

## Putin world's most powerful person

2nd November, 2013



The American business magazine "Forbes" has announced that Russian President Vladimir Putin is the most powerful person in the world. He knocks US President Barack Obama from the top spot. "Forbes" is well known for compiling annual lists comparing the rich and famous. In its latest ranking, it asked: "Who's

more powerful: the autocratic leader of a former superpower or the handcuffed commander-in-chief of the most dominant country in the world?" The magazine cites a number of reasons why Obama lost his top ranking and has become "lame duck" president. These included the recent "government shutdown mess," his foreign policy on Syria and the ongoing spying and security leaks scandals.

Forbes wrote: "There are nearly 7.2 billion people on the planet. These are the 72 that matter the most." It added that its list is: "An annual snapshot of the heads of state, financiers, philanthropists and entrepreneurs who truly run the world." It is put together by Forbes' editors, who have four "dimensions" to take into consideration. One is whether the candidate has power over lots of people; second is the financial resources at the disposal or control of each person; third is to what degree the person has power "in multiple spheres"; and finally, the extent to which he or she "actively use their power". These factors put the U.N. Secretary-General 22 places behind the CEO of retail giant Wal-Mart.

Sources: *Forbes.com*

### Writing

*Barack Obama is more powerful than Vladimir Putin.* Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*business magazine / the top spot / annual lists / latest ranking / superpower / scandal / the planet / philanthropists / run the world / financial resources / power / retail giant*

### True / False

- A Russian magazine said Putin is the world's most powerful person. T / F
- Barack Obama was number one before Vladimir Putin. T / F
- A magazine suggests Obama has limited use of his power. T / F
- The magazine likens Obama to a spring chicken. T / F
- The magazine took a photograph of 72 powerful people. T / F
- People who chose the most powerful person looked at four areas. T / F
- One factor to be most powerful was influence in different areas. T / F
- The U.N. Secretary-General was 22 places higher than Wal-Mart's CEO. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1. announced | a. putting together  |
| 2. spot      | b. make a difference |
| 3. compiling | c. areas             |
| 4. former    | d. yearly            |
| 5. ongoing   | e. declared          |
| 6. matter    | f. control           |
| 7. annual    | g. continuing        |
| 8. run       | h. position          |
| 9. spheres   | i. colossus          |
| 10. giant    | j. ex-               |

### Discussion – Student A

- Who is more important, a financier or a philanthropist?
- What do you think of the four dimensions used to decide the "winner"?
- What responsibilities does the most powerful person in the world have?
- Does power corrupt?
- Does having power change people?
- What power do you have?
- What kind of power would you like to have?
- What would you like to ask Vladimir Putin about the Forbes list?

## Phrase Match

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. compiling             | a. duck president         |
| 2. autocratic            | b. control of each person |
| 3. a lame                | c. policy on Syria        |
| 4. the recent government | d. entrepreneurs          |
| 5. his foreign           | e. that matter the most   |
| 6. These are the 72      | f. leader                 |
| 7. philanthropists and   | g. giant                  |
| 8. take into             | h. shutdown mess          |
| 9. at the disposal or    | i. annual lists           |
| 10. retail               | j. consideration          |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of the Forbes list?
- What power does Vladimir Putin have in Russia and in the world?
- Do you think Vladimir Putin is more powerful than Barack Obama?
- Why did Forbes call Putin an "autocratic leader"?
- Why did Forbes say Obama is "handcuffed"?
- Is Obama a weak president?
- Who is the most powerful person who isn't a national leader?
- Are lists like this important?

## Spelling

- giilpomcn annual lists
- the ctacroatiu leader
- the fhddefunac commander-in-chief
- The magazine tecis a number of reasons
- foreign yiclpo
- usytecri leaks
- financiers, philanthropists and tnpenesreerur
- four "dimensions" to take into nooesdicatirn
- the dtaiacncd has power
- at the lsspdioa or control of each person
- in multiple erepshs
- ealirt giant

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. a	4. j	5. g
6. b	7. d	8. f	9. c	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Vladimir Putin

You think Vladimir Putin is the most powerful person in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their people. Also, tell the others who is the least powerful of these (and why): Barack Obama, Facebook's CEO or the U.N. Secretary-General.

### Role B – Barack Obama

You think Barack Obama is the most powerful person in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their people. Also, tell the others who is the least powerful of these (and why): Vladimir Putin, Facebook's CEO or the U.N. Secretary-General.

### Role C – Facebook's CEO

You think Facebook's CEO is the most powerful person in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their people. Also, tell the others who is the least powerful of these (and why): Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin or the U.N. Secretary-General.

### Role D – The U.N. Secretary-General

You think the U.N. Secretary-General is the most powerful person in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their people. Also, tell the others who is the least powerful (and why): Barack Obama, Facebook's CEO or Vladimir Putin.

## Speaking – Powerful people

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most powerful at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- a computer hacker
- world footballer of the year
- the boss of Apple
- head of the BBC
- an army general
- the Pope
- the head Al Qaeda
- N. Korea's leader

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.