



History and Geography Activity

The Trans-Siberian Railroad

Russia, as you may know, is the world's largest country. Did you know, though, that Russia is home to the world's longest railroad?

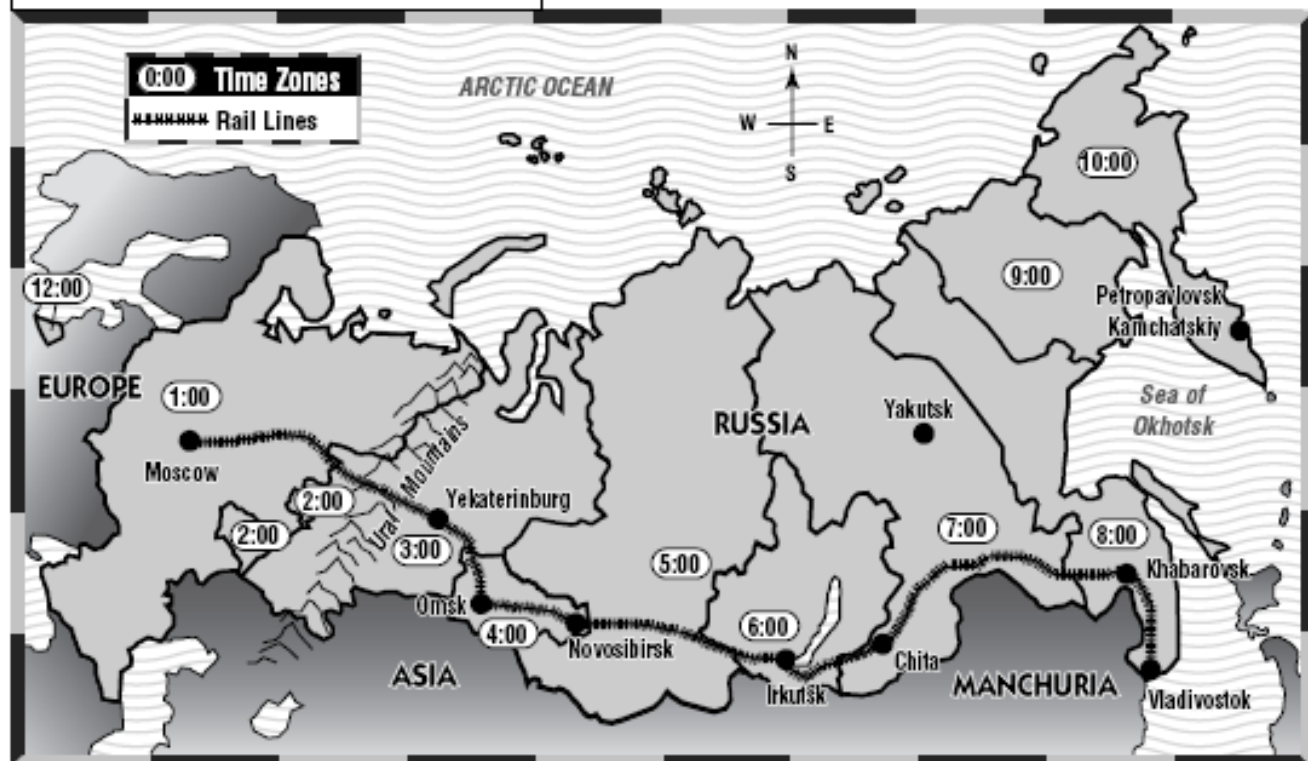
The Trans-Siberian Railroad connects European Russia, the part of Russia west of the Ural Mountains, to Siberia, the part of Russia that extends east of the Ural Mountains all the way to the Pacific Ocean. The main section of the railroad runs between Moscow and Vladivostok, the chief Russian port in the Pacific Ocean, and is 5,785 miles (9,310 km) long. The whole railroad spans 8 time zones. It is easy to see why the Trans-Siberian Railroad is one of the most famous railroads in the world.

Construction of the railroad began in 1891. It took 90,000 workers more than 14 years to complete it. Some say it was the most difficult rail line ever built.

The work was completed in 1905, but there was a problem. One section of the route cut across Manchuria, a Chinese province. The Russians did not want to cross China. So construction began again, this time on a new section of the railroad that ran north, avoiding Chinese territory. That new section, completed in 1916, was the last link in a continuous railroad on Russian soil between Russia's eastern border and Moscow.

The Asian part of Russia is known as Siberia. Although Russia began settling Siberia in 1581, it took the building of the Trans-Siberian Railroad to open up Siberia's vast, undeveloped natural resources. After the opening of the railroad in 1905, Siberia became more accessible and attracted settlers from European Russia. Thanks to the rail line, Siberia is now a major source of minerals and hydroelectric power for Russia.

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RUSSIA AND THE EURASIAN REPUBLICS

History and Geography Activity (continued)

Today a train called the Trans-Siberian Express travels from Moscow to Vladivostok in just seven days.

Directions: Answer the questions below in the spaces provided.

1. What is the name of the longest railroad in the world?

2. The Trans-Siberian Railroad connects what two continents?

3. How many time zones does the Trans-Siberian Railroad cross?


4. How many years did it take to complete the original railroad?

5. What major problem did the government of Russia encounter after completing the railroad? How did they correct this problem?

6. **Critical Thinking** Why do you think the Russian government built the Trans-Siberian Railroad?

7. **Critical Thinking** How did the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad open up Siberia for development?

8. **Making Inferences** In pairs, create a chart that lists the pros and cons of building the Trans-Siberian Railroad completely on Russian territory.

9.  **Mapping Activity** Determine the time in cities in different time zones along the Trans-Siberian Railroad relative to other cities along the route. Add the times to the table below.

If it is:	In:	What time is it in:
1:00 P.M.	Moscow	Yekaterinburg? _____
7:00 A.M.	Irkutsk	Novosibirsk? _____
2:00 P.M.	Vladivostok	Moscow? _____
9:14 A.M.	Yekaterinburg	Khabarovsk? _____