

Families of the World: Russia

1) 7-year-old **Anya** lives in the industrial city Nizhny Novgorod, built hundreds of years ago on the Volga and Oka Rivers. We learn how important education is to Anya and her brother. Her Dad works for the local water department and must fix a broken pump.

2) Next, we visit 10-year-old **Nicolai** whose family owns a farm where everyone works together and nothing is purchased if it can be made at home. The village of Retkino is known for its woodworking, and we see local craftspeople making things and painting them in intricate and colorful designs. Nicolai later joins his dad for a soothing "banya" (sauna) before bed.



Vocabulary

1. kid (n)
2. break (v)
3. pump (n)
4. water department (n)
5. public transportation (n)
6. underground (n)
7. bomb shelter (n)
8. gymnastics (n)
9. balance beam (n)
10. honey (n)
11. beehive (n)
12. exercise (n)
13. electrician (n)
14. abacus (n)
15. banya: a Russian sauna
16. greenhouse (n)
17. communist country (n)
18. communism (n)
19. property (n)
20. shared (adj)
21. owned (adj)
22. individual (n)
23. cabbages (n)
24. icon (n): religious painting
25. saint (n): holy person
26. poisons (n)

Part 1: While Watching**A) Anya**

1. How long ago was Anya's city built?
2. Why is her school day only a half day long?
3. How many students are in her class?
4. True or False? They drink coffee during snack time.
5. Who does her dad work for?

6. T or F? Russia has very good public transportation.
7. How many people does the subway in Moscow carry every day?

8. Why was the subway built so far underground?

9. What class does she go to at the gym?

10. T or F? Once a student is accepted to the dance school, lessons are free.
11. What does she do with her mother before going to bed?

B) Nicolai

1. Why doesn't the family have to buy much food?
2. Where does he get the honey to sweeten his tea?
3. What percent of the Russian people can read and write?
4. T or F? Russia is the biggest country in the world.
5. T or F? Russia used to be a communist country.
6. What is communism?

7. On break during school, what do the students do?

8. Where does his mom work?

9. What is his father's job?



10. What time is their biggest meal?
11. What food do they eat with almost every meal?
12. The grocery store clerk does not use a calculator. What does she use?
13. What does his father cut wood for?
14. Why is a greenhouse important in Russia?
15. What vegetables do they keep in (or under) the garage?
16. T or F? They try to make things rather than buy them.
17. What handicrafts do they make from wood?
18. What are icons? What people (or religious characters) was the woman painting on the icon?
19. T or F? Nicolai says the icon of Saint Nicolai will watch over and protect him.
20. Why do they use birch branches in the banya?

Part 2: After Watching (HW: Write your answers.)

1. What was different, interesting, or surprising for you? For example, what do you think of the way the children raise their hands in school? **(Write down at least 2 or 3 things.)**



2. Self-sufficiency:

a. What are some of the things that Nicolai's family and the people in his city make and grow? (See Questions B 1, B 2, B 14, B 15, B 16 and B 17).

b. Why do you think they have to do this? Does your family do anything like this? What?

3. Before 1991, Russia was a communist country. Nicolai says that communism means that all the work and property in the country was shared and owned by all the people, not individuals. However, people could not freely elect their government. (See Question B 6). What do you think of this system? What are some advantages and disadvantages?

4. Would you like to visit the Russia someday? Why or why not? (**Write down 2 or 3 reasons.**)