Objectives

- Understand how geography influenced the rise of Russia.
- Describe the growth of Kiev.
- Explain how Mongol rule affected Russia.
- Describe how Moscow took the lead in Russia and how its rulers developed authoritarian control.
Terms and People

- **steppe** – sparse, dry, treeless grassland
- **Kiev** – capital of present-day Ukraine and center of the first Russian state
- **Cyrillic** – relating to the Slavic alphabet derived from the Greek; became the written script still used in Russia
- **Golden Horde** – Mongol invaders who burned Kiev; led by Batu, the grandson of Genghis
Terms and People (continued)

- **Ivan the Great** – Ivan III; proclaimed himself first tsar after recovering much of Russia from invaders

- **tsar** – Russian word for “Caesar”; absolute leader of Russia

- **Ivan the Terrible** – Ivan IV, who took the throne as tsar in 1547; noted for his tyrannical rule
How did geography and the migrations of different people influence the rise of Russia?

As Western Europe was developing its distinctive medieval civilization, Russian culture took a different path. Connecting Europe and Asia, it became a center of power in its own right.

One reason Russia developed differently from Western Europe was its unique geography.
Russia is located on a broad plain with three climatic regions that have influenced Russian life.

- Northern forests supplied fur-bearing animals and lumber but were too cold to farm.
- Russia’s first civilization grew in a narrow band of fertile land now part of Ukraine.
- The southern steppe is a treeless, open grassland from which nomads invaded.

Rivers connected Russia to the Byzantine empire.
Russia’s first civilization grew where Slavic and Viking influences met in Kiev.

- Slavic farmers moved into what is today Russia between 500 and 600.
- Vikings traded and took tribute along the rivers to Constantinople.
- In 862 Rurik, prince of the Rus, a Viking group, began to rule Novgorod to the north.
- After Rurik’s death the Rus expanded and made **Kiev** their capital—hence the name “Russia.”
Christian missionaries brought Byzantine influences to Kiev from Constantinople.

- In 863, Cyril and Methodius translated the Bible into Slavic, creating Cyrillic, a written script still in use.

- In 956 Princess Olga of Kiev converted. Soon Russia was aligned religiously and culturally with the Byzantine empire.
Olga’s grandson Vladimir married the sister of the Byzantine emperor.

The Orthodox faith became the Russian religion.

- Vladimir’s son Yaroslav the Wise spread Christianity.
- Russia adapted Byzantine art and architecture. The onion-shaped domes on Russian churches show Byzantine influence.
Between 1236 and 1241 Russia fell to the Mongols.

- The **Golden Horde** that invaded Russia was led by Batu, grandson of Genghis Kahn.
- The invaders looted Kiev and other towns, killing many of the residents.
- The Mongols ruled for 150 years.

Fearsome invaders, the Mongol rulers didn’t meddle in local government as long as tribute was paid. They even tolerated the Christian Church.
During Mongol rule the princes of Moscow increased their power.

- As Mongol power declined in the fourteenth century, the princes of Moscow took on a new role as patriotic defenders of Russia against foreign invaders.

- In 1380, they rallied other Russians to defeat the Mongol Golden Horde in the Battle of Kulikova.

Although Mongol raiders continued to plunder, their power was greatly reduced.
The Mongols had a long-term impact on Russia. Mongol leaders:

- Modeled strong, centralized control without interference from the clergy or nobility.
- Cut Russia from contacts with the West just as new advances were being made there in science and the arts.
- As Mongol leaders subdued neighboring cities for tribute, Russian clergy spread Christianity.
Between 1462 and 1505, Ivan the Great united Russia under his rule.

Ivan conquered most of northern Russia and subdued local landlords.

He married the last Byzantine emperor’s niece and saw Russia as the heir to Byzantine power.

He adopted the Byzantine double-headed eagle as his symbol and the title of tsar—Russian for “Caesar.”
Between 1300 and 1584, the power and territory of the Russian princes and tsars expanded.
In 1547, Ivan III’s grandson, Ivan IV, was crowned tsar.

He limited the privileges of boyars, wealthy landowners, and gave land instead to nobles in exchange for their military and other service.

At a time when the manor system was fading in Western Europe, he instituted a new policy that made poor farmers into serfs on nobles’ lands.
Known as **Ivan the Terrible**, Ivan IV had a vicious temper, which grew worse over time.

- When he suspected anyone of disloyalty, he had them slaughtered by agents called *oprichniki*, who wore black and rode black horses.

- His policies created a tradition of absolute rule, a tradition followed by future rulers.
Section Review

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