

Name _____

Date _____

Ivan The Great

A Russian prince named Ivan III took the throne in Moscow in 1462 after his father, Basil II, died. Ivan III ruled from 1462-1505 and became known as “Ivan the Great.” Ivan became the grand duke of Russia without being confirmed by the Mongol Khan.

At the time of Ivan’s rule, Russians were concerned about building up their nation and freeing themselves from the Mongols. These Mongols were also sometimes called Tartars.

Ivan III continued the work of his predecessors. The Grand Dukes of Moscow had been trying to overthrow the Mongols for years. Even though they occasionally won battles against the Mongols, the Mongols always regained control. Ivan the Great succeeded in freeing Russia from the control of the Mongols by refusing to pay the tribute demanded by the Mongols in 1480. Many expected his refusal to lead to battle, but that battle never occurred.

Russian forces faced off against the Mongols, but no battle was fought. Instead, both sides retreated. This retreat was as good as a victory for Ivan the Great because he had to pay the tribute. In fact, tribute was never again demanded by the Mongols.

Ivan the Great also conquered nearby provinces and extended Russian borders in every direction. Ivan also helped to stop Lithuanian expansion into Russia. To prevent insurrection in annexed territories, Ivan transplanted the old ruling classes and replaced them with loyal Russians. He also began to shift control out of the hands of the aristocratic princes in Russia.

Moscow had always been an important city in Asia. In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Turks and many leaders of the Orthodox Church fled to Moscow. By doing so, they brought art, culture, and religion to Moscow. Under Ivan the Great, Moscow flourished even more and became the center of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the home of the grand royal court.

Under Ivan, a building program took place in Moscow that saw new buildings erected in the Kremlin. The Kremlin walls were also strengthened and new towers and gates were built.

Ivan was first married when he was only twelve. His first wife died, and Ivan later married a Byzantine princess, named Sophia. This marriage was supported by the Vatican, and the Vatican hoped it would bring Russia under the sway of the pope. This failed to happen, but Ivan seemed to think the marriage was still a good fit.

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Ivan The Great (Cont'd)

After his second marriage, Ivan developed an autocratic government built on the Byzantine model and began using the title of czar and autocrat. The two-headed eagle of Byzantium was added to the coat of arms of Russia. Sophia introduced Russia to the customs of the Byzantine court. Russia became known as a “third Rome,” successor to the might of the Byzantine Empire and Rome.

Ivan the Great became Russia’s first national sovereign. He was succeeded by his son, Vasily III.

Ivan The Great Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. Ivan the III ruled Russia from:

- a. 1492 - 1525
- b. 1462 - 1505
- c. 1460 - 1520
- d. 1492 - 1552

2. Mongols were sometimes known as:

- a. Russians
- b. Kremlins
- c. Czars
- d. Tartars

3. Constantinople fell to the Turks in:

- a. 1453
- b. 1492
- c. 1462
- d. 1505

4. Moscow became the center of:

- a. Eastern Orthodox Church
- b. Lithuania
- c. Asia
- d. Tartars

True or False:

___ 5. The two-headed eagle of Byzantium was added to the coat of arms of Russia.

___ 6. To prevent insurrection in annexed territories, Ivan transplanted the old ruling classes and replaced them with loyal Russians.

___ 7. Ivan married a Byzantine princess named Vasily.

___ 8. Ivan III did not continue the work of his predecessors.

___ 9. Ivan the Great became Russia's first national bank.

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Ivan The Great Answers

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