

# CURRENT EVENTS®

## IN THIS ISSUE

### OBJECTIVES

**Main News:** Students will learn about Russian President Vladimir Putin's growing power and about complaints that he is becoming a dictator. They will read about Russia's revolutionary past and its changing political landscape.  
**News Debate:** Students will be able to conduct an informed debate about a proposed spanking ban in Massachusetts and the arguments for and against corporal punishment.

### STANDARDS SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

**Main News:** Culture and diversity; Interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions; Power, authority, and governance

**News Debate:** Interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions; Power, authority, and governance; Civic ideals and practices

### LANGUAGE ARTS (NCTE)

**Main News:** Students read nonfiction texts to build a better understanding of society and themselves.  
**News Debate:** Students apply a wide range of strategies to interpret and evaluate text.

### GEOGRAPHY (NCGE)

**Main News:** Students use maps to acquire information.

### SOCIAL STUDIES VOCABULARY

Communism, Vladimir Lenin

### SKILLS BUILDERS

**Page 3:** Comprehension Skills  
**Page 4:** Map Skills  
**Page 5:** Crossword

## MAIN NEWS

### PUTIN'S POWER

#### Get Talking

Ask students: Who is Vladimir Putin? Which country does he lead? Have students identify Russia on a map. Ask students what they know about Russia.

#### Background

- Putin came from humble beginnings. He was born on Oct. 7, 1952, in Leningrad (previously called Petrograd, now St. Petersburg). His mother, Maria Ivanova Putina, was a factory worker, and his father, Vladimir Spiridonovich Putin, served in the Soviet navy. His father's father had been the personal cook for both Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin.
- As a boy and young man, Putin wanted to become a spy. He applied to the KGB, the Soviet Union's secret police, at age 17, but he was turned down and told to come back when he had a college degree. He did just that and was accepted into the KGB. He rose in its ranks during the 1970s and 1980s. From 1985 to 1990, he was a Soviet intelligence officer in Dresden, a city in what was then Communist East Germany. In the early 1990s, Putin retired from the KGB and became an official at Leningrad State



University. He entered politics and became deputy mayor of St. Petersburg. In 1996, Putin moved to Moscow, where he joined the staff of Russian President Boris Yeltsin. In 1998, Yeltsin made Putin director of the Federal Security Service, the successor to the KGB. Yeltsin resigned in 1999 and appointed Putin as his successor. Three months later, Putin was elected to his first term as president. Read more about Russian history at [www.geographia.com/russia](http://www.geographia.com/russia).

#### Doing More

Russia has a history of powerful leaders: Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Joseph Stalin among them. Have each student research a past Russian leader and create a presentation to share with the class.

### ISSUE DATES • 2007-2008

9/10	9/17	9/24	10/1	10/8	10/22	10/29	11/5	11/12	11/19	11/26	12/10	12/17	1/21	1/28
2/4	2/11	2/25	3/3	3/10	3/24	3/31	4/14	4/28	5/5					

Keep current at [www.weeklyreader.com/ce](http://www.weeklyreader.com/ce). For updates on the stories in this issue, plus games and more, visit *Current Events* online.

### SKIP ISSUE NOTICE

Your next issue of *Current Events* will be dated Jan. 21, 2008. Happy New Year!

*Below are some key terms used in this issue of Current Events.*

**Communism** (pages 4-5)  
 Communists subscribe to a system of politics and economics in which private property is eliminated and all goods are shared equally. German philosopher Karl Marx founded modern communism. Marx claimed that economic factors shape the character of society. He believed that exploited workers would rise up and overthrow the capitalists, eventually creating a classless society. Countries such as China and North Korea still practice forms of communism today.

**Vladimir Lenin** (page 3) Lenin led the Russian Bolsheviks' October Revolution in 1917. The country was suffering from famine and war at the time. Lenin used the theories of Karl Marx to create Soviet communism. He promised to bring prosperity, health care, education, and electricity to the proletariat—Russia's working class. His government abolished private ownership of land and took control of industries. After an assassination attempt, he ordered the secret police to crack down on suspected enemies. Lenin died of a stroke in 1924. His preserved body is on display in Moscow.

**MOM SAYS 'DON'T SPANK'**

**Get Talking**

Ask students: Do you think spanking hurts children? Do you think it changes bad behavior? Do you think spanking should be banned in schools? in homes?

**Notes Behind the News**

- The use of spanking to punish children has a long history. Many supporters of spanking today point to the Bible, which says "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." A backlash against spanking began in the United States about 40 years ago. In 1974, the American Psychological Association came out against corporal punishment in schools. In 1987, the National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools was formed. For more information, go to [www.stop hitting.org/disatschool](http://www.stop hitting.org/disatschool) or [www.corpun.com](http://www.corpun.com).
- Twenty-nine U.S. states, primarily in the West, Northeast, and Upper Midwest, have laws banning corporal punishment in schools. In most of the rest of the country, teachers have the right to paddle misbehaving students unless their communities or school boards forbid it. In 2004, the U.S.

Department of Education found that 12 percent of U.S. schools had used corporal punishment during the previous school year.

- In 1979, Sweden became the first country to ban spanking and corporal punishment in the home. It is now illegal in 18 other countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, and Ukraine. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says countries "shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence. ..." Read more at [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc).

**Doing More**

Have students read their school's rules on corporal punishment. Ask the principal to speak to the class and answer questions about the school's rules on student punishment and the philosophies behind the punishments used.



**ANSWER KEY**

Teachers: Please see Teacher's Guide that accompanies printed magazine for answer key.



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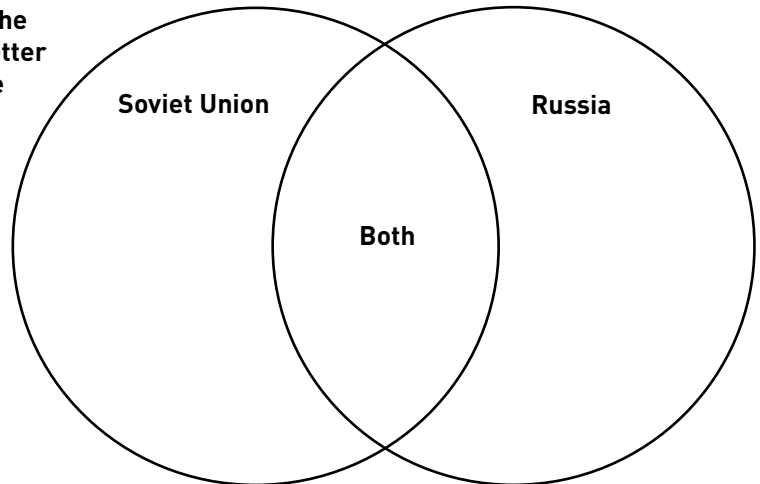
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**SKILLS PAGE****12.17.07****What's the Difference?**

Research the history of Russia and the former Soviet Union. Then put the letter of each item below in its appropriate place on the Venn diagram.

- A. Its capital is Moscow.
- B. It borders Iran.
- C. Chechnya is part of it.
- D. It has a secret police.
- E. It borders Finland.
- F. Its currency is the ruble.
- G. It has a Communist Party.
- H. Its parliament is called the Duma.
- I. Its president is democratically elected.
- J. Its government requires children to attend school.

**Comprehension**

Read this issue's cover story, "Putin's Power," and then answer the following questions.

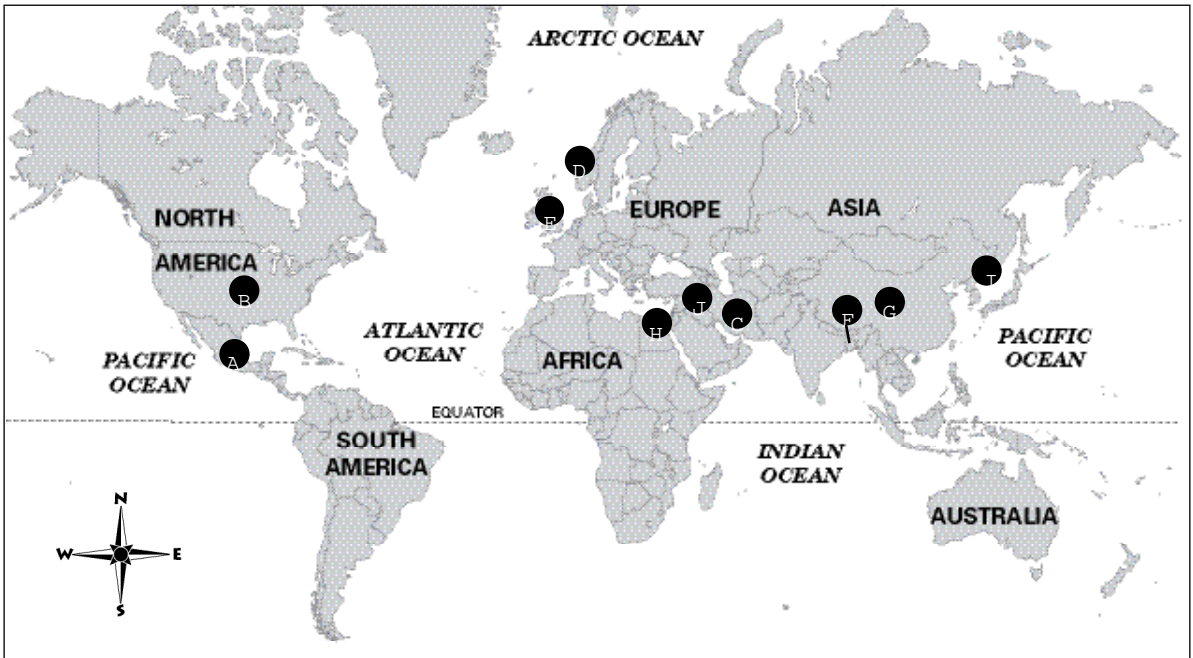
1. Who was the first leader of the Soviet Union?
  - A. Boris Yeltsin
  - B. Czar Nicholas II
  - C. Vladimir Lenin
2. What does the Russian teenager, Andrei Tatarinov, mean by saying that before Putin, Russia was "like a nation without a father"?
  - A. Russia had a lot of single-parent families.
  - B. Russians felt lost and leaderless.
  - C. Russia needed a founding father similar to the founding fathers of the United States.
3. Which of the following occurred in Russia following the breakup of the Soviet Union?
  - A. Russia's peasants quickly grew wealthy.
  - B. Most people's standard of living decreased.
  - C. Businesses came under government control.
4. Which statement is a fact?
  - A. Vladimir Putin's political party, United Russia, won a majority of seats in Russia's national parliament.
  - B. Vladimir Putin was elected president of Russia three times.
  - C. Putin is pushing to reunify the former Soviet Union.
5. Why might Russia's national parliament grant Putin a new title or make him prime minister and expand the position?
  - A. to ensure that Russia's Communist Party continues to dominate
  - B. to honor him for his work in turning around Russia's economy
  - C. so Putin can continue to influence and control Russia's future

**MAP SKILLS**

12.17.07

**Where in the World?**

How well do you remember this year's top news stories? This world map is marked with the letters A through J. Each letter points to a country that made headlines this year. Read the statements below. On the line before each statement, write the letter of the country that corresponds to the statement. On the line after the statement, write the name of the country. Note: If you get more than three wrong, make a New Year's resolution to follow the news!



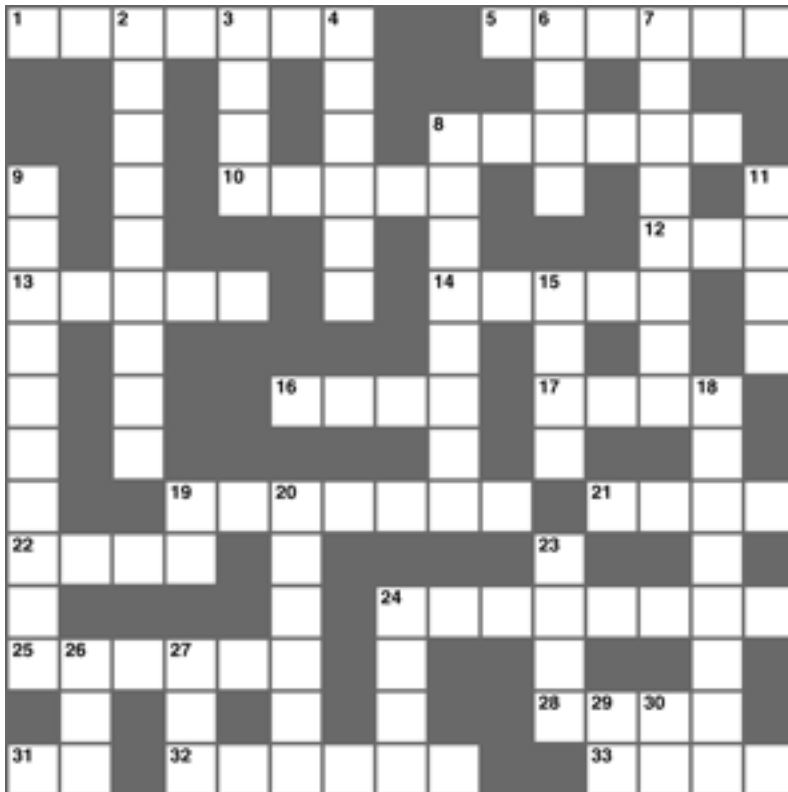
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>_____ 1. Millions of toys made in this country were recalled after officials discovered they had been made with dangerous materials.<br/>_____</p> <p>_____ 2. This country agreed—again—to dismantle its nuclear program in exchange for energy aid. _____</p> <p>_____ 3. The face of King Tutankhamen is on display for the first time inside a tomb in this country. _____</p> <p>_____ 4. U.S. intelligence agencies reported that this country abandoned its nuclear weapons program in 2003. _____</p> <p>_____ 5. U.S. President George W. Bush announced that a “surge” of U.S. troops would be sent to this country. _____</p> | <p>_____ 6. Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore received the Nobel Peace Prize in this country. _____</p> <p>_____ 7. Cyclone Sidr killed more than 3,000 people in this country. _____</p> <p>_____ 8. An eight-lane bridge in Minneapolis collapsed during evening rush-hour traffic in this country. _____</p> <p>_____ 9. Tony Blair stepped down as this country's prime minister.<br/>_____</p> <p>_____ 10. An estimated 1 million people were flooded out of their homes in the states of Chiapas and Tabasco in this country.<br/>_____</p> |
|---|---|

**CROSSWORD**

12.17.07

**Across**

- 1. cell center
- 5. capital of Russia
- 8. Venezuela's outspoken prez (last name)
- 10. international treaty that aims to cut greenhouse gases, \_\_\_\_\_ Protocol
- 12. hip's dance partner
- 13. leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Vladimir \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Russia's popular president, Vladimir \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. Russian ruler before 1917
- 17. U.S. intelligence agencies now say this country shut down its nuclear weapons program in 2003.
- 19. fancy fungus
- 21. Tom Sawyer's BFF (for short)
- 22. favorite chemical element in Las Vegas?
- 24. chess champ who thinks Putin's a problem, Garry \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. former communist country made up of Russia and 14 other republics, the \_\_\_\_\_ Union
- 28. Russia's national parliament
- 31. magazine filler (for short)
- 32. Principal Jim Friel has two; he's giving one to a student.
- 33. the \_\_\_\_\_ at hand



**Down**

- 2. type of government after the Russian Revolution
- 3. Leif's dad, \_\_\_\_\_ the Red
- 4. where you are right now?
- 6. George Washington wanted the president's office in the White House to be this shape.
- 7. mainly Muslim part of southern Russia
- 8. type of punishment Kathleen Wolf wants banned
- 9. what Robbie and Brittany Bergquist donate to U.S. troops (two words)
- 11. hero's poem
- 15. stem's offshoot
- 18. Russian leader executed in 1918, \_\_\_\_\_ II
- 19. state that's home to the Grand Ole Opry (postal abbr.)
- 20. Putin's party, \_\_\_\_\_ Russia
- 23. the Apple of your ear?
- 24. high flyer
- 26. *new's* negator
- 27. a family, class, or kind, as in you and others of your \_\_\_\_\_
- 29. Salt Lake City state (postal abbr.)
- 30. pa's partner