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## **Tunnel planned between Russia and USA**

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**20<sup>th</sup> April, 2007**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Tunnel planned between Russia and USA**

Russian officials have announced there are plans to build an amazing new tunnel between Russia and the USA. The proposed link would cost \$60 billion and take 15 years to complete. The ambitious project would go under the Bering Strait, which is a thin waterway between Russia's Far East and Alaska in the USA. Russian businessmen are very eager for the scheme to go ahead. They say it would greatly increase the amount of trade between Asia and North America and would cut travel costs between the two continents. Representatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin said: "It is planned to call on the governments of Russia, the United States and Canada to sign an agreement to study and go ahead with the project."

The idea to build a tunnel across the 85-kilometre Bering Strait is not new. People discussed it first more than 100 years ago, but it was forgotten about during the Soviet era. However, since the end of the Cold War, the plan has come back into politicians' minds and it is now a serious possibility. Naturally, there are people who think the project is a bad idea. Reuter's news agency reports a Russian official who expressed concern over the link, saying: "To be honest, anyone who looks at a map will realize that the project is too hard to do." Alternatively, many others see a transport link that could connect New York City in the USA with Shanghai in China. This would become the world's greatest train journey. The tunnel could also pipe much-needed energy from Russia to North America.

## WARM-UPS

**1. RUSSIA-USA:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about what they know about relations and the history between Russia and the USA. When you have finished, sit with your original partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*plans / tunnels / \$60 billion / Alaska / Russian businessmen / trade / projects / 100 years ago / Soviet era / Cold War / bad ideas / maps / train journeys*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. TRANSPORT HEADLINES:** Look at these newspaper headlines about transport projects. Would they be good for you? Do you think they are possible?

- New tunnel connects USA and Russia
- Highway to the Moon to be finished on time
- Sydney to London in an hour on new Super jet
- Backpack helicopters causing chaos in city skies
- Escalator to top of Everest near completion
- Oil runs out – no more transport

**4. RELATIONS:** What are relations / links like between your country and the USA and Russia? Talk about these areas:

- |           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| • trade   | • religion    |
| • history | • war         |
| • culture | • politics    |
| • sport   | • other _____ |

**5. QUICK DEBATE:** Have this quick debate with your partner(s). Students A think road/rail tunnels should link all continents; students B think the world is already too connected. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

**6. TUNNEL:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "tunnel". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**7. NEW YORK-SHANGHAI:** You are on the very first New York to Shanghai Express. Talk to the other train passengers in your class about your journey and reasons for taking it.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Politicians want to build a tunnel that links the USA and Russia.    | T / F |
| b. The tunnel would take 50 years to construct.                         | T / F |
| c. Russian businessmen are against the project.                         | T / F |
| d. Vladimir Putin's government is eager for the project to go ahead.    | T / F |
| e. The tunnel would be 850 kilometres long.                             | T / F |
| f. The idea of the tunnel was first thought of over a century ago.      | T / F |
| g. A Russian official said the tunnel looks very easy looking at a map. | T / F |
| h. The tunnel would create the world's longest train journey.           | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| a. officials     | transport         |
| b. proposed      | keen              |
| c. ambitious     | period            |
| d. eager         | suggested         |
| e. call on       | on the other hand |
| f. era           | bureaucrats       |
| g. concern       | link              |
| h. alternatively | ask               |
| i. connect       | challenging       |
| j. pipe          | worry             |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. there are plans to build         | for the scheme to go ahead    |
| b. The ambitious project would go   | first more than 100 years ago |
| c. businessmen are very eager       | under the Bering Strait       |
| d. cut travel costs                 | concern over the link         |
| e. go                               | from Russia to North America  |
| f. People discussed it              | an amazing new tunnel         |
| g. the plan has come back           | hard to do                    |
| h. a Russian official who expressed | into politicians' minds       |
| i. the project is too               | ahead with the project        |
| j. pipe much-needed energy          | between the two continents    |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### Tunnel planned between Russia and USA

Russian officials have \_\_\_\_\_ there are plans to build an \_\_\_\_\_ new tunnel between Russia and the USA. The proposed link would cost \$60 billion and take 15 years to complete. The \_\_\_\_\_ project would go under the Bering Strait, which is a thin \_\_\_\_\_ between Russia's Far East and Alaska in the USA. Russian businessmen are very eager for the scheme to go ahead. They say it would \_\_\_\_\_ increase the amount of trade between Asia and North America and would \_\_\_\_\_ travel costs between the two continents. Representatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin said: "It is planned to \_\_\_\_\_ on the governments of Russia, the United States and Canada to sign an agreement to study and go \_\_\_\_\_ with the project."

*ambitious*

*cut*

*amazing*

*greatly*

*ahead*

*announced*

*call*

*waterway*

The \_\_\_\_\_ to build a tunnel across the 85-kilometre Bering Strait is not new. People discussed it first more than 100 years ago, but it was forgotten about \_\_\_\_\_ the Soviet era. However, since the end of the Cold War, the plan has come back into politicians' \_\_\_\_\_ and it is now a serious possibility. \_\_\_\_\_, there are people who think the project is a bad idea. Reuter's news agency reports a Russian official who \_\_\_\_\_ concern over the link, saying: "To be honest, anyone who looks at a map will \_\_\_\_\_ that the project is too hard to do." Alternatively, many others see a transport link that could \_\_\_\_\_ New York City in the USA with Shanghai in China. This would become the world's greatest train journey. The tunnel could also pipe much-\_\_\_\_\_ energy from Russia to North America.

*connect*

*minds*

*realize*

*naturally*

*needed*

*idea*

*expressed*

*during*

## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Tunnel planned between Russia and USA

Russian officials have announced there \_\_\_\_\_ build an amazing new tunnel between Russia and the USA. The proposed link would cost \$60 billion \_\_\_\_\_ years to complete. The ambitious project would go under the Bering Strait, which is a thin waterway between Russia's Far East and Alaska in the USA. Russian businessmen \_\_\_\_\_ the scheme to go ahead. They say it would greatly increase \_\_\_\_\_ trade between Asia and North America and would cut travel costs between the two continents. Representatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin said: "It is planned \_\_\_\_\_ governments of Russia, the United States and Canada to sign an agreement to study \_\_\_\_\_ the project."

\_\_\_\_\_ tunnel across the 85-kilometre Bering Strait is not new. People discussed it first more than 100 years ago, \_\_\_\_\_ about during the Soviet era. However, since \_\_\_\_\_ Cold War, the plan has come back into politicians' minds and it is now a serious possibility. Naturally, \_\_\_\_\_ think the project is a bad idea. Reuter's news agency reports a Russian official who expressed \_\_\_\_\_ link, saying: "To be honest, anyone who looks at a map will realize that the project is too hard to do." Alternatively, many others see a transport \_\_\_\_\_ New York City in the USA with Shanghai in China. This would become the world's greatest train journey. The tunnel could \_\_\_\_\_ energy from Russia to North America.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'go' and 'ahead'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "TUNNEL" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about tunnels and linking different continents.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• amazing</li><li>• ambitious</li><li>• eager</li><li>• cut</li><li>• call</li><li>• study</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• idea</li><li>• era</li><li>• minds</li><li>• Reuters</li><li>• map</li><li>• pipe</li></ul>
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## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) Do you think the tunnel is a good idea?
- c) What are the main advantages of building this tunnel?
- d) Do you think it will be possible to drive around the world one day?
- e) Are there any very useful tunnels in your country?
- f) What do you think the tunnel will do for US-Russian relations?
- g) Who will benefit most and least from the tunnel?
- h) Do you have any favourite tunnels or bridges?
- i) What name would you give to the new tunnel?
- j) What kinds of things might the governments have to study before they build the tunnel?



### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think they could have built the tunnel a century ago?
- c) Do you think there the tunnel will cause any problems?
- d) What do you know about the Soviet era and the Cold War?
- e) Why do you think some politicians think it's a bad idea?
- f) Would you like to take the train from Shanghai to New York?
- g) What future transport schemes would you like to see happen?
- h) There are also plans to link Spain and Morocco and Yemen with Somalia. What do you think of these ideas?
- i) What do you think of the idea of a bridge to the moon?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?



## LANGUAGE

**CORRECT WORD:** Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

### Tunnel planned between Russia and USA

Russian officials have announced there are plans to build an amazing new tunnel between Russia and the USA. The (1) \_\_\_\_\_ link would cost \$60 billion and take 15 years to complete. The ambitious project would go under the Bering Strait, (2) \_\_\_\_\_ is a thin waterway between Russia's Far East and Alaska in the USA. Russian businessmen are very eager (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the scheme to go ahead. They say it would (4) \_\_\_\_\_ increase the amount of trade between Asia and North America and would (5) \_\_\_\_\_ travel costs between the two continents. Representatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin said: "It is planned to (6) \_\_\_\_\_ on the governments of Russia, the United States and Canada to sign an agreement to study and go ahead with the project."

The idea to build a tunnel across the 85-kilometre Bering Strait is not new. People discussed it (7) \_\_\_\_\_ more than 100 years ago, but it was forgotten about (8) \_\_\_\_\_ the Soviet era. However, since the end of the Cold War, the plan has come (9) \_\_\_\_\_ into politicians' minds and it is now a serious possibility. Naturally, there are people who think the project is a bad idea. Reuter's news agency reports a Russian official who expressed concern over the link, saying: "To be (10) \_\_\_\_\_, anyone who looks at a map will realize that the project is too hard to do." (11) \_\_\_\_\_, many others see a transport link that could connect New York City in the USA with Shanghai in China. This would become the world's greatest train journey. The tunnel could also pipe (12) \_\_\_\_\_ -needed energy from Russia to North America.

1. (a) proposition (b) prosperous (c) proposed (d) proposal
2. (a) which (b) what (c) where (d) whichever
3. (a) so (b) by (c) with (d) for
4. (a) great (b) greatly (c) greatness (d) greatest
5. (a) cutting (b) cuts (c) cut (d) price cut
6. (a) message (b) ring (c) phone (d) call
7. (a) first (b) initial (c) prime (d) one
8. (a) while (b) during (c) via (d) for
9. (a) backing (b) backer (c) back (d) backward
10. (a) honest (b) dishonest (c) honestly (d) truth
11. (a) altogether (b) altar (c) alternate (d) alternatively
12. (a) lots (b) many (c) much (d) loads

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information about the Bering Strait tunnel. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. TUNNEL POSTER:** Make a poster about different tunnels around the world. How are they different? Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

**4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE:** Write a magazine article about different tunnels around the world. In particular, write about the ones that link different countries and the costs and benefits of the tunnels. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to the Russian officials. Ask them three questions about the tunnel project. Give them three pieces of advice about the link. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| a. officials     | bureaucrats       |
| b. proposed      | suggested         |
| c. ambitious     | challenging       |
| d. eager         | keen              |
| e. call on       | ask               |
| f. era           | period            |
| g. concern       | worry             |
| h. alternatively | on the other hand |
| i. connect       | link              |
| j. pipe          | transport         |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. there are plans to build         | an amazing new tunnel         |
| b. The ambitious project would go   | under the Bering Strait       |
| c. businessmen are very eager       | for the scheme to go ahead    |
| d. cut travel costs                 | from Russia to North America  |
| e. go                               | ahead with the project        |
| f. People discussed it              | first more than 100 years ago |
| g. the plan has come back           | into politicians' minds       |
| h. a Russian official who expressed | concern over the link         |
| i. the project is too               | hard to do                    |
| j. pipe much-needed energy          | between the two continents    |

### GAP FILL:

#### Tunnel planned between Russia and USA

Russian officials have **announced** there are plans to build an **amazing** new tunnel between Russia and the USA. The proposed link would cost \$60 billion and take 15 years to complete. The **ambitious** project would go under the Bering Strait, which is a thin **waterway** between Russia's Far East and Alaska in the USA. Russian businessmen are very eager for the scheme to go ahead. They say it would **greatly** increase the amount of trade between Asia and North America and would **cut** travel costs between the two continents. Representatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin said: "It is planned to **call** on the governments of Russia, the United States and Canada to sign an agreement to study and go **ahead** with the project."

The **idea** to build a tunnel across the 85-kilometre Bering Strait is not new. People discussed it first more than 100 years ago, but it was forgotten about **during** the Soviet era. However, since the end of the Cold War, the plan has come back into politicians' **minds** and it is now a serious possibility. **Naturally**, there are people who think the project is a bad idea. Reuter's news agency reports a Russian official who **expressed** concern over the link, saying: "To be honest, anyone who looks at a map will **realize** that the project is too hard to do." Alternatively, many others see a transport link that could **connect** New York City in the USA with Shanghai in China. This would become the world's greatest train journey. The tunnel could also pipe much-**needed** energy from Russia to North America.

### LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - c    2 - a    3 - d    4 - b    5 - c    6 - d    7 - a    8 - b    9 - c    10 - a    11 - d    12 - c