**GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COUNTRY BETTER:**

**Official Country Name:**

Czech Republic

**Location: (Be Specific):**

4 In Central Europe between Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Austria  
*Geographic Coordinates:* 49 45 N 15 30 E

**Capital of Your Country:**

Prague

**Governmental System:**

2014 there will be a new civil code that will replace the existing civil law system which is based on former Austro-Hungarian civil codes and socialist theory (has been amended 40 times since the fall of the Communist regime); the Czech republic is a parliamentary democracy and the supreme law is the Constitution of the Czech Republic with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. The power is divided into the Czech Parliament,Czech Government, and President of the Republic.

**Is the Government corrupt? (dictatorship, free elections, …)**

Yes, according to the Freedom House 2013 Media Freedom Status poll, 94% of people believe that there is widespread corruption in their country because of the most recent scandal involving the country's prime minister and a power grab by the president.

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>, <http://www.czech.cz/en/Discover-CZ/Facts-about-the-Czech-Republic/Politics/Czech-Republic-Political-System>

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/165476/government-corruption-viewed-pervasive-worldwide.aspx>

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/czech-corruption-case-raises-concerns-about-prague-democracy-a-910885.html>

**Who is the head of state today? How did he get into office?**

The president is Miloš Zeman. He collected 50,000 signatures required in support of a nomination for President of the Czech Republic and is elected with a 54.8% of the popular vote.

Source:

<http://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/current-president-of-the-cr-milos-zeman/curriculum-vitae.shtml>

**Official language**:

Czech

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

**Major religion**:

Roman Catholic, Protestant

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

**Types of ethnic groups:**

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

63.7.% Czech, 4.9% Moravian, 1.4% Slovak, 30% Other

**Major cities**: Prague (capital, interior) Brno (Interior, next to Sazava River), Plzen(Interior, close to Mze, Brounka, Uhlava, and Kadubzu River), Olomouc(interior, Morava River), Ostrava(interior, Odra River), and Liberec(interior).

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

<http://www.nationsonline.org/maps/czech_republic_map.jpg>

**Infrastructure status**:

128 Airports, 1 heliport, pipelines: gas 7,160 km; oil 536 km; refined products 94 km, 9,469 of railway, 130,671 km of roadways, 664 km of waterways, river ports: Prague (Vltava); Decin, Usti nad Labem (Elbe)

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

**Physical geographical characteristics**:

No coastline, temperate; cool summers; cold, cloudy, humid winters; Bohemia in the west consists of rolling plains, hills, and plateaus surrounded by low mountains; Moravia in the east consists of very hilly country; natural resources: hard coal, soft coal, kaolin, clay, graphite, timber; Central Europe, between Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Austria

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

**Neighboring/Bordering Countries:**

Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Austria.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

**Population:** 10,162,921

**Ratio of:** 4,955,769 *men* to 5,204,152 *women* = 0.95%

**Men:** 4,955,769

**Women:** 5,204,152

**Ages:** 25-54 years old average

**Literacy Rate:** The Literacy Rate is 99%

**Natural Resources:**

Hard coal, soft coal, kaolin, clay, graphite, timber.

**Major Industries:**

Motor vehicles, metallurgy, machinery and equipment, glass, and armaments.

**Major Exports:**

Machinery and transport equipment, raw materials and fuel, and chemicals.

**Major Imports:**

Same as Majors exports.

**Major Trade Partners:**

Germany 31.8%, Slovakia 9.1%, Poland 6.1%, France 5.1%, UK 4.9%, and Austria 4.7%

**Economy/Overall Wealth/ Per capita income:**

Per Capita income: $27,600

Overall Wealth: -$4.727 billion

**GNP (GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT):**

**Military Strength:**

Army of the Czech Republic and about 4,914,460 men and women serving in the army, and air force.

**Allies/Blocs:**

Nato, before allies with Soviet Union during the Cold War.

**Conflicts (Past and Present):**

**Trace of brief history of your country (was counter once a colony or protectorate of another nation)**

The Czech Republic was one a protectorate of another nation, which the Soviet Union had basically controlled the Czech Republic.

**Cold War Information:**

During the late 1960s, a series of reforms were instituted by the Czech government, under Alexander Dubcek. These reforms became known as the Prague Spring. These so alarmed the Soviet Union whose policy was to enforce Soviet-style governments among its satellite states, through military force if needed, that the armies of five Warsaw Pact nations invaded Czechoslovakia on August 20 1968.

Source: <http://www.nationalcoldwarexhibition.org/the-cold-war/countries/>

Note taking Form #1:

Type of Source: Research

Name, author, publisher of Source: CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)

Web Address: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ez.html>

Notes:

* After WWI, the Czechs and Slovaks of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire merged to form Czechoslovakia
* On the eve of WWII, Nazi Germany occupied the Czech part and Slovakia became independent, allied with Germany
* Czechoslovakia fell within the Soviet sphere of influence
* 1968- Warsaw Pact troops ended the efforts of the country’s leaders to liberalize communist rule which led to “normalization” period
* 1989- “Velvet Revolution” swept the Communist Party and inaugurated a return to democratic rule and market economy
* 1993- “Velvet Divorce” between the Czech Republic and Slovakia
* Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and European Union in 2004
* Literacy Rate, Natural Resources, Background Information, Governmental System, Industries, Religion, Population, etc.

Note taking Form #2:

Type of Source: Image

Name, author, publisher of Source: Nations Online Project

Web Address: <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/czech_republic_map2.htm>

Notes:

* The capital of the Czech Republic is Prague
* The Czech Republic Borders: Austria, Germany, Poland, and Slovakia
* Major cities, infrastructure, and rivers in the Czech Republic
* Prague (capital, interior) Brno (Interior, next to Sazava River), Plzen(Interior, close to Mze, Brounka, Uhlava, and Kadubzu River), Olomouc(interior, Morava River), Ostrava(interior, Odra River), and Liberec(interior).

Note taking Form #3:

Type of Source: Article

Name, author, publisher of Source: author Benjamin Cunningham; published by Spiegel Online

Web Address: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/czech-corruption-case-raises-concerns-about-prague-democracy-a-910885.html>

Notes:

* Prime Minister Petr Necas met with police as part of an investigation into Jana Nagyova who was a one-time top advisor and Necas’ mistress
* Nagyova alleged to have used intelligence services to spy on opponents and Necas’ wife
* Police arrested her and other key players while also seizing 150 million Czech crowns in cash and a trove of gold in a series of raids tied to the case
* Zeman advised the new government to ignore "the media criticism of envious idiots who have never done anything proper in their lives."
* High levels of corruption and patronage in Central Europe at the moment

Note taking Form #4

Type of Source: Article

Name, author, publisher of Source: Jan Sonnenschein and Julie Ray; published by Gallup

Web Address: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/165476/government-corruption-viewed-pervasive-worldwide.aspx>

Notes:

* 94% of people in the Czech Republic say that corruption is widespread in the government of their country
* The percentage of residents perceiving corruption as widespread has increased by 15% since 2007, a big part of this has to do with the corruption scandal that led to Prime Minister Petr Necas’ resignation (this was addressed in Note taking Form #3).

Note taking Form #5

Type of Source: Official Website

Name, author, publisher of Source: Czech Republic

Web Address: <http://www.czech.cz/en/Discover-CZ/Facts-about-the-Czech-Republic/Politics/Czech-Republic-Political-System>

Notes:

* Facts about the Czech Republic (politics)
* Legislative, executive, and judicial power in the Czech Republic
* A parliamentary democracy and the supreme law is the Constitution of the Czech Republic with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms
* Legislative Power - House of Parliament and the Senate
* Executive Power - Czech Government and President
* Judicial Power - Courts of Law (Supreme Court and Constitutional Court)

Note taking Form #6

Type of Source: Research

Name, author, publisher of Source: Prague Castle

Web Address: <http://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/current-president-of-the-cr-milos-zeman/curriculum-vitae.shtml>

Notes:

* Milos Zeman is a Czech politician and leader of the Czech Republic
* Collected 50,000 signatures required in support of a nomination for President of the Czech Republic and is elected with a 54.8% of the popular vote.

Note taking Form #7

Type of Source: Documentary Video

Name, author, publisher of Source: CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)

Web Address:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVvyU849FHI

Notes:

* Elections May 1946, Communism had ⅓ of the popular vote but became the largest single political party → communist leaders in key positions
* Reminders of years of Nazy occupation were everywhere
* Czech people looked to Edward Vanish → would be difficult as Czechoslovakia was surrounded by Russia and Russian dominated territory
* Czech foreign policy would have to lean towards Moscow, he made a mutual assistance treaty with Russia and ceded the province of Romania to Russia
* Czechoslovakia was created after the first World War
* Thomas Masaryk was the founder of Prague → created an intense national spirit amongst people and firm in the ways of democracy
* Edward Bennett (was premier and foreign minister)- played an active part in the republic struggle for independence
* One of great industrial nations of Europe → a lot of agricultural and industrial growth
* Bratislava - key port to trade with nations of the world
* 1938 Munich Conference- Western Powers abandoned Czechoslovakia and agreed to partition
* Hitler entered Prague as a conqueror and announced that Czechoslovakia didn’t exist, save as a German Protectorate
* 1946- campaign to elect Czechoslovakia’s first post-war parliament was underway
* Government would be formed in which each party would be represented → every citizen 18+ required to vote → communist party was in the lead
* U.S. shipped to Czechoslovakia over 200 million dollars worth of supplies to start them on the road to recovery
* February 1948 - Czechoslovakia reconstruction was interrupted by communism
* Masaryk died and his ideals of democracy went away with the interruption of communism

Note taking Form #8

Type of Source: Research

Name, author, publisher of Source: Royal Air Force Museum (National Cold War Exhibition)

Web Address:

<http://www.nationalcoldwarexhibition.org/the-cold-war/countries/>

Notes:

* Prague was liberated by the Red Army in 1945
* Communist Party gained control of the government in 1948
* Prague Spring - a series of reforms instituted by the Czech government → this alarmed the Soviet Union who were strict about enforcing Soviet policies in their satellite states → the armies of 5 Warsaw Pact nations invaded Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968 and the leadership was replaced by hard-line communists
* Army- After communism took over the Czechoslovak govt. in 1948 - the ranks of officers and NCOs were purged → led to a loss of competent personnel but Soviet advisers re-organized the units to fit Soviet pattern and Soviet equipment (credible combat capability)  
  -140,000 in 1950 to 250,000 in 1951 and considered capable and competent by 1955 when Czechoslovakia committed its forces to the Warsaw Pact  
  -1964 Warsaw Pact War Plan the Czechoslovak military was assigned the role of tying down the NATO forces in the southern part of the Federal Republic of Germany  
  -Prague Spring mid 1960s - 500,000 Soviet Troops invaded in 1968 and Czechoslovakia was an occupied country by August 21, 1968
* Navy- Czechoslovakia doesn’t have a navy but there are patrols on the River Danube
* Air Force- after WWII, the Czechoslovak air force was equipped with personnel and equipment from Germany, Britain, Russia, and the former Slovak air force as well as captured German stocks w/ supplies from Avia factory  
  -When communists came into power, all pro-Western and ex-RAF personnel were purged from the armed forces and Russian advisors moved in

Note taking Form #9

Type of Source: Article

Name, author, publisher of Source: BBC News

Web Address: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17220018>

Notes:

* The Czech Republic was part of Czechoslovakia until the “velvet divorce” in January 1993
* Emerged from over 40 years of communist rule in 1990
* Joined the European Union in 2004
* First former Eastern Bloc state to acquire status of a developed economy
* Vaclav Havel became the first president of post-communist Czechoslovakia
* Feb. 2003, he stepped down as president and after a few months when Czech Republic and Slovakia became separate, Mr Havel became president of the Czech Republic
* Prague’s fine architecture is a major tourist attraction

Note taking Form #10

Type of Source: Article/Video

Name, author, publisher of Source: Euronews

Web Address: <http://www.euronews.com/2013/05/18/czech-republic-nuclear-bunker-turns-cold-war-museum/>

Notes:

* The nuclear bunker in this video/mentioned in this article is the only intact nuclear bunker in the Czech Republic out of two others
* This nuclear bunker in Misov has since been converted into a Cold War Museum
* Was at one point one of the most secret places in the Soviet World→ very few people knew it existed and even the top representatives wouldn’t have known
* This nuclear bunker could have sheltered 80 nuclear warheads

Note taking Form # 11

Historical

Type of Source: Documentary Video

Name, author, Publisher of Source: Paul F. Goldsmith pictures and produced by Hon. Richard Pivnicka

Web Address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KSt1XYTn4U>

Notes:

* Prague Spring- “Once again we have the chance to take into our own hands our shared fate,” Ludvik Vaculik in June 1968
* Jan. 1968 - Alexander Dubcek was elected head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and advocated “socialism with a human face”
* April - Ludvik Svoboda was elected and a new government formed
* Human rights mattered, young people sported long hair, turtlenecks, some Czechs and Slovaks vacationed outside the Communist bloc
* Dubcek and other reformers struggled to keep things from shifting too quickly to prevent backlash
* June - Soviet troops held maneuvers in Czechoslovakia
* Aug. 20 - 4,000 tanks and 165,000 troops from the Warsaw Pact crossed into Czechoslovakia → greeted with shock, anger, and fear - protests and barricades
* Dozens of unarmed Czechs and Slovaks were killed, hundreds were wounded
* End of Prague Spring was the crushing of the hopes of the generation
* August 21st- Soviet invasion and leading to a lot of protests and marches
* 1968- Alexander Dubcek’s reforms ushered in a period of liberalization and loosened restrictions on free speech, media, and economic activity  
  -Soviet military turned more aggressive to crack down on citizens exercising their fundamental rights to speak freely and assemble peacefully  
  -Velvet Revolution would allow the Czech people to shed the shackles of Soviet oppression  
  -Courage showed in August 1968 laid the groundwork for the Communist Party’s eventual collapse
* Paul Goldsmith in these pictures evokes the spirit of resilience that drove throngs of Czechs citizens to stare down Soviet tanks in the name of liberty

Note taking Form #12

Historical

Type of Source: Article

Name, author, Publisher of Source: BBC

Web Address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/21/newsid_2781000/2781867.stm>  
Notes:

* Prague Spring- dozens of people have been killed in a massive military clampdown in Czechoslovakia by 5 of the Warsaw Pact countries
* Several members of the liberal Czechoslovak leadership are arrested, including Prime Minister Alexander Dubceck
* Claims by Tess (Soviet news agency) that say that assistance was requested by members of the Czechoslovak government and Communist party leaders to fight “counter-revolutionary forces”
* Czechoslovak President Ludvik Svoboda condemned the occupation by Warsaw Pact allies as illegal and committed w/o govt. consent
* U.S. President Lyndon Johnson said the invasion was a violation of the U.N. Charter and that excuses would be obviously not genuine
* Prague - crowds of people support Mr. Dubceck and implore for the foreign troops to leave  
  -Resistance was centered at the Prague radio station and youths threw homemade missiles and tried to take on Russian tanks  
  -Some tanks and ammunition trucks were destroyed but the response was machine gun and artillery fire w/ at least 4 shot dead  
  -Youths made barricades to try and halt the advance  
  -Soviet and eastern block commanders imposed an overnight curfew and the threat of those out overnight be shot  
  -All railroad, road and airline routes out of Czechoslovakia are closed and troops enter (nearly 175,000 men)

Note taking Form #13

Historical

Type of Source: Article

Name, author, Publisher of Source: U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian

Web Address: <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/soviet-invasion-czechoslavkia>  
Notes:

* Before WWII, Czechoslovakia was a strong democracy in Central Europe- mid 1930s it faced challenges from the West and East
* 1938- leadership in Great Britain and France conceded the German right to take over the Sudetenland in the Munich Agreement  
  -Czech government condemned this German occupation of its western-most territory as betrayal
* 1948- Czech attempts to join the U.S. Marshall Plan to aid postwar rebuilding but was thwarted by Soviet takeover and the installation of communist govt. in Prague
* 1960s changes in leadership led to reforms to improve the economy and establish the fundamental human rights such as the ending of censorship- Prague Spring
* For fear of these reforms leading to widespread rebellion against Moscow’s leadership of the Eastern Bloc, the Communist intervened violently (Warsaw Pact Invasion) → invasion temporarily derailed progress towards détente btwn. the Soviet Union and the U.S.
* B/c the U.S. was having growing influence in Vietnam, they condemned the act but didn’t act on it → Czechoslovakia became a cooperative member of the Warsaw Pact
* Soviet invasion was significant b/c it delayed the splintering of Eastern European Communism and didn’t have any direct intervention from the West
* Brezhnev Doctrine- stated that Moscow had the right to intervene in any country where a communist government had been threatened

Note taking Form #14

Modern

Type of Source: Article

Name, author, Publisher of Source: BBC News

Web Address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/8611693.stm>  
Notes:

* New Start treaty at Prague - U.S. and Russia are one step closer to nuclear disarmament
* Every first Wednesday of the Month at midday, air raid sirens ring out across the country
* The sirens are an integral part of the Czech Republic’s present day civil defence system and are used to warn the populace in times of peril
* Prague’s metro system has steel doors in the passenger tunnels that can be shut and a network of 800 interlinked bunkers w/ water, power, and tinned food to keep the populace alive for 72 hours before they would emerge into the radioactive daylight if a nuclear bomb were to hit
* Trokavec- the local mayor Jan Neoral is celebrating President Obama’s abandonment of the Bush missile defence plan and Russia had threatened to target its nuclear missiles at the radar base which would wipe out the town
* After Washington changed its mind, the military threat from Moscow is gone

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| --- | --- |
| United States (US) | Soviet Union (USSR) |
| U.S sending about 200 million dollars of supplies and equipment to support the industrial growth and agriculture culture post war Czechoslovakia (Marshall Plan), however Communism had taken over, yet the U.S still sent them supplies. **+**  Becoming Allies with the United States by joining Nato, now striving economically and getting benefits from the U.S. **+**  When the USSR finally had fallen the Czech Republic was able to prosper because it then adapted to a free-market economy. **+** | When the USSR had control of Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic) they couldn’t adapt to a free-market economy making the economy to be harder to strive  overall the meaning of this, is basically wages were distributed no matter what social class you were, and depending how much the government wanted to keep the economy balanced. **-**  Czechoslovakia had a much larger military with competent Soviet personnel and equipment . **+**  The Soviet Union purged the competent military personnel (including the NCOs and ranks of officers) **-**  Because of the disproportionate military that Czechoslovakia was forced to maintain as part of the Warsaw Pact, the Czech economy suffered. **-**  The Soviet Union took a very violent approach during the Prague Spring and killed some of the youths, injuring many more. Stomped on the liberal movement to prevent any ideas spreading to other countries. **-** |

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| Summary:  The Soviet Union caused the most damage and pain for the Czech Republic because it was oppressive and was very destructive for the economy. The negatives greatly outweigh any positives and the U.S. had very little involvement in Czechoslovakia (and the Czech Republic) besides offering aid. The Soviet Union on the other hand not only was violent, it also oppressed the people socially, politically, and economically. Depriving the people of their liberties and stomping on any ideas of freedom and hurting the economy to support a large military. |