Spanning the divide between Europe and Asia, Russia is a multi-ethnic empire with a huge territory, strategically placed and abundantly provided with natural resources. Russian History: A Very Short Introduction puts into context the difficulties Russia faces in terms of the size of its territory, its ability to rule the masses, its diverse population, and its harsh and vulnerable environment. Attention is given to the important individuals in Russian history and Russia's relationship with the West and Europe is considered. Beginning with the Kievan Rus, this VSI goes on to examine the formation of the Muscovite state, the Russian empire, revolution, the Soviet Union, and the post-Soviet era.

The Soviet Union: A Very Short Introduction

The Soviet Union: A Very Short Introduction blends political history with an investigation into the society and culture of the time. This VSI takes a thematic approach to the history of the Soviet Union. It covers the workings of Soviet society and its political system from 1917–91, emphasizing the contradictions and paradoxes of this large and complex state. The Soviet Union's impact and legacy are also considered, alongside aspects of patriotism, political violence, poverty, and ideology, and answers are offered to some of the big questions about the Soviet experience.