



## Post-Soviet World Resources

This collection of lesson plans and education resources examines the ongoing political and economic evolution of the post-Soviet world, twenty years after the collapse of the USSR.

### Cleaning up the Cold War

- [The Race to Secure Kazakhstan's 'Plutonium Mountain'](#)
  - In this audio clip from the Pulitzer Center, researcher Eben Harrell discusses how a team of scientists secured leftover plutonium from a former Soviet nuclear testing site. Fears that the unprotected material could fall into the hands of rogue states and terrorists prompted the initiative.

### Political Transition

- [Former Soviet Republics: 20 Years on from the Collapse of the USSR, how are the New States Fairing?](#)
  - Summary: This infographic from the *Guardian* shows how the former Soviet states have transitioned politically and economically since the fall of the Soviet Union. Data includes free elections, GDP, and population.
  - Common Core: Strengthen students' ability to integrate technical analysis with qualitative analysis by having them evaluate the key trends depicted in the graphic.
- [What Happened to Russian Democracy](#)
  - Summary: This eight-minute NPR talk explains the foundations of the Russian people's distrust of the concepts of freedom and democracy. It explores how Putin's authoritarian government eventually came to power, disappointing Western visions of a democratic Russia after the fall of the USSR.
  - Common Core: Does democracy mean the same thing for everyone? Have students discuss how they define democracy, as opposed to the Russian perspective heard here. Strengthens skills relating to reading informational texts by analyzing key terms.
- [8 Years after the 'Orange Revolution,' Ukraine](#)

- Summary: This PBS Frontline video examines the difficulties of democracy building in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution, leading viewers to ask the question: why do some countries succeed when others fail? A particularly relevant topic considering the recent Arab Spring uprisings.

## West vs. East: Political Loyalties

- [Russia Putting a Strong Arm on Neighbors](#)
  - Summary: This *New York Times* article relates the Russian government's response to Western expansion into former Soviet states. Using threats and what the *Times* calls economic "bullying," Russia is trying to retain influence in eastern Europe.

## Economic Transition: From Communism to the Free Market

- [The Russia Left Behind](#)
  - Summary: This interactive photo essay from the *New York Times* explores Russian life outside of major city centers.
- [Russian Oligarchs: What You Need to Know](#)
  - Summary: This short video from BBC explains the rise of Russia's oligarchs, and why the superrich prefer invest their assets abroad, instead of domestically.
- [Global Wealth Report 2013](#)
  - Summary: Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report 2013 contains statistics on wealth inequality in Russia compared to global averages. Page 53 has the fact sheet on Russia.
  - Common Core: A great way to add quantitative and technical analysis skills to understanding informational texts. Especially relevant to standards RH.7 and WHST.2.

## The Future

- [Toys Protest against Government in Barnaul, Siberia](#)
  - Summary: Discontented Russians find creative ways to voice their protests, as demonstrated in this short video from the Guardian.
- [Russia's Booming Nuclear Industry](#)
  - Summary: A collection of articles and photo essays from the Pulitzer Center discuss Russia's expanding nuclear energy industry and its impact on geopolitical security.

## Lesson Plans

- [Old Kids from the Bloc: Exploring Post-Soviet History](#)
  - Summary: In this one hour lesson, students learn about wide-scale development in Moscow and its impact on cultural preservation. They also create a post-Soviet educational website after researching the former Eastern Bloc.
  - Common Core: Builds experience in production and distribution of writing. WHST 6.
  
- [Out With the Old, in With the New: Comparing the Soviet Union to Democratic Russia](#)
  - Summary: In this one hour lesson, students compare political, economic, geographic, and cultural structures from the old Soviet order to today's Russia. Students work in groups to display their findings in a diagram.