

E. Catherine's Reading

Russia's greatest Empress was born in Germany, and had neither Russian blood nor originally the Russian language, yet propelled herself into a position of power that would have huge effects on the politics, arts, and culture of her adopted country.

- ♪ **Video:** Lucy Worsley on Catherine the Great (BBC 2019)
- ♪ **Film:** *Catherine the Great* (2019), opening of trailer
- ♪ **Dreznin:** *Catherine the Great* (2006), excerpt (Maria Vinenkova)
- ♪ **Video:** Lucy Worsley on Tsarskoye Selo (BBC 2019)
- Vigée Lebrun:** *Marie Antoinette and her Children* (1787)
- ♪ **Kourakina:** Song, "Je vais donc quitter pour jamais"

Jean-Baptiste le Rond d'**Alembert** (1717–83, *French polymath*), Johann Sebastian **Bach** (1685–1750, *German composer*), Denis **Diderot** (1713–84, *French polymath*), Sergei **Dreznin** (1955– , *Russian musician*), Princess Natalia Ivanovna **Kourakina** (1766–1831, *Russian composer*), Wolfgang Amadeus **Mozart** (1756–91, *Austrian composer*), Alexander **Pushkin** (1799–1837, *Russian writer*), Pyotr Ilych **Tchaikovsky** (1840–93, *Russian composer*), Élisabeth **Vigée-Lebrun** (1755–1842, *French painter*), **Voltaire** (François-Marie Arouet, 1694–1778, *French writer*)

Louis XIV (1638–1715; *reigned 1643–1715*), **Peter I**, the Great (1672–1725; *reigned 1682–1725*), **Louis XV** (1710–74; *reigned 1715–74*), **Frederick II**, the Great (1712–86; *reigned 1740–86*), **Catherine II**, the Great (1729–96; *reigned 1762–96*), **Joseph II** (1741–90; *reigned 1765–80 as co-regent, 1780–90 alone*), **Louis XVI** (1754–93; *reigned 1774–92*)

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French Connections



5. To Russia with Reason

March 19, 2025

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CATHERINE THE GREAT OF RUSSIA, Frederick the Great of Prussia, Joseph II of Austria: all grew up speaking French, all studied the French *philosophes*, and all used their absolute power to enact reforms for the benefit of their people. They are often cited as the prime examples of the 18th-century *Enlightened Despot*, a concept we owe to Voltaire. Although born in the preceding century and establishing contact with France relatively late in life, Peter the Great of Russia showed many of the same traits.

The “French Connections” in this class are thus forged through ideas rather than events or people. Though people are involved too: Frederick invited Voltaire to Potsdam and protected Rousseau; Catherine corresponded with Voltaire for years and hosted Diderot; Frederick made music with two Bachs, father and son; Joseph supported Mozart; and Catherine sheltered Élisabeth Vigée Lebrun, Marie Antoinette’s favorite painter, after she fled the Revolution. And all of them built palaces. *rb.*

A. Time Capsule

By way of introduction, an elderly Frenchman in Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*, and thoughts on French as a language and educational model.

♪ **Tchaikovsky:** *Eugene Onegin* (Petr Weigl film, 1988), peasants’ chorus and M. Triquet’s tribute

Brillantmont School, Lausanne

Comparison: Peter the Great and Catherine the Great

Timeline of today’s class

B. The Traveling Tsar

The accomplishments of Tsar Peter the Great, who came to the throne as a boy, spent several years traveling to other parts of Europe, and gave his country new laws, a new capital, and a powerful navy.

♪ **Video:** Lucy Worsley on Peter the Great (BBC 2019)

Dobrovolsky: *Peter Contemplating the Founding of St. Petersburg*

♪ **Video:** Peter the Great’s City

Louis Hersent: *Peter the Great meets Louis XV* (Azerbaijan)

♪ **Video:** Peterhof Palace, St. Petersburg (1714–23)

C. The Enlightened Despot

Brief glimpses of Joseph II of Austria and Hungary and his role-model Frederick the Great of Prussia, with their patronage of music.

♪ **Film:** *Amadeus* (Miklos Forman, 1984): Emperor Joseph (Jeffrey Jones) congratulates Mozart (Tom Hulce) after the premiere of *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1781)

Potsdam: New Palace and Sanssouci compared

Adolf Menzel: *Flute Concerto at Sanssouci* (1852, Berlin NG)

♪ **Film:** Bach plays for Frederick the Great (German tv, 1985)

D. Diderot’s Encyclopædia

Denis Diderot’s greatest accomplishment is surely the *Encyclopédie* he edited with Jean d’Alembert between 1751 and 1772, a monument of Enlightenment scholarship, and a subtly subversive undertaking.

♪ **Video:** *Musée d’histoire naturelle*, Paris, evolution display

♪ **Video:** *Musée d’histoire naturelle*, Paris, paleontology display

♪ **Video:** The *Encyclopédie* (Washington U. of St. Louis), excerpts

♪ **Jacques Rivette:** *The Nun* (1966), trailer