

PRE-READING

A. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Match the words on the left with the correct meaning on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| _____ 1. veteran | a. to maintain a balance; to stop going up and down |
| _____ 2. federal | b. finish working (around 65 years old) |
| _____ 3. expert | c. assistant |
| _____ 4. security | d. person who was once a soldier |
| _____ 5. spy | e. to exchange |
| _____ 6. deputy | f. from another country |
| _____ 7. mayor | g. boss, chief, leader |
| _____ 8. foreign | h. related to a national or central government |
| _____ 9. head | i. leader of a city government |
| _____ 10. retire | j. someone who gathers secret information |
| _____ 11. stabilize | k. someone who is excellent at doing something |
| _____ 12. swap | l. safety |



QUICK FACTS

Name: _____

Nickname: "Russia's Hard Man"

Nationality: _____

Birthdate: Oct. 7, 1952

Job: _____

Quote: "Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart. Whoever wants it back has no brain."

B. WARM-UP QUESTIONS ☀

1. What were some of the countries in the former U.S.S.R.?
2. Have you ever heard of the KGB? What is it?
3. When did the Communist system start to change in Russia?
4. How many terms has Vladimir Putin held as President in Russia?

Vladimir Putin

Vladimir Putin is known as Russia's "Hard Man". He was the second man to serve as President of Russia. During his long political career, Putin has helped his nation's economy **stabilize** and grow.

Putin was born in 1952 in Leningrad, Russia. His mother worked in a factory and his father was a war **veteran**. Putin studied martial arts and became an **expert**. In 1975, he graduated from law school at Leningrad State University.

After university, Putin went to work for the KGB, the Soviet Union's national **security** group. He learned how to be a **spy** and how to speak German. In 1985, he was sent to Dresden, East Germany to spy for his country.

In 1990, East Germany was not a Communist country any more. Many things were changing in the Soviet Union. Putin quit working for the KGB and became the **deputy mayor** of St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg was the new name for Leningrad. Putin got many **foreign** companies, such as Coca-Cola, to do business in St. Petersburg.

In 1997, Putin went to work for the Russian government. He became the **head** of the **Federal Security Service**. In 1999, President Yeltsin appointed Putin as prime minister. Putin became very popular with the Russian people. When President Yeltsin **retired** early, Putin acted as president for 6 months.

Putin became the president of Russia in March 2000, and was reelected in 2004. In 2008, the law prevented him from serving a third term. Instead, he became prime minister again. Though Dmitry Medvedev was the president, much of the power remained in Putin's hands.

In 2011, Putin announced his plan to **swap** roles with President Medvedev. Many protestors filled the streets. They accused Putin of being an undemocratic dictator. Others were happy. They felt Putin was the best leader for Russia.

Most Russians knew Putin would win the 2012 election. Putin received most of the media coverage during the campaign. Monitors called it an unfair win.



COMPREHENSION

A. QUIZ YOUR PARTNER

Student A asks questions 1–3. Student B asks questions 4–6. Don't look at the reading as you answer.

1. When and where was Vladimir Putin born?

2. What did his parents do?

3. What did he study at university?

4. What was the KGB?

5. What did Putin do for the KGB?

6. What did Putin do to help the economy of St. Petersburg when he worked as deputy mayor?

B. TIMELINE

Place the following in chronological order (1–8). One item is not mentioned in the reading. Guess where it belongs. Add an additional important event to the timeline.

- _____ As a child, Putin studied martial arts.
- _____ Putin began working for the Russian government.
- _____ Dmitry Medvedev announced he would not run for a second term.
- _____ The KGB hired Vladimir Putin.
- _____ Putin went to university to study law.
- _____ Putin went to Germany as a spy for Russia.
- _____ Vladimir Putin was elected for a third term as President.
- _____ Dmitry Medvedev appointed Putin as Russia's prime minister.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from Page 1.

1. Mr. and Mrs. Jones have many hobbies. They will have lots of things to do when they _____.
2. The doctor _____ the patient's heartbeat.
3. James Bond is a very famous Hollywood _____.
4. Let's _____ books. You read mine and I'll read yours.
5. Marie speaks English, French, Spanish and German fluently. She is an _____ at languages.
6. Now that Russia is no longer a communist country, many _____ companies are opening there.
7. The leader of the American government is called the president. The _____ of the British government is called the Prime Minister.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you like spy movies? What are the characteristics of a good spy?
2. In what ways has Russia changed in the last number of years?
3. What is the meaning of the "cold war"?
4. How have relations between the U. S. and Russia changed over the past decade?
5. How do you feel about Putin serving a third term as President?



C. TRUE OR FALSE?

Some of the answers are from the reading. Others you will need to guess or research. Use a mobile device, a library, or the Internet to find the right answers.

1. Vladimir Putin grew up in East Germany. _____
2. Putin did well at university. _____ Putin was mayor of St. Petersburg.
3. Putin became head of the KGB. _____
4. St. Petersburg used to be called Leningrad. _____
5. Putin was named Time magazine's Person of the Year in 2007. _____
6. Putin addressed the Olympic committee in English. This helped Sochi win the bid for the 2014 winter Olympics. _____

A Popular Idiom in Politics

• *pulling the strings*

Despite being Prime Minister rather than President, Vladimir Putin was still *pulling the strings* from 2008-2011. Nothing will change now that he's President.

Write a definition for this idiom.

Do you agree with this statement or not?

ANSWER KEY

Lesson Description: Students read a brief bio about Vladimir Putin and his reelection. This lesson includes vocabulary review, comprehension questions, and discussion questions. Students learn the idiom “pulling the strings”.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. d | 2. h | 3. k | 4. l | 5. j | 6. c | 7. i | 8. f |
| 9. g | 10. b | 11. a | 12. e | | | | |

COMPREHENSION

A. QUIZ YOUR PARTNER

1. Vladimir Putin was born in 1952 in Leningrad, Russia.
2. Putin’s mother worked in a factory and his father was a war veteran.
3. At university, Putin studied law.
4. The KGB was the Soviet Union’s national security group.
5. While he worked for the KGB, Putin learned to be a spy. In 1985, he was sent to Dresden, East Germany to spy and send information back to Moscow.
6. While working as deputy mayor, Putin helped St. Petersburg’s economy by encouraging foreign companies to do business there.

B. TIMELINE

- 1 As a child, Putin studied martial arts.
- 5 Putin began working for the Russian government.
- 6 Dmitry Medvedev announced he would not run for a second term. *
- 3 The KGB hired Vladimir Putin.
- 2 Putin went to university to study law.
- 4 Putin went to Germany as a spy for Russia.
- 8 Vladimir Putin was elected for a third term as President.
- 7 Dmitry Medvedev appointed Putin as Russia’s Prime Minister.

*Not mentioned in reading.

Additional event (many possible options): Putin became President of Russia in 2000.

C. True or False?

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. True

VOCABULARY REVIEW

1. retire
2. stabilized
3. spy
4. swap
5. expert
6. foreign
7. head