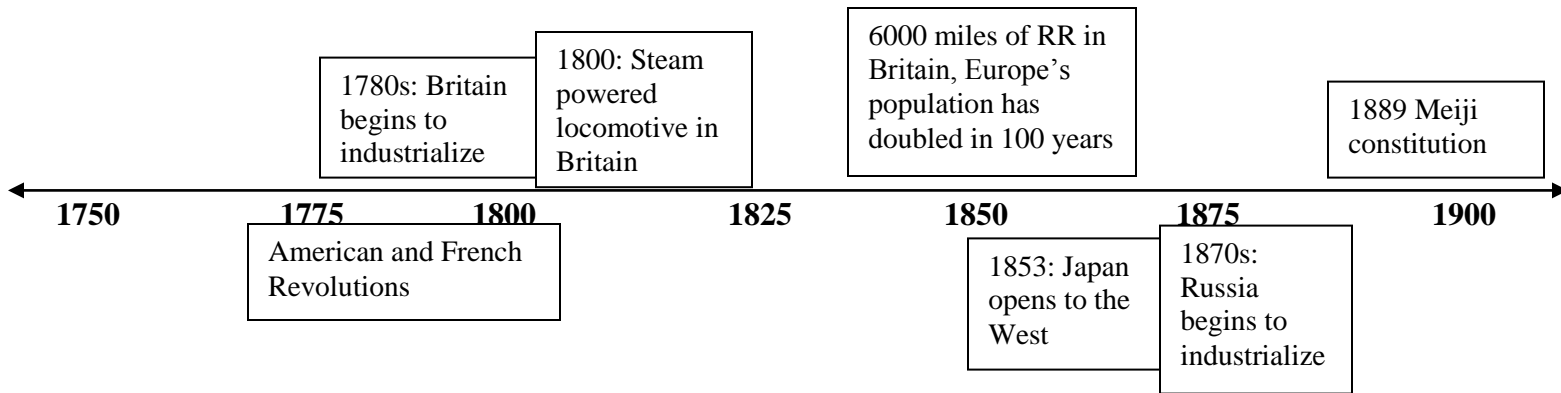


Name:

Date:

Russia and industrialization



Use the information below the fill out the questions that follow.

Russia's Reforms and Industrial Advance. Russia moved into an active period of social and political reform in 1861 that established the base for industrialization by the 1890s. Immense social strain resulted as the government attempted to remain autocratic.

Russia before Reform. The French Revolution and Napoleon's invasion of 1812 produced a backlash in Russia against Westernization. Conservative intellectuals embraced the turn to isolation as a way of vaunting Russian values and institutions, including serfdom. Some intellectuals remained fascinated with Western developments in politics, science, and culture. When Western-oriented army officers fomented the Decembrist revolt of 1825, Tsar Nicholas I repressed opposition. As a consequence, Russia escaped the European revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Russia continued its territorial expansion. The Congress of Vienna confirmed its hold over Poland; Polish nationalist revolts during the 1830s were brutally suppressed. Pressure on the Ottoman Empire continued, and Russia supported dissidents in Greece and Serbia.

Economic and Social Problems: The Peasant Question. In economic terms, Russia fell behind the West because it failed to industrialize. Landlords increased exports of grain by tightening labor obligations on serfs. Russia remained a profoundly agricultural society dependent on unfree labor. The significance of the failure to industrialize was demonstrated by the Crimean War (1854-1856). Britain and France came to the support of the Ottomans and defeated the Russians because of their industrial economies. Tsar Alexander II was convinced that reforms were necessary, and that meant resolving the issue of serfdom. Many individuals believed that a free labor force would produce higher agricultural profits; others wished to end abuses or to end periodic peasant risings. Reform was seen as a way to protect distinctive Russian institutions, not to copy the West.

The Reform Era and Early Industrialization. The serfs were emancipated in 1861; they received land but did not gain any political freedoms. They were tied to their villages until they paid for the lands they had received. The payments, and increasing taxation, kept most peasants very poor. The emancipation created a larger urban labor force, but it did not spur agricultural productivity. Peasants continued to use old methods on their small holdings. Peasant risings persisted because of the enduring harsh conditions that were exacerbated by population growth. Reform had not gone far enough. Other efforts followed. In the 1860s and 1870s, Alexander II improved law codes and created local political councils (zemstvos) with authority over regional matters. The councils gave political experience to middle-class people, but they had no influence on national policy. Military reform included officer promotion through merit and increased recruitment. There was limited extension of the education system. During this era, literacy increased rapidly and a market for popular reading matter developed. Some women gained access to higher education and to the professions. In family organization, Russia followed earlier European trends. A move to industrialization was part of the process of change. State support was vital, since Russia lacked a middle class and capital. A railway system was created in the 1870s; it reached the Pacific in the 1880s. The railways stimulated the iron and coal sectors, as well as the export of grain to the West. They also opened Siberia to development and increased Russian involvement in Asia. Factories appeared in Russian and Polish cities by the 1880s, and the government quickly acted to protect them from foreign competition. Under Count Witte, from 1892 to 1903, the government passed high tariffs, improved the banking system, and encouraged Western investment. By 1900, about half of industry was foreign owned. Russia became a debtor nation, but the industries did not produce economic autonomy. Even though by 1900 some Russian industries were challenging world leaders, the Russian industrial

revolution was in its early stages. Its world rank was due to its great size and rich resources, not its technology or trained workforce. Despite all the reform, Russia remained a traditional peasant society that had not experienced the attitudinal change occurring with Western industrialization.

Protest and Revolution in Russia. Unrest accompanied transformation by the 1880s and Russia became a very unstable society.

1. Why did it take longer for Russia to industrialize?
2. How was Russian industrialization DIFFERENT from British or Japanese industrialization?
3. What did the government do to encourage industrialization?
4. Why do you think, as of 1905, Russia was an unstable country?