounter such a problem in your apartment building, just buy some light bulbs and replace the broken ones. Russia has no laws on expensive energy saving bulbs, and regular clear glass bulbs cost just pennies. You may win the friendship or respect of your neighbors if you occasionally mop the landing area between the lift and your

door.

7.5.4. Attitudes toward foreigners.

Russians generally respect and admire the business expertise and technology skills and tools of European, North American and Asian companies and are interested in doing business with them.

In some quarters Russians tend to blame Western influence for the hard times brought about by reform. The economic disparity between foreigners and themselves may also raise the hurdle of understanding. Russians have historically feared and distrusted foreigners, but today's foreign community in Moscow lives in relative harmony with the locals. Some Russians may respect their presence, but most appreciate the efforts of foreigners to modernize the local economy.

While Russians are well aware of the fact that things in Russia aren't perfect, they do not appreciate it when foreigners criticize their country, or boast excessively about the alleged superiority of their homelands. Very often questions about how things are managed overseas will actually be a delicate appeal for some positive comments about how things are by comparison in Russia. A tactful reply, without toadying, will be appreciated. It is useful to have some pre-prepared compliments about some neutral topics such as the affordability and frequency of public transport or the low cost of public amenities etc.

7.5.5. Attitudes towards women.

The communists maintained the equal status of men and women in the classless society, and many women had (and still have) the dual responsibility of adding to family income through a full-time job and of caring (shopping, cooking, cleaning) for the family. In the workplace opportunities for women have been slow to surface. While women in Russia have always had the opportunity to pursue higher education and many have at least one degree. They do not typically fill leadership positions.

Foreigners working in Russia often find that Russian women who have reached man-

agerial positions are more serious, harder working and more creative than their male counterparts. However, radical changes must occur for the Russian mentality to accept women in positions superior to men. The male network in business is unwilling to allow women to progress.

Foreign businesswomen might encounter some resistance. Conservative dress and demeanor and a serious attitude will be helpful in dealing with Russian men. Keeping a certain distance rather than being too friendly is advisable. It is also best to ignore the inequality between the sexes that exists in Russia, instead behaving as if business were transacted in the west.

Men are still the dominant gender in Russia and many Russians are uncomfortable with very strong women. A woman who stays aloof will be respected, whereas overly friendly behavior may be misinterpreted.

7.5.6. Attitudes toward the disabled.

Russia on the whole is not a great place for physically disabled or mentally challenged children and adults. If you have a child with a severe physical or mental disability, you should think twice before moving to Russia.

Generally, attitudes toward disabled people in Russia are not very good, as there are not many opportunities for the disabled and they usually stay at home. You will, therefore, hardly ever encounter disabled people on the streets. It is not uncommon to encounter disabled people begging on public transport, particularly military veterans. You may want to prioritize generosity over any feelings of patronizing them as they get little other help in their lives.

State assistance to people with disabled family members is very limited. Consequently, a large proportion of women who give birth to a disabled child decide to give it up right after the child is born. These children are then condemned to a sad existence in state-run orphanages and will receive little to no physical or mental development support.

Educational opportunities for disabled children and adults are extremely limited. Even the private foreign schools in Russia will only accept children with very minor

disabilities. It is almost impossible to get around Russia physically in a wheelchair as building entrances; sidewalks and public transportation are mostly not wheelchair friendly.

7.6. Russian customs, etiquette, and popular superstitions.

- Even if you are not planning to be in Russia for long, you should make every effort to learn at least a few basic words and phrases in Russian.
- Never shake hands with or kiss someone over the threshold of the doorstep or you will quarrel with this person (an old superstition)
- Take off your gloves when shaking hands.
- Returning home if you forgot something brings back luck. If it happens that you must return for something, looking in a mirror before leaving again dispels the bad luck.
- Before leaving the house on a trip, it is customary to sit down on one's suitcase for a minute or so to reflect on the trip (silently, for 4–5 seconds) and to recall whether you have forgotten anything.
- It you are not married, never sit down at the corner of a square table. If you do, you will not get married for seven years.
- Spitting three times over your left shoulder prevents bad luck. (You may hear Russians say “tfu-tfu-tfu” (a spitting incantation against bad luck.) So does knocking on wood.
- Do not put your hands in your pockets.
- Do not sit with your legs wide apart.
- Do not cross your legs with the ankle on the knee or put your feet on the table. It is considered impolite to show others the soles of your shoes.
- Whistling is regarded as a sure way to guarantee that you will soon part with all your money.
- Never light a cigarette from a candle. This is also said to bring bad luck.

Never pour wine backhanded. It is impolite and signifies that you will “pour” your

money away.

- If you spit salt on the table, you will be plagued by bad luck unless you throw three pinches of salt over your left shoulder immediately.
- Always bring a gift for the hostess if invited into a Russian home. A box of candy and /or flowers are traditional gifts for the hostess. Arriving with empty hands is considered the poorest manners.
- Never give an even number of flowers to someone – even numbers are for funerals only!
- When entering a Russian home, offer to take off your shoes. In most cases your host will provide you with slippers called “tapochki” in Russian.
- Be prepared to accept all food and drinks when visiting friends. Refusing a drink or toast is a serious breach of etiquette. An open bottle often has to be finished. However, Russians will understand if you do not drink at all (e.g. for health reasons or because of religious beliefs, or because you have to drive later).
- If you plan to visit a Russian Orthodox Church, dress conservatively (no short skirts or shorts). Women must cover their hair before entering the church, so bring a headscarf. Men, on the other hand, must remove headwear (hats, caps). Some extremely severe monasteries may insist on women donning a wraparound long skirt, if so, these will be provided on free loan at the gateway entrance, and using them is obligatory. It is better to wait outside if you do not wish to respect their dress code requirements.
- On public transportation, younger men and women should give up their seat to mothers with small children, pregnant women and elderly people. Certain seats may be marked for the use of these categories of people anyhow.
- Men should offer to carry parcels and heavy bags for women they accompanying. This is local custom, regardless of what you may be used to or believe in at home.
- That conveniently free seat on the jam-packed tram or bus is for the conductor – you are not allowed to sit there!

- When going to the theatre or a concert, you are expected to check your coat and any larger bags at the coat check. When squeezing past others into your seat, take care to face them as you pass. Doing it “the way you are used to” is regarded as “shoving your ass in their face” in Russia, and is a social no–no.
- Always emphasize the good and the beautiful things you like in Russia, try not to criticize and compare. Russians know that there are a lot of problems in this country, but they are also very proud of their history and culture. They will highly appreciate it if you show them that you like it here or at least like some of it!
- Small gifts are much appreciated. Keep a list of people who have been nice and helpful to you. Give them a small gift such as a box of chocolate or candy or a small souvenir from your home country for major holidays, such as New Year's. Only women are given gifts on March 8th and flowers will be much appreciated, along with a nice card. Pretty calendars and company gifts such as coffee mugs and pens are also good.
- Along with your baggage, bring a good amount of patience, sympathy, tolerance, and your sense of humor. These should get you through most difficulties. Russians are used to long centuries of foreigners bringing their eccentric habits and peculiarities with them to Russia and they will tolerate almost any accidental indiscretions if you can manage a friendly grin as you commit them.

8. FAVOURITE RUSSIAN PASTIMES

8.1. General information.

Thanks to a variety of terrain and seasons, Russia offers enviable opportunities for leisure activities all year round. From fishing to hunting, mushroom collecting and swimming all past times form just a small selection of leisure activities and outdoor pursuits available.

8.2. Types of pastimes.

8.2.1. Dacha

Dacha is a term that refers to a summerhouse and can stand for pretty much everything from a small wooden shack without running water, gas or electricity to a lavish multi-story house in the countryside. While not everyone has a dacha, most people have relatives, neighbors or friends who do, and everyone normally jumps at the opportunity to leave the city on weekends and escape to cleaner air and nature. Dachas are usually big projects that require the involvement of the entire family. Most dachas are not used in winter, but as soon as the last snow has gone people set out to repair and prepare their dachas for the coming summer. The majority of people who have even a small plot of land still plant vegetables and herbs at their dacha and many also have apple trees and berries. These of course require constant maintenance up until late autumn when the plots and trees have to be prepared for the coming winter. In short, a dacha is often not a place to relax and lie in the sun but rather a second full-time job.

8.2.2. Shashlyki

Shashlyk is a form of Shish kebab popular in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, India, Iran, Afghanistan, Israel, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Turkey and other places. Shashlyk was originally made of lamb. Nowadays it is also made of pork or beef depending on local preferences and religious observances. The skewers are either all meat, or alternating pieces of meat, fat, and vegetables such as bell peppers, onions, mushrooms and tomatoes.

Shashlyki (barbecues) are a very popular activity on summer weekends when Russians often invite friends to their dacha for a barbecue.

8.2.3. Banya

Over the centuries, the Russian banya (bath house) has served people not only as a place where they could clean themselves, but also as a place for restoring health. It is believed that by visiting a banya may cure many health problems. Among other

positive effects, the steam in the banya helps expel fat from the body, restores the tonus of blood vessels and clean pores.

The difference between the Russian banya and the Finnish sauna lies in the kind of steam. The steam in the Russian banya is humid, and in order to reach the best effect, hot water is poured onto hot stones. The temperature inside a Russian banya can reach 60°C (140°F). The steam in a Finnish sauna, on the other hand, is dry, and the temperature can reach up to 100°C (212°F). After having spent some time in the steam room, banya visitors will jump into a pool with cold water as a kind of contrast treatment.

A very important banya attribute is the broom (a kind of broom made from dried birch, oak or fir branches and leaves), which banya visitors beat each other with. Apart from a positive effect on health, the banya also is a place where friends get together to relax. While at the banya, Russians like to drink beer, which is often accompanied by vobla, which is a kind of dried fish. Sometimes people have too much fun at the banya. A great example of this is provided in the very funny and highly recommended Soviet comedy “The Irony of Fate”.

8.2.4. Mushroom collecting

It is a tradition dating back to ancient times. Russia has a lot of forest areas where different kinds of mushrooms grow in abundance. While mushrooms have always been an important component of the national diet, they have also become a substitute for meat during the Orthodox Christian Lent. Over 200 kinds of edible mushrooms grow in Russia. Apart from protein and fats, mushrooms also contain a number of minerals such as iron, calcium, and zinc. However, there are also about 25 poisonous types of mushrooms in Russia, so unless you are very experienced you should never collect and consume mushrooms without consulting with an expert in this field. You can tell that mushroom season has arrived when you see them being sold outside metro stations. While you should never collect and consume mushrooms that grow in Moscow or within a 30 km radius of the city, the Moscow region is considered relatively safe. A mushroom collecting trip usually involves a long car or train ride to ecologically

clean area outside the city. If you want to get there before others do, you have to leave home in the small hours of morning. Remember that forest areas are very popular with mosquitoes so make sure you bring sufficient amounts of mosquito repellent and wear long-sleeved shirts. The most common kind of edible mushrooms are chanterelle, oyster mushrooms, porcini and yellow boletus. A mushroom hunting trip is often an excuse for a fun trip to the country, and if you fail to find any you can always quietly buy some from sellers at the roadside, and claim you found them yourself. Be ready to cook them into dishes or freeze them when you get home – they won't keep more than a day without spoiling. The same trip can also be a good chance to pick some forest wild berries such as blackberries, redcurrants, and many others that flourish within just an hour of the city limits.

8.2.5. Cross-country skiing

Skiing is a recreational activity and competitive sport in which the participant attaches skis to boots or shoes on the feet and uses them to travel on top of snow. Skiing is used for military purposes and travelling in areas that experience heavy snowfall.

It is a very popular winter activity that often the whole family participates in. Children learn this sport at school from an early age. You can engage in cross-country skiing in any of the larger parks within the city.

Fishing

While you will see people fishing in the Russian rivers, fishing is not recommended in them due to highly polluted waters. You can however go fishing at any of the larger water reservoirs river parts outside of town.

8.2.6. Cooking

Russian cuisine is a collection of the different cooking traditions of the Russian people. The cuisine is diverse as Russia is by area the largest country in the world. Russian cuisine derives its varied character from the vast and multi-cultural expanse of Russia. Moreover, it is necessary to divide Russian traditional cuisine and Soviet cuisine, which has its own peculiarity. Its foundations were laid by the peasant food of the rural population in an often harsh climate, with a combination of plentiful fish,

poultry, game, mushrooms, berries, and honey. Crops of rye, wheat, barley and millet provided the ingredients for a plethora of breads, pancakes, cereals, beer and vodka. Soups and stews full of flavor are centered on seasonal or storable produce, fish and meats. This wholly native food remained the staple diet for the vast majority of Russians well into the 20th century.

Russia's great expansions of culture, influence, and interest between the 16th and 18th centuries brought foods that are more refined and culinary techniques. It was during this period that smoked meats and fish, pastry cooking, salads and green vegetables, chocolate, ice cream, wines, and juice were imported from abroad. At least for the urban aristocracy and provincial gentry, this opened the doors for the creative integration of these new foodstuffs with traditional Russian dishes. The result is extremely varied in technique, seasoning, and combination.

The most popular dishes:

- Sel'd' pod shuboy also known as "dressed herring", is chopped salted herring under a coat of shredded cooked beet, sometimes with a layer of egg or other vegetables.
- Kholodets (or Studen'): Jellied chopped pieces of pork or veal meat with some spices added (pepper, parsley, garlic, bay leaf) and minor amounts of vegetables (carrots, onions). The meat is boiled in large pieces for long periods of time, then chopped, boiled a few times again and finally chilled for 3–4 hours (hence the name) forming a jelly mass, though gelatine is not used because calves' feet, pigs' heads and other such offal is gelatinous enough on its own. It is served with horseradish, mustard, or ground garlic.
- Pelmeni belong to the family of dumplings. Akin to vareniki: Ukrainian variety of dumplings with filling made of mashed potatoes, farmer's cheese, or cherries, to mention the most popular three. They are not dissimilar to Chinese pot stickers, Tibetan mo-mo and Italian ravioli, as well as the Manti of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz cultures. The main difference between pelmeni and other kinds of dumplings is in their shape and size — the typical pelmen' is roughly spherical

and is about 2 to 3 cm in diameter, whereas most other types of dumplings are usually elongated and much larger.

8.2.7. Ice swimming

It is a less common, but nevertheless very interesting pastime. An extreme way of keeping fit, the ice swimmers (called Morzhi or walrus in Russian) are very proud of their sport and consider it a way of life. Even babies and toddlers are subjected to short immersion in ice cold water to make them strong, and many people in their 70s and 80s still regularly engage in this invigorating activity on a regular basis. The roots of ice swimming date back to pre-revolutionary times and have links to the Russian Orthodox Church as a way of cleaning sins.

Every winter during religious festivals, worshippers would submerge themselves in icy waters to erase all sins from their bodies. For contemporary Morzhi, however, ice swimming is part of everyday life rather than a religious practice. When ice forms on lakes and rivers, these enthusiastic sportsmen will cut swimming holes in the ice that are carefully maintained so that bathing is possible throughout the winter. Each session is very short but a challenging experience for the uninitiated. If you want to try ice swimming, please consult with your doctor before jumping into the icy water. While this is a stimulating and energizing activity, it can easily send your body into spasms and causes severe joint ache.

8.2.8. Grandchildren

Grandchildren are a very popular activity for any grandmother (and grandfather). It is very common in Russia for grandparents to take care of their grandchildren while their parents are at work. They will take the children for walks, take them to the playground, to or from kindergarten or school, will cook them lunch, and often even supervise their homework assignments.

Many grandchildren spend the entire summer at their grandparents' dacha, giving the parents some time for themselves. While this may seem very convenient, it sometimes results in problems as parents and grandparents often have very different ideas

on how to best raise a child. Russians traditionally lived in extended families in one big house until very recently, and many of the grandparents involved will have been raised in that way.

9. NATIONAL HOLYDAYS AND SYMBOLS

9.1. Holidays.

Russian holidays are the holidays of Russian people and are connected with the widespread national traditions of their carrying out. For a long time in Russia, there was a set of remarkable holidays. People drove round dances, sang songs, and lived excitingly. Every day seemed to be a holiday. But gradually traditions and holidays varied. In Russia there are also state holidays.

9.1.1. Public holidays

There are eight public holidays in Russia. New Year's Day is the first in calendar and the biggest in terms of popularity. Russian New Year traditions resemble those of a Western Christmas, with New Year Trees and gifts, and Ded Moroz (Father Frost) playing the same role as Santa Claus, and Snegurochka. Orthodox Christmas falls on 7 January, because the Russian Orthodox Church still follows the Julian (old style) calendar and all Orthodox holidays are 13 days after Catholic ones. Another two major Christian holidays are Easter and Trinity, but there is no need to recognize them as public holidays since they are always celebrated on Sunday.

Further Russian public holidays include the Defender of the Fatherland Day (23 February), which honors Russian men, especially those serving in the army; International Women's Day(8 March), which combines the traditions of Mother's Day and Valentine's Day; International Workers' Day(1 May), now renamed Spring and Labor Day ; Victory Day (9 May); Russia Day(12 June); and Unity Day(4 November), commemorating the popular uprising which expelled the Polish–Lithuanian occupation force from Moscow in 1612. The latter is a replacement for the old Soviet holiday celebrating the October Revolution of 1917 (again, it falls on November because of the dif-

ference in calendars). Fireworks and outdoor concerts are common features of all Russian public holidays. Victory Day is the second most popular holiday in Russia. This day commemorates the victory over Nazi Germany in World War II and is widely celebrated throughout Russia. A huge military parade, hosted by the President of the Russian Federation, is annually organized in Moscow in Red Square. Similar parades are organized in all major Russian cities and the cities with the status of Hero city or City of Military Glory.

9.1.2. Non-public holidays

Other popular holidays, which are not public, include Old New Year (which is New Year according to Julian Calendar on 1 January), Tatiana Day (the day of Russian students on 25 January), Maslenitsa (which is an old pagan holiday that starts a week before the Lent), Cosmonautics Day (celebrating the day of Yury Gagarin's first ever human trip into space on 12 April), Ivan Kupala Day (another pagan Slavic holiday on the 7th of July) and Peter and Fevronia Day (taking place on the 8th of July and being the Russian analogue of Valentine's Day, which focuses, however, on family love and fidelity). On different days in June there are major celebrations of the end of the school year, when graduates from schools and universities traditionally swim in the city fountains; the local varieties of these public events include Scarlet Sails tradition in Saint Petersburg.

9.2. National symbols.

9.2.1. State symbols

State symbols of Russia include the Byzantine double-headed eagle, combined with St. George of Moscow in the Russian coat of arms; these symbols date from the Grand Duchy of Moscow time. The Russian flag appeared in the late Tsar of Russian period and became widely used since Russian Empire times. The Russian anthem shares its music with the Soviet Anthem, though not the lyrics (many Russians of older generations just don't know the new lyrics and sing the old ones). The Russian imperial motto God is with us and the Soviet motto Proletarians of all countries, unite

are now obsolete and no new motto has been officially introduced to replace them. The Hammer and sickle and the full Soviet coat of arms are still widely seen in Russian cities as a part of old architectural decorations. The Soviet Red Stars are also encountered, often on military equipment and war memorials. The Soviet Red Banners still honored, especially the Banner of Victory of 1945.

9.2.2. Unofficial symbols

Matryoshka dolls a recognizable symbol of Russia, while the towers of Moscow Kremlin and Saint Basil's Cathedral in Moscow are main Russia's architectural symbols. Cheburashkai are a mascot of Russian national Olympic team. Mary, Saint Nicholas, Saint Andrew, Saint George, Saint Alexander Nevsky, Saint Sergius of Radonezh, Saint Seraphim of Sarov are Russia's patron saints. Chamomiles a flower that Russians often associate with their Motherland, while birch is a national tree. The Russian bear is an animal often associated with Russia, though this image has Western origin and Russians themselves do not consider it as a special symbol. The native Russian national personification is the Motherland, the statue of which is located on the Mamay hill in Volgograd (former named Stalingrad).

9.3. National costume.

Traditional Russian clothing was designed to empathize Russian woman's inner dignity and emotional restraint. Russian costumes are not only beautiful, there are also convenient in wearing because they were created for work without restricting freedom of movement. Festive clothes and everyday clothes, married woman's and young girl's clothes differed only for details, decoration, color gamut. The variety of colors for traditional costume displays love for beauty and ethnic diversity. Red fabric cloth was considered the most attractive one, hence, the Russian word "beautiful" comes from the word "krasny" which is Russian for "red".

Homemade canvas and wool clothes decorated with embroidery or woven pattern have been used most often for traditional peasant costumes. Embroidery came in dif-

ferent ornaments (rhombuses, crosses, herringbones, stylized patterns of people and animals) performed in naturally painted threads Red, blue, green, white and yellow. The color gamut was rich and various.

Despite the social and territorial differences, traditional Russian clothes had one thing in common; they had to be in cape form, from the head down. Soft silhouettes without any cuts emphasized Russian women's light steps. Dress and sleeves were getting wider to the lap; the fabric was decorated with symmetric pattern, or with other golden or silvery-like fabrics, furs, and embroidery.

Patterned woman's headdress "kokoshnik", fine linen "rubashka" shirts, beautiful woman's dress "sarafan" with embroidery in brocade and silk, where all comfortable and nice clothes traditionally worn by Russian women.

In the Northern districts of the region the means of decoration were modest and laconic in keeping with the architecture of those places. In the Southern districts the ornaments were brighter and more colorful. Every tiny detail made its contribution to the whole ensemble. A waist-belt was an indispensable part of it. Headwears were divided into women's and girls' ones. They were embroidered with gold and pearls and where of great value. They were everyday clothes and holiday garments.

Russian traditional costume manifests folk art and conveys the spirit of the past and the old bright culture of Russia. Presently, Russians do not wear traditional costumes, even on holidays.

10. RUSSIAN ART

10.1. Russian art.

Russian culture is the culture associated with the country of Russia and, sometimes, specifically with Russians. It has a long history and can claim a long tradition of dividend in many aspects of the arts, especially when it comes to literature and philosophy, classical music and ballet, architecture and painting, cinema and animation, which all had considerable influence on world culture in general.

10.2. Folklore

10.2.1. Texts

Old Russian folklore takes its roots in the pagan beliefs of the ancient Slavs and is now represented in Russian fairytales. Epic Russian bylinas are also an important part of Slavic mythology. The oldest bylinas of Kievan cycle were actually recorded mostly in the north of Russian, especially in Karelia, where most of the Finnish national epic Kalev always was recorded as well.

Many Russian fairy tales and bylinas has been adapted for animation films, or for feature movies by famous directors like Aleksandr Ptushko (Ilya Muromets ,Sadko) and Aleksandr Rou(Morozko,Vasilisa the Beautiful). Some Russian poets, including Pyotr Yershov and Leonid Filatov, created a number of well-known poetical interpretations of classical Russian fairy tales, and in some cases, like that of Alexander Pushkin, also created fully original fairy tale poems that became very popular.

Folklorists today consider the 1920s the Soviet Union's golden age of folklore.

10.2.2. Folk music

Russians have distinctive traditions of folk music. Typical ethnic Russian musical instruments are gusli, balalaika ,zhaleika, balalaika contrabass , bayan , accordion, Gypsy guitar and the garmoshka. Folk music had great influence on Russian classical composers, and in modern times it is seen as a source of inspiration for a number of popular folk bands, the most prominent being Melnitsa. Russian folk songs, as well as patriotic songs of the Soviet era, constitute the bulk of repertoire of the world-renowned Red Army choir and other popular Russian ensembles.

10.2.3. Folk dance

According to Bob Ren field, considered the preeminent scholar on the topic, Russian Folk Dance can generally be broken up into two main types of dances. The Khorovod, a circular game type dance where the participants hold hands, sing, and the action generally happens in the middle of circle, and the Plyaska, which is a coed circular dance that increases in diversity and tempo. Other forms of Russian Folk Dance

include Pereplyas, an all-male competitive dance; the Mass Dance, an unpaired stage dance without restrictions on age or number of participants; the Group Dance, a type of mass dance that employs simple round dance passages, and improvisation; and types of Quadrille's, which was originally a French dance brought to Russia in the 18th century.

Ethnic Russian dances include khorovod, barynya, kamarinskaya, kazachok, chechotka, and the Troika, which is a dance with one man and two women and is named after the traditional Russian carriage that is led by three horses. The Bear Dance or dancing with bears dates back to 907 when Great Russian Prince Oleg, in celebration of his victory over the Greeks in Kiev, had as entertainment, 16 male dancers dress as bears and four bears dress as dancers. Dances with dancers dressed as bears are a reoccurring theme, as seen a recording of the Omsk Russian Folk Chorus.

10.3. Literature

Russian literature is considered to be among the most influential and developed in the world, with some of the most famous literary works belonging to it. Russia's literary history dates back to the 10th century; in the 18th century its development was boosted by the works of Mikhail Lomonosov and Denis Fonvizin, and by the early 19th century a modern native tradition had emerged, producing some of the greatest writers of all time. During this period the Golden Age of Russian Poetry began with Alexander Pushkin, who is considered to be the founder of modern Russian literature and often described as the Russian Shakespeare or the Russian Goethe. It continued in the 19th century with the poetry of Mikhail Lermontov and Nikolay Nekrasov, dramas of Aleksandr Ostrovsky and Anton Chekhov, and the proses of Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin, Ivan Goncharov, Aleksey Pisemsky and Nikolai Leskov. Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky in particular were titanic figures, to the point that many literary critics have described one or the other as the greatest novelist ever.

By the 1880's Russian literature had begun to change. The age of the great novelists was over and short fiction and poetry became the dominant genres of Russian literature for the next several decades, which later became known as the Silver Age of Russian Poetry. Previously dominated by realism, Russian literature came under strong influence of symbolism in the years between 1893 and 1914. Leading writers of this age include Valery Bryusov, Andrei Bely, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Aleksandr Blok, Nikolay Gumilev, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Fyodor Sologub, Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, Marina Tsvetaeva, Leonid Andreyev, Ivan Bunin, and Maxim Gorky.

Following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the ensuing civil war, Russian cultural life was left in chaos. Some prominent writers, like Ivan Bunin and Vladimir Nabokov left the country, while a new generation of talented writers joined in different organizations with the aim of creating a new and distinctive working-class culture appropriate for the new state, the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1920's writers enjoyed broad tolerance. In the 1930's censorship over literature was tightened in line with Joseph Stalin's policy of socialist realism. After his death, the restrictions on literature were eased, and by the 1970's and 1980's, writers were increasingly ignoring official guidelines. The leading authors of the Soviet era included Yevgeny Zamiatin, Isaac Babel, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Ilf and Petrov, Yury Olesha, Mikhail Bulgakov, Boris Pasternak, Mikhail Sholokhov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, and Andrey Voznesensky.

The Soviet era was also the golden age of Russian Science fiction, that was initially inspired by western authors and enthusiastically developed with the success of Soviet space program. Authors like Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, Kir Bulychov, Ivan Yefremov, Alexander Belayev enjoyed mainstream popularity at the time.

10.4. Humor

Russia owes much of its wit to the great flexibility and richness of the Russian language, allowing for puns and unexpected associations Russian jokes. The most popu-

lar form of Russian humor is short fictional stories or dialogues with a punch line. The Russian culture of wit features a series of categories with fixed and highly familiar settings and characters. Surprising effects are achieved by an endless variety of plots. Russians love jokes on topics found everywhere in the world, be it politics, spouse relations, or mothers-in-law.

10.4.1. Jokes

The most popular form of Russian humor consists of jokes (anecdotic), which are short stories with a punch line. Typical of Russian joke culture is a series of categories with fixed and highly familiar settings and characters. Surprising effects are achieved by an endless variety of plots and plays on words.

10.4.2. Toasts

Drinking toasts can take the form of anecdotes or not-so-short stories, concluded with “So here's to...” with a witty punch line referring to the initial story.

10.4.3. Chastushkas

A specific form of humor is chastushkas, songs composed of four-line rhymes, usually of lewd, humoristic, or satiric content. Chastushka, a type of traditional Russian poetry, is a single quatrain in iambic tetrameter with an “abab” or “abcb” rhyme scheme. Usually humorous, satirical, or ironic in nature, chastushkas are often put to music as well, usually with a balalaika or an accordion accompaniment. The rigid, short structure (and to a lesser degree, the type of humor these use) parallels limericks. The name originates from the Russian word *часть*, meaning, “To speak fast”.

10.4.4. Black humor

Apart from jokes, Russian humor is expressed in word play and short poems including nonsense and black humor verses, similar to some of the macabre “nursery rhymes” of Edward Lear.

Often they have recurring characters such as “little boy”, “Vova”, “a girl” and “Masha”. Most rhymes involve death or a painful experience either for the protagonists or other people. This type of joke is especially popular with children.

A little boy found a machine gun—

Маленький мальчик нашёл пуле-

Now the village population is none. мѣт–

Больше в деревне никто не живѣт.

10.5. Visual arts

10.5.1. Handicraft

Matryoshka dolls are a Russian nesting doll. A set of Matryoshka dolls consist of a wooden figure that can be pulled apart to reveal another figure of the same sort inside. It has in turn another figure inside, and so on. The number of nested figures is usually six or more. The shape is mostly cylindrical, rounded at the top for the head and tapered towards the bottom, but with little else. The dolls have no extremities, (except those that are painted). The true artistry is in the painting of each doll, which can be extremely elaborate. The theme is usually peasant girls in traditional dress, but can be almost anything; for instance, fairy tales or Soviet leaders.

Other forms of Russian handicraft include khokhloma, Dymkovo toy, gzhel, Zhostovo painting, Filimonov toys, pisanka and palekh.

10.5.2. Classical painting

The Russian Academy of Arts was created in 1757, aimed to give Russian artists an international role and status.

Realism came into dominance in the 19th century. The realists captured Russian identity in landscapes of wide rivers, forests, and birch clearings, as well as vigorous genre scenes and robust portraits of their contemporaries. Other artists focused on social criticism, showing the conditions of the poor and caricaturing authority; critical realism flourished under the reign of Alexander II, with some artists making the circle of human suffering their main theme. Others focused on depicting dramatic moments in Russian history. The Peredvizhniki (wanderers) group of artists broke with Russian Academy and initiated a school of art liberated from Academic restrictions. Leading realists include Ivan Shishkin, Arkhip Kuindzhi, Ivan Kramskoi, Vasily Polenov, Isaac Levitan, Vasily Surikov, Viktor Vasnetsov and Ilya Repin. By the turn of the

20th century, many Russian artists developed their own unique styles, neither realist nor avante-garde. These include Boris Kustodiev, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, Mikhail Vrubel and Nicholas Roerich.

10.5.3. Russian avant-garde

The Russian avant-garde is an umbrella term used to define the large, influential wave of modernist art that flourished in Russia from approximately 1890 to 1930. The term covers many separate, but inextricably related, art movements that occurred at the time; name lyneo-primitivism, suprematism, constructivism, rayonism, and futurism. Notable artists from this era include El Lissitzky, Kazimir Malevich, Vassily Kandinsky, Vladimir Tatlin, Alexander Rodchenko, Pavel Filonov and Marc Chagall. The Russian avant-garde reached its creative and popular height in the period between the Russian Revolution of 1917 and 1932, at which point the revolutionary ideas of the avant-garde clashed with the newly emerged conservative direction of socialist realism.

In the 20th century many Russian artists made their careers in Western Europe, forced to emigrate by the Revolution. Vassily Kandinsky, Marc Chagall, Naum Gabo and others spread their work, ideas, and the impact of Russian art globally.

10.6. Musical creativity

10.6.1. Classical music

Music in 19th century Russia was defined by the tension between classical composer Mikhail Glinka along with the other members of The Mighty Handful, who embraced Russian national identity and added religious and folk elements to their compositions, and the Russian Musical Society led by composers Anton and Nikolay Rubinstein, which was musically conservative. The later Romantic tradition of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, one of the greatest composers of the Romantic era, whose music has come to be known and loved for its distinctly Russian character as well as its rich harmonies and stirring melodies, was brought into the 20th century by Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the last great champions of the Romantic style of European classical

music.

World-renowned composers of the 20th century included Alexander Scriabin, Igor Stravinsky, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich and Georgy Sviridov. During most of the Soviet Era, music was highly scrutinized and kept within a conservative, accessible idiom to conform to the policy of social realism.

Soviet and Russian conservatories have turned out generations of world-renowned soloists. Among the best known are violinists David Oistrakh and Gidon Kremer; cellist Mstislav Rostropovich; pianists Vladimir Horowitz, Sviatoslav Richter, and Emil Gilels; and vocalists Fyodor Shalyapin, Galina Vishnevskaya, Anna Netrebko and Dmitry Hvorostovsky.

10.6.2. Ballet

The original purpose of the ballet in Russia was to entertain the imperial court. The first ballet company was the Imperial School of Ballet in St. Petersburg in the 1740s. The Ballets Russes was a ballet company founded in the 1909 by Sergey Diaghilev, an enormously important figure in the Russian ballet scene. Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes' traveled abroad profoundly influenced the development of dance worldwide. The headquarters of his ballet company was located in Paris, France. A protégé of Diaghilev, George Balanchine, founded the New York City Ballet Company in 1948.

During the early 20th century, Russian ballet dancers Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky rose to fame. Soviet ballet preserved the perfected 19th century traditions, and the Soviet Union's choreography schools produced one internationally famous star after another, including Maya Plisetskaya, Rudolf Nureyev, and Mikhail Baryshnikov. The Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow and the Mariinsky school in Saint Petersburg remain famous throughout the world.

10.6.3. Opera

The first known opera made in Russia was “A Life for the Tsar” by Mikhail Glinka in 1836. This was followed by several operas such as *Ruslan and Lyudmila* in 1842. Russian opera was originally a combination of Russian folk music and Italian opera.

After the October revolution many opera composers left Russia. Russia's most popular operas include: Boris Godunov, Eugene Onegin, The Golden Cockerel, Prince Igor, and The Queen of Spades.

10.6.4. Modern music

Russian pop music is well developed, and enjoys mainstream success via pop music media such as MTV Russia, Muz TV and various radio stations. A number of pop artists have broken through in recent years. The Russian duo t.A.T.u. is the most successful Russian pop band of its time. They have reached number one in many countries around the world, with several of their singles and albums. Other popular artists include the Eurovision 2008 winner Dima Bilan, as well as Valery Meladze, VIA Gra, Nyusha, Vintage, Philipp Kirkorov, Vitas and Alsou. Music producers includes the likes of Igor Krutoy, Maxim Fadeev, Ivan Shapovalov.

The rock music scene has gradually evolved from the united movement into several different subgenres similar to those found in the West. There's youth pop rock and alternative rock (Mumiy Troll, Zemfira, Splean, Bi-2, Zveri). There's punk rock, ska and grunge (Korol i Shut, Pilot, Leningrad, Distemper, Elisium). The heavy metal scene has grown substantially, with new bands playing Power and Progressive Metal (Catharsis, Epidemia, Shadow Host, Mechanical Poet), and Pagan Metal (Arkona, Butterfly Temple, Temnozor). Rock music media has become prevalent in modern Russia. The most notable is Nashe Radio, which is promoting classic rock and pop punk. A-One TV channel is specializing in alternative music and hardcore.

Other types of music include folk rock (Melnitsa), trip hop (Linda) and reggae (Jah Division). Hip Hop/Rap is represented by Bad Balance, Kasta, Lugalize and Mnogotochie. There's also an experimental rap core scene headlined by Dolphin and Kirpichi.

11. CINEMA, ANIMATION AND MEDIA

11.1. Cinema

While in the industrialized nations of the West, motion pictures had first been accepted as a form of cheap recreation and leisure for the working class, Russian filmmaking came to prominence following the 1917 revolution when it explored editing as the primary mode of cinematic expression. Russian and later Soviet cinema was a hotbed of invention in the period immediately following 1917, resulting in world-renowned films such as *Battleship Potemkin*. Soviet-era filmmakers, most notably Sergei Eisenstein and Andrei Tarkovsky, would become some of the world's most innovative and influential directors.

Eisenstein was a student of the filmmaker and theorist Lev Kuleshov, who developed the groundbreaking Soviet montage theory of film editing at the world's first film school, the All-Union Institute of Cinema Photography. Dziga Vertov, whose *kinoglaz* (film-eye) theory suggested that the camera is like the human eye, is used to explore real life and had a huge impact on the development of documentary filmmaking and cinema realism. In 1932, Stalin made socialist realism the state policy; this somewhat limited creativity, however many Soviet films in this style were artistically successful, like *Chapaev*, *The Cranes Are Flying*, and *Ballad of a Soldier*.

In the 1960s and 1970s Soviet Cinema saw a greater variety of artistic styles. Eldar Ryazanov's and Leonid Gaidai's comedies of that time were immensely popular, with many of the catch phrases still in use today. Between 1961 and 1967 Sergey Bondarchuk directed an Oscar-winning film adaptation of Tolstoy's epic *War and Peace*, which was the most expensive Soviet film made. In 1969, Vladimir Motyl's *White Sun of the Desert* was released, and became a very popular film in a genre known as 'osterns'; cosmonauts traditionally watch the film before any trip into space.

The late 1980s and 1990s was a period of crisis in Russian cinema and animation. Although Russian filmmakers became free to express themselves, state subsidies were drastically reduced, resulting in fewer films produced. The early years of the 21st century have brought increased viewership and subsequent prosperity to the in-

dustry on the back of the economy's rapid development, and production levels are already higher than in Britain and Germany. Russia's total box-office revenue in 2007 was \$565million, up 37% from the previous year (by comparison, in 1996 revenues stood at \$6million).Russian cinema continues to receive international recognition. Russian Ark (2002) was the first feature film ever to be shot in a single take.

11.2. Animation

Russia also has a long and rich tradition of animation, which started in the times of the late Russian Empire. Most of Russia's cartoon production for cinema and television was created during Soviet times, when Soyuz cartoon studio was the largest animation producer. Soviet animators developed a great and unmatched variety of pioneering techniques and aesthetic styles, with prominent directors including Ivan Ivanov-Vano, Fyodor Khitruk andAleksandr Tatarskiy. Soviet cartoons are still a source for many popular catch phrases, while such cartoon heroes as the Russian-style Winnie-the-Pooh, Cheburashka, became iconic images in Russia and many surrounding countries. The traditions of Soviet animation were developed in the past decade by such directors as Aleksandr Petrov and studios like Melnitsa.

After the end of the Soviet Union, the situation for Russian animators changed dramatically. On one hand, State subsidies diminished significantly. On the other hand, the number of studios competing for that amount of money rose a good deal. Most of the studios during the 1990s lived on animation for advertisement and on doing commissioned works for big studios from America and elsewhere. Nevertheless, there were a few very successful international co-productions besides from Aleksandr Petrov's (former Sverdlovsk Film Studio animator) Oscar-winning *The Old Man and the Sea* (1999, from Ernest Hemingway's novel) and Stanislav Sokolov's *A Winter's Tale* (1999, from William Shakespeare's play) which earned the director an Emmy.

In 2002, Rossiya Television Network made the first ever CGI Animation in Russia for Television and the first CGI Animation in Russia.

11.3. Media and technology

11.3.1. Radio and TV

Russia was among the first countries to introduce radio and television. Due to the enormous size of the country Russia leads in the number of TV broadcast stations and repeaters. There were few channels in the Soviet time, but in the past two decades, many new state-run and privately owned radio stations and TV channels have appeared.

Television is the most popular medium in Russia, with 74% of the population watching national television channels routinely and 59% routinely watching regional channels. There are 3300 television channels in total. 3 channels have a nationwide outreach (over 90% coverage of the Russian territory): First Channel, Rossiya and NTV.

11.3.2. Internet

Originating from Russian scientific community and telecommunication industries, a specific Russian culture of using the Internet has been establishing since the early 1990s. In the second half of 1990s, the term Runet was coined to call the segment of Internet written or understood in the Russian language. Whereas the Internet has no boundaries, Russian Internet (online communications in the Russian language) cannot be localized solely to the users residing in the Russian Federation as it includes Russian-speaking people from all around the world. This segment includes millions of users in other ex-USSR countries, Israel and others abroad diasporas.

With the introduction of the Web, many social and cultural events found reflections within the Russian Internet society. Various online communities formed, and the most popular one grew out of the Russian-speaking users of the California-based blogging platform Live Journal (which was completely bought out in December 2007 by Russian firm SUP Fabrik). In January 2008 a Live Journal blog of the 3rd statesman, Sergey Mironov, had appeared and he was shortly followed by the new President Dmitry Medvedev who opened a personal video blog which was later also expanded with a Live Journal version.

As of late, there are scores of websites offering Russian language content including

mass media, e-commerce, and search engines e.g. Russian Hackers are particularly notorious. Russian web design studios, software and web-hosting enterprises offer a variety of services, and the results form a sort of national digital culture. E-commerce giants such as Google and Microsoft have their own Russian branches. In September 2007, the national domain.ru passed the milestone of a million domain names.

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