

Reading Essentials and Study Guide



A New Era Begins, 1989–Present

Lesson 1 End of the Cold War

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What motivates political change? How can economic and social changes affect a country?

Reading HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

demonstration a public display of group feeling toward a person or cause

collapse to break down completely; to suddenly lose force or effectiveness

Content Vocabulary

perestroika the fundamental restructuring of the Soviet economy; a policy introduced by Gorbachev

glasnost a Soviet policy permitting open discussion of political and social issues

ethnic cleansing a policy of killing or forcibly removing an ethnic group from its lands; used by the Serbs against the Muslim minority in Bosnia

autonomous self-governing

TAKING NOTES: *Categorizing*

ACTIVITY As you read, use a table like the one below to identify events that happened after the fall of communism in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.

Poland	Czechoslovakia	Romania

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IT MATTERS BECAUSE

After 40 years of the Cold War, the new division of Europe between West and East seemed to be permanent. Major changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe brought an end both to the Cold War and to this division of Europe.

Gorbachev and Perestroika

Guiding Question *How did Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms change the Soviet Union?*

The Soviet Union was not doing well by 1980. It had a declining economy, rising infant mortality rates, quickly growing rates of alcoholism, and poor working conditions. A small group of reformers appeared within the Communist Party. One reformer was Mikhail Gorbachev (GAWR•buh•chawf). A new period began when the party chose him as leader in March 1985.

Gorbachev talked about the need for radical reforms. These reforms were based on **perestroika** (PEHR•uh•STRAWIH•kuh), or restructuring. At first, this meant restructuring, or reorganizing, economic policy. Gorbachev wanted a market economy that better met consumers' needs. It would have a limited amount of free enterprise. This meant that in this new system, some businesses would be privately owned and operated. Gorbachev, however, realized that reforming the economy would not work without political reform. He hoped **glasnost**, or openness, would help this happen. It was a policy that encouraged Soviet citizens and officials to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev set up a new Soviet parliament of elected members at the 1988 Communist Party conference. It was called the Congress of People's Deputies, and it first met in 1989. Then Gorbachev created a new state presidency. Under the old system the first secretary of the Communist Party had been the most important position in the Soviet Union. This had been Gorbachev's position. In March 1990 Gorbachev became the Soviet Union's first president. He was also the Soviet Union's last president.

Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985 also brought a dramatic end to the Cold War. His willingness to rethink Soviet foreign policy led to amazing changes.

Gorbachev made an agreement in 1987 to get rid of intermediate-range nuclear weapons. (These were middle-range missiles, which could travel a distance of about 300 to 3400 miles, or 500 to 5,500 kilometers.) It was called the Intermediate-Range INF Treaty. Both Gorbachev and U.S. president Ronald Reagan wanted to slow down the arms race. They wanted to lower their military budgets to fix domestic problems. Gorbachev hoped to focus national resources on social and economic change in the Soviet Union. The United States wanted to cut its national debt, which had tripled during the time Reagan was president.

Gorbachev stopped giving Soviet military support to Communist governments in Eastern Europe. This action helped lead to the end of Communist regimes there. A revolutionary movement spread through Eastern Europe in 1989. The changes in government were mostly peaceful. Germany was reunified on October 3, 1990. This was a powerful symbol of the end of the Cold War. In 1991 the Soviet Union ended. The long rivalry between the two superpowers was over.

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Reading Progress Check

Describing How did Gorbachev's reforms affect Soviet foreign relations?

Revolutions in Eastern Europe

Guiding Question *How did popular revolutions help end Communist regimes in Eastern Europe?*

Gorbachev decided to stop sending troops to support the governments of the satellite states in Eastern Europe. (These were the Communist states there that were dependent on the Soviet Union.) In response, revolutions broke out throughout Eastern Europe. A look at three Eastern European states shows how the process worked.

Workers' protests in Poland led to demands for change. In 1980, a worker named Lech Walesa (lehk vah•LEHN•suh) organized a powerful national trade union that was known as Solidarity. Solidarity gained the support of the Roman Catholic Church and its leader, Pope John Paul II. He was the first Polish pope. Even when Wałesa was arrested the movement continued. The Polish regime finally agreed to free parliamentary elections in 1988. They were the first free elections in Eastern Europe in 40 years. A new government was elected, and 45 years of Communist rule ended.

Walesa was chosen president of Poland in December 1990. Poland's new path was not easy, however. Rapid free-market reforms led to a lot of unemployment. Aleksander Kwasniewski was the next president. He helped Poland move toward a successful free-market economy and democracy. Recent presidents have tried to combine modern ideas with tradition.

The Soviets stopped the Czechoslovakian reform movement of 1968. Writers and other intellectuals continued to oppose the government, but they did not have much success at first. Then large **demonstrations** took place throughout Czechoslovakia in 1988 and 1989. These demonstrations were getting crowds in Prague as large as 500,000 by November 1989.

In December 1989, the Communist government **collapsed**. Václav Havel (VAHT•SLAHF HAH•vehl) became the new president at the end of that month. He was a writer who had played an important role in ending the Communist government. Havel was a powerful spokesperson for Czech democracy and a new order in Europe.

The new government soon faced old ethnic conflicts. The two national groups were Czechs and Slovaks. They agreed to a peaceful division of the country. Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Havel became the first president of the Czech Republic, and Michal Kováč became the first president of Slovakia.

Václav Klaus became the second president of the Czech Republic in 2003. The country has one of the most of the most stable and prosperous, or successful, economies of the former Communist Eastern European states. Over the years, Slovakia has gone from a centrally planned economy to a market economy.

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Communist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu (nee•kaw•LY chau•SHEHS•koo) ruled Romania with an iron grip. He used secret police to stop anyone who was against him, but opposition grew. His economic policies led to a sharp drop in living standards. Food shortages resulted in food rationing, or limiting the amount of food people could get. In December 1989, the secret police murdered thousands of people who were peacefully demonstrating against the government. The army did not want to support any more repression, or stopping opposition by force. Ceaușescu and his wife were captured and killed. A new government was quickly formed in Romania.

Former Communists controlled the Romanian government until 1996. Twenty-five years after the end of Communist rule, Romanians elected center-right candidate Klaus Iohannis. He succeeded Traian Basescu who was limited from serving another term.



Reading Progress Check

Identifying What role did protestors play in the new governments that formed after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe?

End of the Soviet Union

Guiding Question *How did Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms change the Soviet Union?*

Fifteen separate republics made up the Soviet Union. They included 92 ethnic groups that spoke 112 different languages. Gorbachev ended the iron grip of the Communist Party, centered in Moscow, over the Soviet Union. As a result, old ethnic conflicts reappeared, and nationalist movements began. In 1989 and 1990 calls for independence started. They came first from Soviet Georgia and then from the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia), Moldova, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan.

The traditional Soviet institutions were the army, the government, the KGB (security agency, including the secret police), and military industries (which produced military goods). The conservative leaders, or those opposing change, were worried that the breakup of the Soviet Union would end their privileges. On August 19, 1991, a group of these conservative leaders arrested Gorbachev and then tried to take power. They failed. Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Republic, and thousands of Russians bravely resisted the rebel forces in Moscow.

The Soviet republics wanted complete independence. Ukraine voted for independence on December 1, 1991. A week later, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus announced that the Soviet Union did not exist.

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Reading Progress Check

Analyzing Why was President Gorbachev arrested on August 19, 1991?

The New Russia

Guiding Question *What are political, economic, and social challenges faced by the new Russia?*

Gorbachev left power on December 25, 1991. He gave his responsibilities as commander-in-chief to Boris Yeltsin, the new president of Russia. By the end of 1991, one of the largest empires in world history had ended.

Boris Yeltsin wanted to introduce a free market economy as quickly as possible. The transition, or change, was not easy, however. Russia already faced economic and social problems. A huge increase in organized crime made the problems worse.

Another problem Yeltsin faced was in Chechnya. Chechnya was a province in the south that wanted to split from Russia and become independent. Yeltsin used brutal force against the Chechens (CHEH-chuhnz) to keep the province as part of Russia. Yeltsin did not solve this problem. Fighting continued into the year 2000 under his successor.

Yeltsin left office at the end of 1999. Vladimir Putin, a former KGB officer, was elected president in 2000. Many thought he wanted to keep tight control on government power. Putin started reforms to increase growth and budget revenues in July 2001. The reforms included tax cuts and the free sale and purchase of land. Even so, business conditions in Russia remained uncertain, and this hurt foreign investment.

Putin's reforms helped Russia experience a budget surplus and a growing economy. Much of this growth is due to oil and gas exports. The country has an estimated 6 percent of the world's oil deposits. It also has about 30 percent of the world's natural gas deposits.

In 2008 Dmitry Medvedev became president of Russia. Putin could not run for reelection because of limits in Russia's constitution, but he became prime minister. However, since Russia's constitution limits only consecutive terms, Putin won the presidency again in 2012. He will be eligible to run for reelection in 2018.

Putin's latest term as president has been witness to problems. These problems have strained Russia's relationship with much of the world. Russian military action in both the Ukrainian revolution of 2014 and the Syrian Civil War of 2015 have been causes for alarm. Russia also faces internal problems. A drop in the price of crude oil has impacted the Russian economy. Rising alcoholism, criminal activities, and the decline of the traditional family system continue to give Russians concern.

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Reading Progress Check

Describing What were the effects of Russia's transition to a market economy?

The Disintegration of Yugoslavia

Guiding Question *How did the fall of the Soviet Union impact Eastern Europe?*

Yugoslavia had a Communist government, but it was never a Soviet satellite state. Josip Broz Tito had been the dictator of Yugoslavia since World War II. He worked to keep together the six republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Serbia) and two provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo) that made up Yugoslavia. However, the Communist Party collapsed by 1990.

Yugoslav politics were complex. Slobodan Milošević (slaw•BAW•dahn muh•LOH•suh•vihch), the leader of Serbia, rejected efforts toward independence. He thought the borders first needed to be redrawn to form a new Greater Serbian state. However, these negotiations failed. Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in June 1991. The Yugoslav army attacked Croatia in September 1991. The Yugoslav army was increasingly dominated by Serbia. Serbian forces captured one-third of Croatia's territory before the conflict ended.

The Serbs next attacked Bosnia-Herzegovina and took 70 percent of Bosnian territory. Many Bosnians were Muslims. The Serbs followed a policy called **ethnic cleansing** toward Bosnians. They killed or forced Bosnians from their lands. Ethnic cleansing brought back memories of the horrific Nazi crimes in World War II. In 1995, Bosnian and Croatian forces regained a lot of territory from Serbia with help from NATO air attacks. The Serbs signed a formal peace agreement. It split Bosnia into a Serb republic and a Muslim-Croat federation.

A new war started in 1998 over Kosovo. Kosovo was an **autonomous**, or self-governing, province in Yugoslavia. Slobodan Milošević took away Kosovo's independence in 1989. Then groups of ethnic Albanians founded the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and fought against Serbian rule. Serb forces massacred ethnic Albanians. The United States and NATO allies (partners) worked on a settlement to end the killing. The Albanians in Kosovo regained their independence in 1999. Milošević's rule ended in 2000. Milošević died in 2006 while he was on trial for killing civilians in Kosovo.

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Yugoslavia no longer existed by 2004. The government officially renamed the country Serbia and Montenegro in that year. The people of Montenegro voted for independence in 2006. Kosovo declared its independence in 2008. Six republics had formed Yugoslavia in 1918. All were now independent nations again, and a new one, Kosovo, was born.



Reading Progress Check

Describing What role did NATO play in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia?
