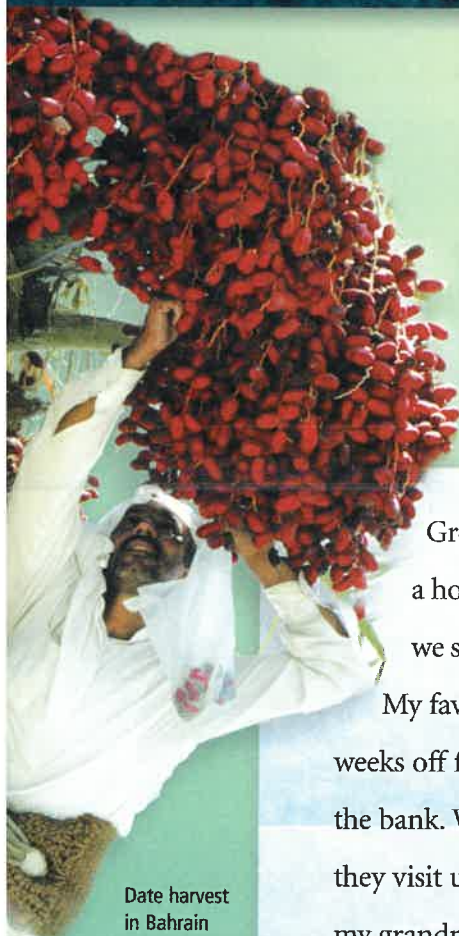


The Persian Gulf and Interior

The human geography of the Persian Gulf and interior Southwest Asia is changing as the modern world mixes with the old. In this chapter you will read about changes affecting the region's cultures and economic development.



Illustrated manuscript from ancient Persia



Date harvest in Bahrain



Greetings from Iran! My name is Mitra. I live with my family on the top floor of a house in Tehran, the capital. The roof of our house is flat, and in nice weather we sit up there and look out at the mountains. In the summer we sleep there too. My favorite holiday is No Ruz, our New Year's festival, in the spring. We get two weeks off from school. We go see all our relatives, who give us clean new money from the bank. We visit the older people first, like my mother's family in Tehran, and then they visit us. The second week we may go to Isfahan, where my father is from, and see my grandmother. Lots of sweets and pastries are served at these visits. At dinner we may have special New Year's dishes. We also set up a table with a cloth with seven food items on it that begin with the *s* sound in our language. This spread is called the cloth of seven dishes. The foods on the table symbolize rebirth, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience, and beauty. For example, *serkeh* is vinegar and represents age and patience. You might compare this with your putting up a Christmas tree.

My mother's family is from the north, near the Caspian Sea. During our vacation, we go to her family's summer house. I like to go to the beach and swim. There is one beach for boys and another for girls. I also love to go to the Tehran bazaars with my mother. Food shops, fruit markets, gold shops—they are all mixed together. The shop owners pull out the best things to show us. We bargain for everything.

Section
1

Natural Environments

HOLT
Geography's Impact

Watch the video to understand the impact of oil on Southwest Asia

READ TO DISCOVER

1. What landforms and rivers can be found in the Persian Gulf area and the interior of Southwest Asia?
2. How does the region's physical geography affect its climates and biomes?
3. What natural resources does the region have?

DEFINE

exotic rivers
oasis

LOCATE

Persian Gulf
Arabian Peninsula
Red Sea
Gulf of Aden
Arabian Sea
Mesopotamia
Tigris River

Locate, continued

Euphrates River
Shatt al Arab
Zagros Mountains
Elburz Mountains
Kopet-Dag
Hindu Kush
Rub' al-Khali
An Nafūd
Caspian Sea

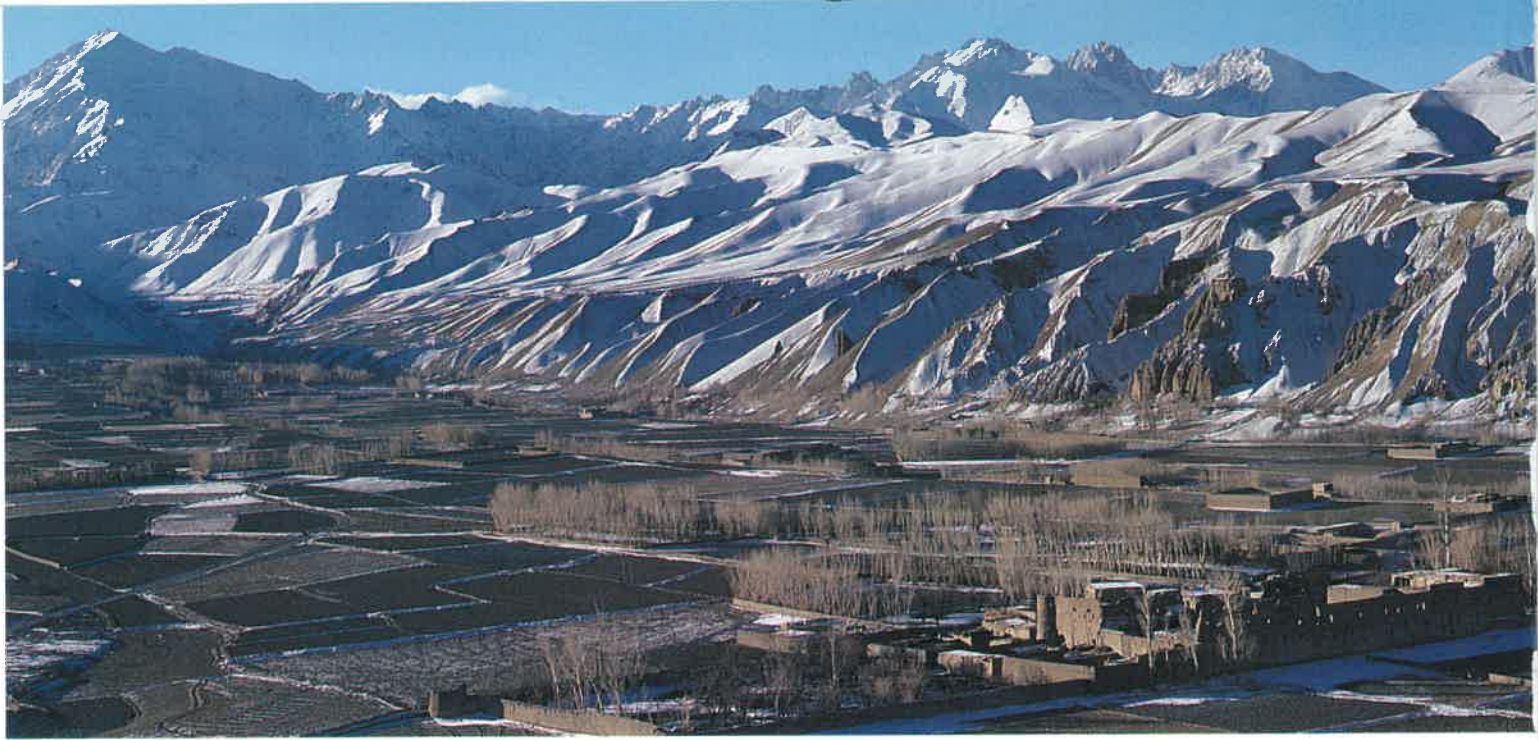
Reading Strategy

READING ORGANIZER Create a three-column chart on a piece of paper. Title the first column Landforms and Rivers; the second column Climates, Plants, and Animals; and the third column Natural Resources. As you read this section, list the countries and main ideas for each topic. Include key terms and their definitions.



The Persian Gulf and Interior: Physical-Political





INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Eastern Afghanistan lies in the shadow of the rugged Hindu Kush mountain range. Crossing these mountains is difficult, as only a few major passes cut through the range. How do landforms like the Hindu Kush divide a continent into regions?

Landforms and Rivers

The region formed by the Persian Gulf and interior Southwest Asia includes Saudi Arabia and the smaller countries of the Arabian Peninsula. These countries are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. This region is also often referred to as the Middle East. The Arabian Peninsula lies between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. (See the chapter map.) To the south are the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. Beyond these two bodies of water is the Indian Ocean. North and northeast of the Arabian Peninsula are three large countries that stretch farther inland into Asia. Two of these countries—Iraq and Iran—have coasts on the Persian Gulf. The third country, landlocked Afghanistan, lies to the northeast.

Tectonic forces have shaped the physical features of this region. Southwest Asia sits near the intersection of the African, Eurasian, and Arabian plates. The collision of these plates has created a mixture of rugged mountains, upland plateaus, and valleys. Plate movement has also created narrow gulfs and seas, which are bordered by coastal plains. As the African and Arabian plates move apart, the Red Sea is becoming wider. The region's frequent earthquakes are reminders of Earth's continuing tectonic activity.

Mountains stretch along the Arabian Peninsula's western edge. Wide dry plains slope down toward the Persian Gulf in the east. To the north and east of the Arabian Peninsula is a region called Mesopotamia, which lies mostly in Iraq. In Greek *Mesopotamia* means "between the rivers." In fact, Mesopotamia is a wide plain through which two great rivers flow. These rivers are the Tigris (TY-gruhs) and the Euphrates (yoooh-FRAY-teez). They are **exotic rivers**, or rivers that begin in humid regions and then flow across dry areas. Before the Tigris and Euphrates reach the Persian Gulf, they join in a single channel known as the Shatt al Arab. East of Mesopotamia are the Zagros (ZA-gruhs) Mountains of Iran. In northwestern Iran lie the Elburz Mountains, where Iran's highest peak reaches 18,605 feet (5,671 m). Another range, the Kopet-Dag, rises in northeastern Iran. The rest of Iran is mainly made up of high plateaus. Afghanistan has the lofty Hindu Kush mountain range. Some peaks

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there rise higher than 24,000 feet (7,300 m). The Hindu Kush range is the western extension of the world's highest mountains, the Himalayas.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Physical Systems* What physical process is shaping the Red Sea?

Climates, Plants, and Animals

Hot and dry climates dominate the region. Rains come mostly during the winter when the westerly winds of the middle latitudes bring occasional cyclonic storms. The southern interior is a mostly uninhabited desert called the Rub' al-Khali (ROOB ahl-KAH-lee), or "Empty Quarter." Farther north lies the An Nafūd (ahn nah-FOOD), a desert of reddish sand. At its widest point, this desert stretches to 140 miles (225 km).

The region's mountains provide water to the valleys below. An orographic effect produces these more humid climates. The region's wettest climate is in Iran in a narrow zone along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. Here winds blow southward over the water and pick up moisture. As the air rises along the Elburz Mountains, rain falls. The Zagros Mountains and the mountains of Yemen also have more humid climates.

The lowlands of Saudi Arabia along the Persian Gulf are among the hottest places in the world. Because of subtropical high pressure with clear skies and little shade, the summer daytime temperatures often climb above 114°F (46°C). Summer rains are almost unknown here, but nearness to the sea keeps the humidity high. However, inland areas are very dry. These areas experience rapid cooling at night because the air holds such a small amount of moisture. In fact, after sunset desert temperatures can drop some 30 degrees in just a few hours. Elevation also influences temperatures, so the region's highlands are much cooler than lowlands in general. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia have mountain resorts where people can escape the summer heat. Winter skiing is popular in Iran's Elburz Mountains.

Shrubs and grasses cover the region's wide dry plains. Trees are common only in mountain regions and the usually dry streambeds. The highest plains are grasslands. In the driest areas the ground is bare rock and sand. In some places the soil is so salty that no plants can grow. Nearly all the region's plants have adapted to survive long periods without rain. Roots either grow deep or spread out to capture as much water as possible. Many plants have developed leaves or stems that allow them to store moisture.

Hunting by humans and competition from domestic animals have made life difficult for the region's larger wild animals. Gazelles and wild goats were common a few centuries ago. Hyenas, leopards, lions, and tigers as well as herds of wild camels and donkeys once roamed the region. Most large wild mammals are now rare or restricted to a few game reserves. Today all the camels and donkeys are domesticated. Reptiles, including lizards and several poisonous snakes, are still common.

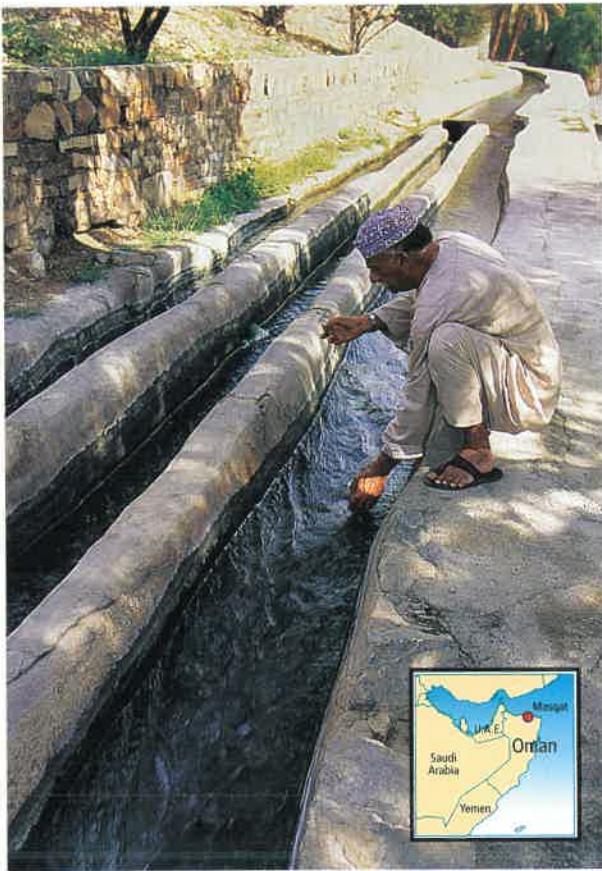
✓ **READING CHECK:** *Physical Systems* What kinds of climates dominate the region? What produces humid climates in the region?



The Rub' al-Khali is the world's largest region of active sand dunes—dunes that migrate over time. The English name for this region is the Great Sandy Desert.

One of the driest areas in the world, the Rub' al-Khali receives an average of less than 4 inches (10 cm) of rainfall each year. Few water sources are found in this desert, but oil reserves have been discovered beneath its sands.





Natural Resources

The region's two most important natural resources are oil and water. Oil is plentiful, but water is not. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are the main sources of water in Iraq. Canals lead away from these rivers, bringing precious water to the surrounding dry lands. In the high plateaus and mountains of northern Iran, farmers depend on rain for agriculture. Farmers in most other places must irrigate their fields.

Surface water is rare in the desert areas. It can be found only at an **oasis**, an area where a spring bubbles to the surface. People have made many of these springs into productive wells. Wells may also reach water below a dry river bed. Deep wells may tap into fossil water, groundwater that is not being replaced by rainfall. Fossil water is not a renewable resource. Desalinization of seawater provides another source of freshwater. In general, however, only wealthy countries get freshwater this way. This is because the process uses large amounts of power and is expensive. Saudi Arabia produces more desalinized water than any other country.

Oil is the region's most valuable natural resource. The oil reserves along the Persian Gulf are the largest in the world. Iraq, Oman, and Yemen also have important oil deposits. However, the region's countries have few other resources for developing industry. Only Iran has the potential to develop an industrial economy from its own reserves of metallic ores.

READING CHECK: *Places and Regions* How can technology expand the region's supply of freshwater?

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD An Omani man collects water from a local falaj, or aqueduct. These channels are dug to carry water from desert springs to farms and villages. Many of the falaj systems in use today were built more than 1,000 years ago. How do you think irrigation systems like this one have changed the landscape of dry areas in Oman?



Review

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Define
exotic rivers
oasis

Working with Sketch Maps

On a map of Southwest Asia that you draw or that your teacher provides, label the Persian Gulf, Arabian Peninsula, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Mesopotamia, Tigris River, Euphrates River, Shatt al Arab, Zagros Mountains, Elburz Mountains, Kopet-Dag, Hindu Kush, Rub' al-Khali, An Nafud, and Caspian Sea. What do the names *Rub' al-Khali* and *Mesopotamia* mean?

Reading for the Main Idea

- Physical Systems** What are four physical features that influence what plants can grow in different places in the region?
- Environment and Society** What are the region's two most precious natural resources?

Critical Thinking

- Making Generalizations and Predictions** Which landforms in the region seem most favorable for human settlement? Which seem the least favorable? Why?
- Identifying Cause and Effect** Why do parts of Saudi Arabia have high temperature variations?

Organizing What You Know

- Copy the chart below. Use it to list major physical features that can be found in the region's largest countries. Use the information in Section 1 and the chapter map.

Feature	Afghanistan	Iran	Iraq	Saudi Arabia
Coastal plains				
Interior plains				
Major rivers				
Plateaus				
Mountains				

Section 2

History and Culture

READ TO DISCOVER

1. How have peoples, empires, and Islam affected the history of the Persian Gulf area and interior Southwest Asia?
2. What are the major features of the region's cultures?

Reading Strategy

READING ORGANIZER Before you read, create a spider map. Label the map the Persian Gulf and Interior. Create a leg for each of the main ideas in the section. As you read the section, fill in the map with details supporting each main idea. Include key terms and their definitions.

IDENTIFY

Sunni
Shi'ism

DEFINE

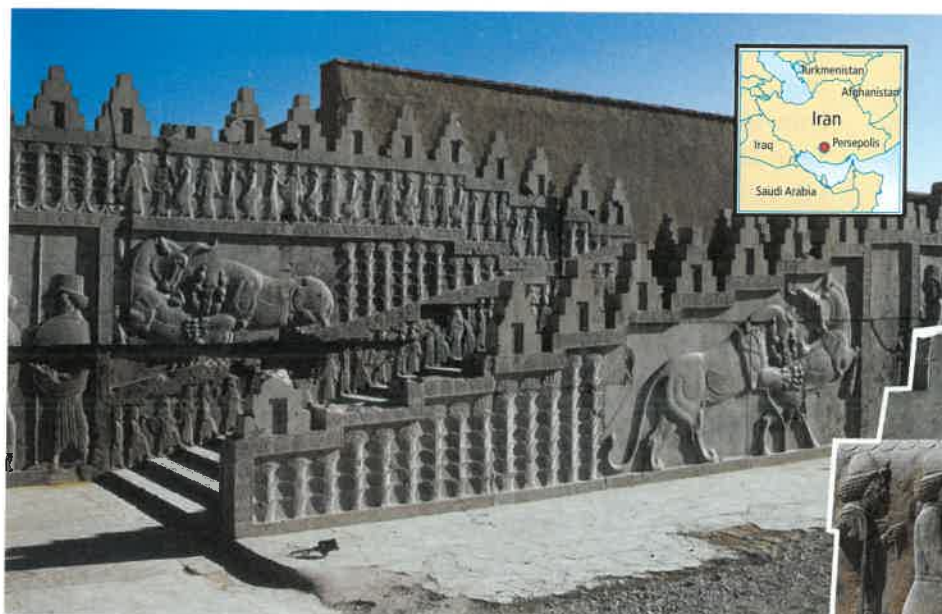
dynasty
imams

LOCATE

Mecca
Medina

From Empires to Independence

The world's first civilizations developed in the area known as the Fertile Crescent. This arc of productive land extends northward from the Persian Gulf and through the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. It continues to Asia Minor and the Mediterranean coast. Asia Minor is the Asian part of what is now Turkey. Many of the plants and animals found on farms throughout the world today may have been first domesticated in the Fertile Crescent region. By about 3000 B.C. a people called the Sumerians built the world's first known cities in southern Mesopotamia. These cities depended on nearby irrigated fields of wheat and barley. City merchants traded goods from throughout the region.



The ruins of Persepolis reflect the former glory of the Persian Empire, which once stretched from Egypt to Afghanistan. King Darius I built Persepolis in about 500 B.C. as the capital of his empire.



Arabic Numerals

The symbols that most of the modern world uses to write numbers are known as Arabic numerals. Just 10 symbols are needed to write a number of any size. These symbols—0 through 9—probably evolved from letters in the Arabic alphabet. The mathematical system itself, in which a symbol's value depends on its place in the number, actually began in India. Arab traders brought the system back to Southwest Asia and later spread its use into Europe. The Arabic system proved much simpler than the old Roman system it gradually replaced. For example, CCCXXXIII in Roman numerals became 333 using Arabic numerals. This simplification of the number system aided the growth of science and commerce. Muslim scholars made important advances in art, astronomy, literature, medicine, and mathematics.

Identifying Cause and Effect How do you think Arabic numerals may have aided the growth of science and commerce?



The rich resources of Mesopotamia attracted invaders again and again. Akkadians conquered the Sumerian cities in about 2350 B.C. and created the region's first real empire. That empire extended to the Zagros Mountains and the Mediterranean coast. The islands in the Persian Gulf became major trading centers. Eventually, these trade centers linked the merchants of Mesopotamia and India.

Over time cities grew and declined in the region. Again and again invaders from the west, east, and north battled the peoples of the plains and set up new empires. About 550 B.C. an empire developed in Persia, where Iran is today. The Persians conquered both Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Theirs was one of the largest, richest, and most powerful empires in world history. Later, the Greeks and then the Romans controlled much of the region for a time.

The Rise of Islam Muhammad, who lived in the region of Arabia from about A.D. 570 to 632, established Islam. Islam is one of the world's most widely practiced religions. Muhammad was born in Mecca, a city in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula. At about the age of 40, a religious experience changed his life. He reported that a messenger of God, the angel Gabriel, told him to preach the word of God. The word *God* in Arabic is *Allah*. Muhammad spread Allah's message to his followers, called Muslims. Muslims are people who practice Islam. A holy book called the Qur'an (Koran) contains what Muslims believe to be Allah's message to Muhammad.

Muhammad established a Muslim community centered at Medina. By the time Muhammad died, Islam had spread to most of the Arabian Peninsula. After his death, Arab armies carried Islam as far west as Morocco and Spain in a little more than a century. Over time Islam spread to Central Asia, India, and Southeast Asia along land and sea trade routes. Muslims in all these places now face Mecca, Islam's holiest city, when they pray.

Gaining Independence Empires continued to rise and fall in Southwest Asia until modern times. In the 1200s the Mongols swept out of Central Asia to conquer what are now Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. Rulers called the Safavids (sah-FAH-weedz) came to power in Iran in the early 1500s. As their power expanded eastward, the Safavids seized Afghanistan from the Muslim rulers of India. Historians consider the rule of Safavids, which lasted more than 200 years, a golden age of Persian culture. Literature, architecture, and the arts flourished. Persian carpets, ceramics, and textiles became renowned. The Safavid **dynasty**, or line of hereditary rulers, ended in the mid-1700s. The expanding British and Russian Empires tried to control Iran and Afghanistan in the 1800s. During the 1900s both became independent countries.

The history of the western part of the region followed much the same pattern. In the 1500s the Ottoman Turks conquered Mesopotamia and the east and west coasts of the Arabian Peninsula. They held much of this area until the early 1900s, when the British took over. Iraq and Saudi Arabia emerged as independent countries

in 1932. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen did not become independent from Britain until the 1960s and 1970s.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* What are some of the peoples and empires that have controlled parts of the region?

Culture

Islam is the unifying cultural feature of the region. However, the region's long history of changing empires and migrations has resulted in the presence of many ethnic groups today.

People and Languages Most people in the Persian Gulf and interior Southwest Asia are Arabs, and Arabic is the dominant language. The spread of Islam encouraged the spread of the Arabic language over time. To read the Qur'an, Muslims had to learn Arabic, which also became the common language of scholarship and trade. Trade routes have long connected the distant parts of the Islamic world. Eventually, all Arabic speakers became known as Arabs. Today Arabic place-names are found in Spain and Morocco, Central Asia, and India. This diffusion of Arabic words is a result of migration, trade, and the spread of Islam.

Like Saudi Arabia, Iraq is an Arab country. In addition, there are more than a million Arabs in southern Iran. However, non-Arab ethnic groups are also numerous in the region. For example, the Kurds, who live in the borderlands of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, are Muslims but not Arabs. The Kurds have never had their own country. Their desire for self-rule is a source of political unrest in some countries, including Iraq.

Cultural diversity is even more complex in Iran and Afghanistan. Most of Iran's people are Persians who speak Farsi. The Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtiari, and Hazara also speak languages related to Farsi. However, Persians dominate Iran and hold most of the important positions in Iranian society. A number of other ethnic groups speak Turkic languages. Turkmen communities are found in northeastern Iran. In the northwest are the Azeri people, Iran's largest group after the Persians. The Qashqai people of the southern Zagros Mountains also speak a Turkic language.

In Afghanistan the Pashtun make up the largest ethnic group. The name *Pashtun* really refers to a number of tribes that speak the Pashtu language. They are closely related to the Tajiks to the north as well as to small tribes in eastern Iran. A number of other ethnic groups also live in Afghanistan. Yet people's loyalties often rest more with their clan and family than with their ethnic group.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* What processes aided the diffusion of Arabic culture?

Horse races in Iran between different nomadic groups are popular events. Iran is home to many nomadic peoples, particularly in regions near the Zagros Mountains.





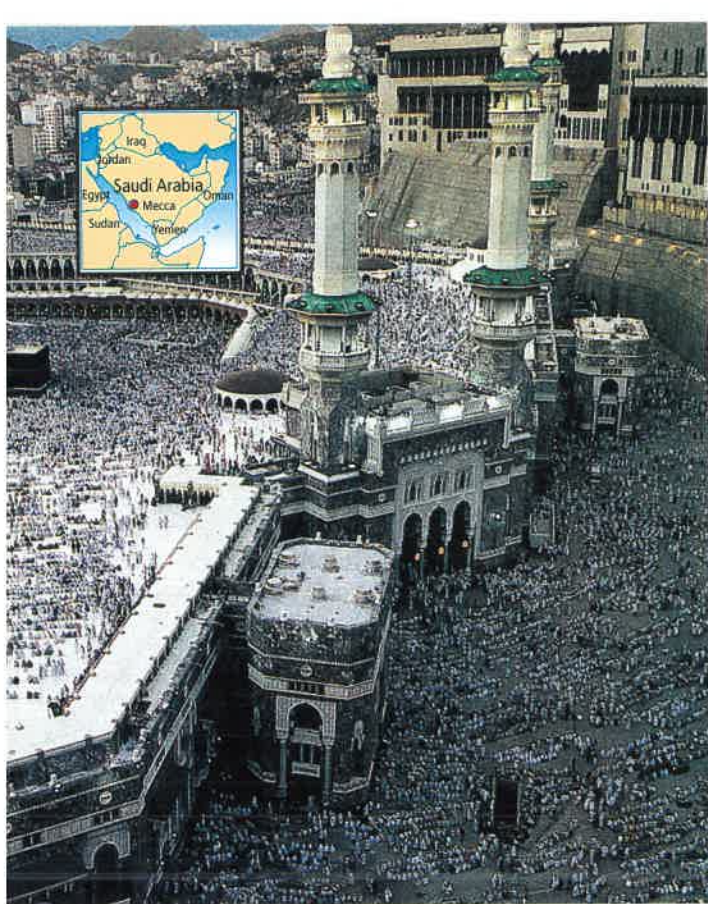
FOCUS ON CULTURE

Religion and Society Islam has split into two main branches and many different groups over the centuries. The two main branches are **Sunni** Islam and **Shi'ism**. Their differences center around who can become religious leaders, called **imams**, in Muslim society. Sunni groups choose their imams, who serve mainly as leaders of prayer. The Shia—those who practice Shi'ism—allow only descendants of the prophet Muhammad's family to become imams. The Shia also rely on imams to interpret the Qur'an and other sacred texts containing teachings that govern personal conduct.

Today about 90 percent of Muslims are Sunnis, and 10 percent are Shia. Sunnis are found everywhere Islam has spread. Because they make up the majority of Muslims, Sunnis are sometimes called orthodox Muslims. Shi'ism is concentrated in Iran, southern Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon. Shia imams are particularly important in Iran. In that country they have considerable political as well as religious authority.

Both Sunnis and Shia share many of the same basic beliefs and practices of Islam. For example, members of both groups are expected to make a religious pilgrimage to Mecca. However, throughout history there have also been conflicts between the two groups. Some conflicts have been caused by the persecution of one group by the other.

READING CHECK: Human Systems How does the role of a Sunni imam differ from that of a Shia imam?



Each year some 2 million Muslims from around the world travel to Mecca, Islam's holiest city. All Muslims are expected to make this sacred journey, called the hajj, at least once during their lifetime. The pilgrims gather around the Ka'bah, a sacred shrine, for several days of prayer. Historically the experience of the hajj has served as a common bond among all Muslims, including followers of Sunni Islam and Shi'ism. However, overcrowding, political disputes, and religious differences have also led to tense confrontations and violence inside the holy city.



Review

Identify Sunni, Shi'ism

Define dynasty, imams

Working with Sketch Maps On the map you created in Section 1, label the countries of the Persian Gulf and interior Southwest Asia, Mecca, and Medina. Then use the description in Section 2 to shade in the Fertile Crescent.

Reading for the Main Idea

- Human Systems** On what did the early cities of the Fertile Crescent depend for their growth? In what way is farming today connected with the early history of the Fertile Crescent region?

- Human Systems** Why will you find the Arabic language, Arabic place-names and Islam in places outside of Southwest Asia today?
- Places and Regions** Which ethnic group is most widely spread throughout the region? Which groups dominate Iran and Afghanistan?

Critical Thinking

- Making Generalizations** What major cultural feature is common throughout the region? What other cultural features could you use to further divide the Persian Gulf and interior Southwest Asia into more regions?

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Organizing What You Know

- Create a diagram like the one shown below. Use it to identify the various peoples who conquered or controlled the region. Add more boxes as needed.



Section 3

The Region Today

READ TO DISCOVER

1. On what activities do the region's economies depend?
2. What are the region's cities like?
3. What are some important issues in the region today?

Reading Strategy

USING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE Draw a line down the center of a sheet of paper to create two columns. Title one column What I Know. Title the other column What I Learned. Before you read, write down what you know about the countries of the region. As you read the section, write down the information you learn in the other column. Include key terms and their definitions.

IDENTIFY

Bedouins OPEC

DEFINE

ayatollahs theocracy

LOCATE

Tehran Riyadh
Baghdad Strait of Hormuz
Kabul

Economic Development

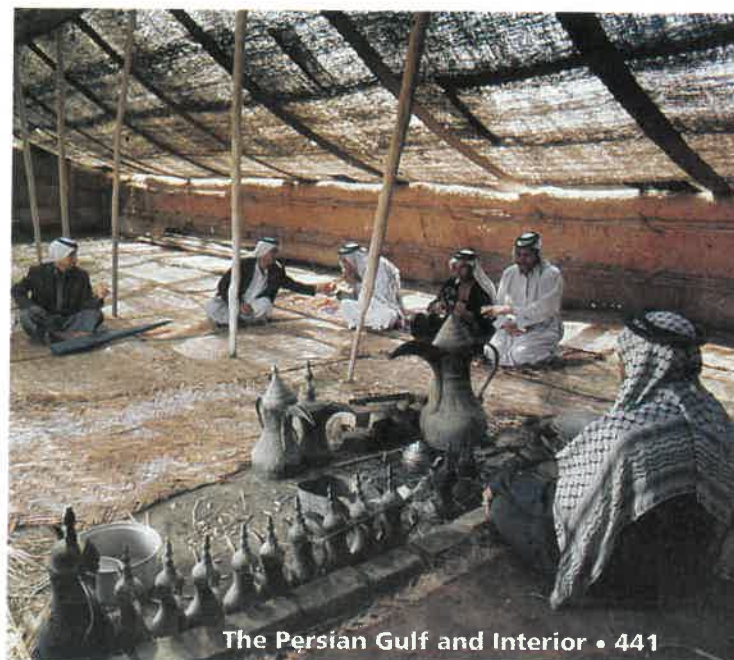
Oil and gas production is central to the economies of the countries along the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia alone produces some 8.25 million barrels of oil a day. Oil wealth has helped modernize the economies of the region. However, many people continue to follow traditional rural ways of life and culture. Arid climates and a rugged landscape make farming difficult. In addition, farmers find fertile soils mainly in the river valleys, on high plateaus, and at a few oases. Partly as a result of this, all the region's countries must import food. Many of the more humid areas have been overgrazed, leading to soil erosion. People have cut down most of the mountain forests that once existed. Some countries in the region are now trying to conserve soil and native plants.

Most farmers practice subsistence agriculture, producing only enough to support their families. They sell any surplus at local markets. Barley and wheat are the most common grains grown in the area. Farmers may also raise livestock—mostly sheep, goats, and some cattle. Because Islam forbids eating pork, pigs are not raised. Commercial farms are typically found near the large cities. They provide fruits and vegetables for city markets. Where irrigation is available, farmers grow citrus fruits, dates, grapes, nuts, and olives for sale. Specialized commercial farms, such as modern dairies and chicken farms, are becoming more common in the oil-rich countries. Saudi Arabia even grows flowers for export to Europe.

Nomadic herders, some of whom are known as **Bedouins**, live in outlying dry lands. They tend to move their camels, goats, or sheep in regular routes as the seasons change. These herders trade their animals, animal products, and handicrafts in towns. More and more Bedouins are leaving this traditional way of life and taking jobs in cities and on the new modern farms.

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Although Bedouins make up only a small percentage of Iraq's population, they move with their herds across much of the country. However, recent laws have restricted the lands that are available to Bedouins for grazing. How do you think these laws are changing Bedouin culture?





Baghdad is Iraq's primate city and is home to almost one

third of its population. It was also one of the leading cities of ancient Mesopotamia, a cradle of early civilization. Although it has been the site of military conflicts in recent years, Baghdad remains a city of contrasts, featuring ancient mosques, bazaars, cafes, high-rise apartments, luxury hotels, and traffic congestion.

In most countries people proudly maintain traditional crafts. Artisans use local materials in products sold around the world. The region's beautiful and valuable wool rugs have been famous for centuries. Rugs are still made by hand, using traditional designs. Each community has its own distinctive designs.

Modern manufacturing in the region is limited. It focuses on building materials, food products, and household supplies. The region imports most of its electrical appliances as well as cars and trucks. The only large industries involve oil refining and related chemical manufacturing. However, these industries are highly automated and provide few jobs.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* How do some of the region's people maintain their traditional ways of life?

Urban Environments

Among the largest cities in the region are the national capitals. These cities include Tehran, Iran; Baghdad, Iraq; Kabul, Afghanistan; and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. As elsewhere in the world's developing regions, many people have migrated to cities from rural farms and villages. They go there looking for jobs. These people often build housing on the fringes of cities. Sometimes they bring farm animals, which then live in urban neighborhoods.

Many of the region's cities are ancient. In the older sections, life goes on today much as it did centuries ago. Old-style buildings are still in use, and many are one or two stories tall. The narrow twisting streets reflect the fact that they predate the use of cars and trucks. The stalls in a central marketplace, called a bazaar, are covered to protect them from sunlight and rain. Merchants display piles of cloth, household utensils, rugs, and spices. Craft items used to be clustered in separate sections of the bazaar. Now buyers find goods of many types, including imports, mixed together throughout the market. A neighborhood mosque is usually nearby.

In contrast, the newer sections of cities have modern buildings and air-conditioned shopping malls. The avenues are wide and clogged with cars. People live in high-rise apartment buildings. With fast-food outlets and gas stations, some of these neighborhoods look like those in the West.

Governments, Issues, and Challenges

The region's politics and concerns for the future center around three basic themes. One theme is the use of oil wealth. Another is the desire of some to preserve the authority of traditional leaders. A third theme involves the role of Islam in a modernizing world. Individual countries emphasize these themes differently.

Oil Wealth and Power Saudi Arabia's oil wealth gives the country a special position in world affairs. Saudi Arabia's huge reserves make it the world's

largest oil exporter. It is a key member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, or **OPEC**, which influences oil prices by controlling supply. By reducing or increasing oil production, OPEC can affect the economies of many countries. Saudi Arabia's role as caretaker of Islam's holiest city, Mecca, adds to its influence. Muslims travel to this city from all over the world. A monarchy whose power is absolute rules from the capital, Riyadh. Defending Arab traditions helps the monarchy maintain control.

Iran's politics have been less stable in recent decades. In 1979 a revolution toppled Iran's monarchy. A government dominated by **ayatollahs** came to power in Tehran. Ayatollahs are religious leaders of the highest authority among Shia Muslims. Today Iran is a **theocracy**, a country governed by religious law. Many Iranian leaders view Western ideas as a threat to public morality. However, many Iranians are seeking more personal freedoms.

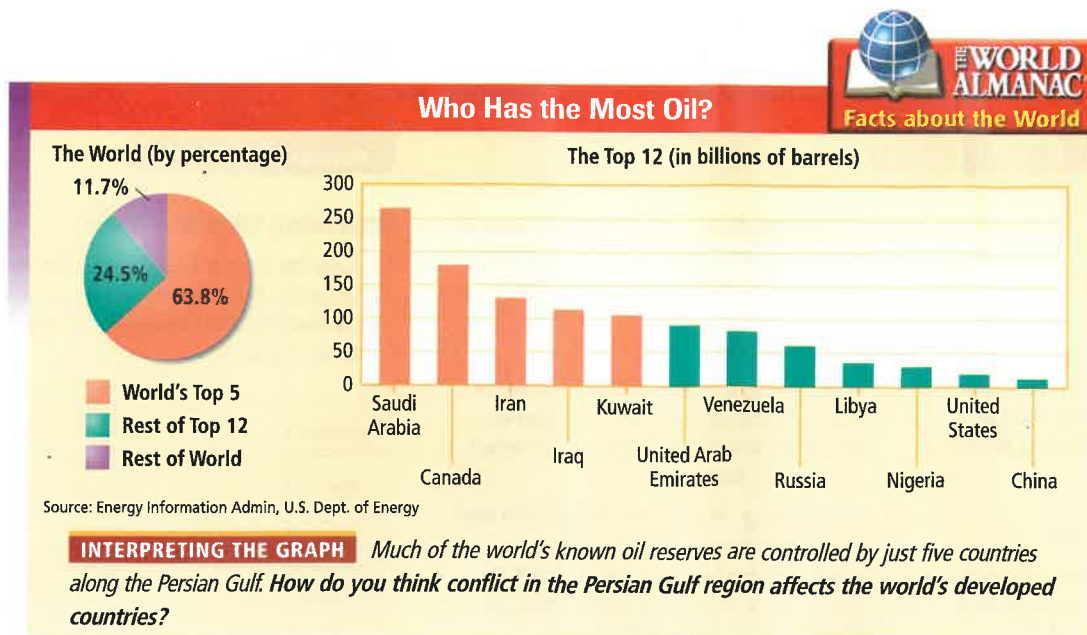
Many countries pay attention to Iran's political situation. The tankers that ship oil from the Persian Gulf must pass through the narrow Strait of Hormuz, off Iran's coast. Iran could cut off a large portion of the world's oil supply by blocking the strait. Many countries are also concerned that Iran may be developing nuclear weapons.

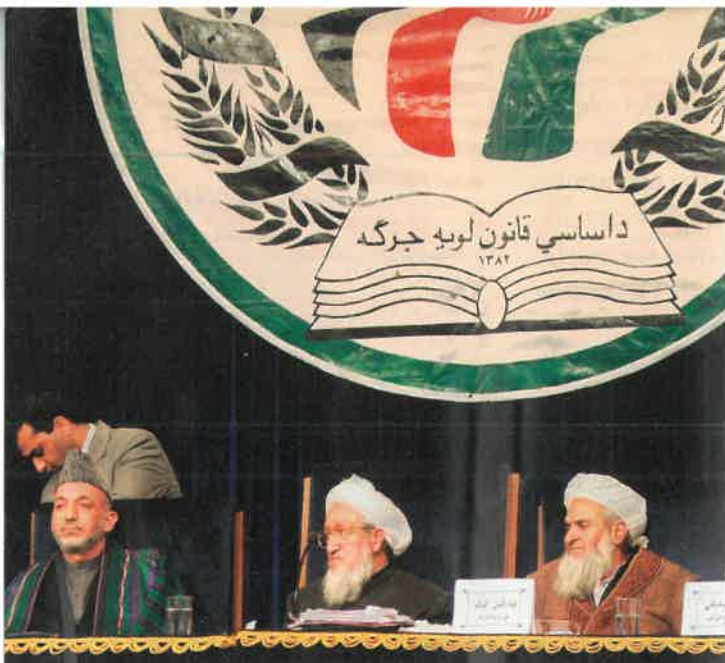
Until 2003 Iraq was ruled by a dictator, Saddam Hussein, who used the country's oil revenues to build a large military. Under Saddam, Iraq invaded Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990—seeking to gain control of oil-rich regions. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait threatened the stability of the region. A coalition led by the United States drove back Iraqi forces in 1991 in a conflict known as the Persian Gulf War. To prevent Iraq from launching another war, the United Nations ordered Saddam to stop producing weapons of mass destruction. In 2003, after Iraq's continued resistance to inspections and violations of UN sanctions, the United States led an invasion of the country. Iraq's forces were defeated and Saddam Hussein was eventually captured. Amid continuing insurgent attacks and violence between Sunnis and Shia, a new government was democratically elected in 2005.

READING CHECK: *Places and Regions* What geographic factors have affected Iraq's international relations in recent decades?



The al-Ghawar field in Saudi Arabia is the biggest oil field in the world. It is more than 150 miles (240 km) long and contains some 82 billion barrels of oil.





In January 2004, Afghanistan's president Hamid Karzai addressed the loya jirga, or Grand Assembly, after the assembly approved a new draft constitution for the country. The new constitution paved the way for democratic elections to be held in 2004.

Islam, Society, and Change In Afghanistan, ethnic and political rivalries have long plagued the country. A group called the Taliban came to power in the 1990s. They were driven by an extreme version of Sunni Islam. The Taliban established strict laws governing Afghans' lives.

After the September 11 terrorist attacks, U.S. officials focused on the aid the terrorists received from the Taliban government. U.S. and allied forces attacked terrorist camps and Taliban military targets. The Taliban regime soon collapsed. A *loya jirga*, a traditional council, with representatives from all ethnic groups was held in June 2002. It elected Hamid Karzai as the country's transitional president. In 2004, the *loya jirga* adopted a new constitution for Afghanistan. The constitution established a presidential system of government with a parliament.

Freed from the Taliban, Afghans experienced new liberties. Women were able to attend school and work outside their homes.

In other countries in the region, women have more educational and economic opportunities. Still, Islamic traditions encourage women to value roles as wives and mothers. Partly as a result, population growth rates are often high. Large families are common. Education for all segments of the population, including women, has increased. However, many school systems are inadequate, and many well-educated people cannot find jobs.

Oil, the influence of foreign cultures, and communications technology are changing the region. Over time these changes will be greater than any development since the spread of Islam. For example, much of the region's oil is available for export. Modern society runs on oil. Homes, power stations, and transportation depend on oil or oil products. Oil is also a basic raw material for products like fertilizers, industrial chemicals, and plastics. The importance of oil in global trade has given the oil-rich countries much economic and political power.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* What three themes are reflected in the region's politics and concerns for the future?



Review

Go.hrw.com Homework Practice Online
Keyword: SW3 HP19

Identify Bedouins, OPEC

Define ayatollahs, theocracy

Working with Sketch Maps On the map you created in Section 2, label Tehran, Baghdad, Kabul, Riyadh, and the Strait of Hormuz. Why is the Strait of Hormuz important to the global oil trade?

Reading for the Main Idea

- Environment and Society** In what ways does the water supply shape rural economic activity in the region?

- Human Systems** What are some ways in which traditional cultures and ways of life have been retained in the region's cities?

Critical Thinking

- Supporting a Point of View** Which resource do you think is more important to the future of Southwest Asia—oil or water? Explain your answer.
- Comparing** How did the Taliban limit economic and educational opportunities for Afghan women? How do opportunities for women there compare to opportunities in other countries in the region?

Organizing What You Know

- Copy the chart below and use it to describe the governments and recent political histories of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

Afghanistan	
Iran	
Iraq	
Saudi Arabia	

Geography for Life

The Ecological Trilogy

The relationships between living things and their environments are important to geographers. For example, geographers study the ways pollution affects ecosystems. They also study how the overuse of natural resources like rain forests and water affect the organisms that depend on them. The study of how living things interact with and depend on each other and the environment is called ecology. Geographers are also interested in human ecology—the ways human beings interact with and depend on the environment and each other. Southwest Asia is just one region in which geographers have studied human ecology.

In the 1960s a geographer developed a model he called the ecological trilogy. This model described how the three main ways of life in Southwest Asia depended on each other. Those three ways are life as a villager, as a pastoral nomad, and as a town- or city-dweller.

At the base of the trilogy were the peasant farmers who lived in the region's small villages. They served the city people and nomads by growing basic food crops like wheat and barley. Although they may not have wanted to do so, the villagers also provided the city with soldiers, tax money, and workers. On the other hand, cities and towns offered villages technological improvements, educational opportunities, and other services.

The three parts of the ecological trilogy are shown in the scenes below. On the left, a farmer tends crops outside his village. In the center, nomadic herders take their flock to market. On the right, people live and work in a modern urban environment in Tehran.

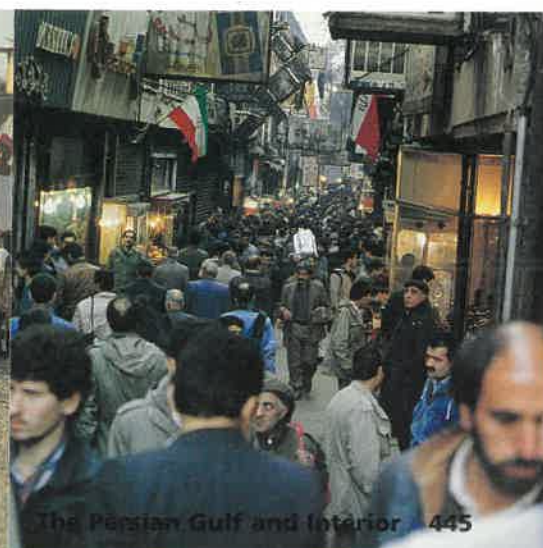
Nomads also had an important role in the trilogy. Nomads supplied villagers with animal products like cheese, meat, milk, and wool. They also provided desert herbs and medicines. City people supplied nomads with cooking utensils and factory-made clothing. However, city people and nomads interacted less than villagers and nomads.

New patterns of living in Southwest Asia have changed the relationships within the trilogy. In recent decades, government doctors, teachers, improved roads, cellular phones, and television have come to villages and nomads. Many villagers, particularly young people, move from rural areas to the city. When they arrive, the villagers change the culture of the city. Changing ways of life for nomads are also affecting this trilogy. As nomads settle in more permanent communities, the number of people who follow their herds declines. As the cities grow, they expand outward to engulf villages.

Although changes have occurred, each of the three parts of the ecological trilogy still supports the others. In addition, no matter where they may live now, individuals still identify themselves as city people, nomads, or villagers.

Applying What You Know

- 1. Summarizing** Which part of the trilogy serves as a base for the model? Why?
- 2. Supporting a Point of View** How might the ecological trilogy of Southwest Asia differ from a similar model for the United States?



Review the video to answer the closing question:
Why is it important for countries to prepare for possible oil shortages?

Building Vocabulary

On a separate sheet of paper, explain the following terms by using them correctly in sentences.

exotic rivers	Shi'ism	OPEC
oasis	imams	ayatollahs
dynasty	Bedouins	theocracy
Sunni		

Locating Key Places

On a separate sheet of paper, match the letters on the map with their correct labels.

Persian Gulf	Shatt al Arab	Mecca
Mesopotamia	Elburz Mountains	Baghdad
Tigris River	Rub' al-Khali	Riyadh



Understanding the Main Ideas

Section 1

- Physical Systems** In what ways has the plant life of the region adapted to the conditions there?

Section 2

- Environment and Society** Why has Mesopotamia been such an attractive target for invasion throughout history?
- Places and Regions** What is the major language spoken in Iran? In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia?

Section 3

- Human Systems** What changes are taking place in the traditional rural economy and culture of the region?
- Human Systems** What are two important factors accounting for Saudi Arabia's influence in world affairs today?

Thinking Critically

- Evaluating** What policies would you recommend to governments working to protect water resources in the region? Why would those policies not be practical for some countries? What geographic and economic effects might these policies have?
- Drawing Inferences and Conclusions** Why might stability in the Persian Gulf region be important to developed countries?
- Comparing and Contrasting** How do views about Islamic teachings and the role of Islam in society vary among governments in the region? How do cultural beliefs influence public policies regarding women in Afghanistan?

Using the Geographer's Tools

- Analyzing Maps** Review the unit maps to study the climates and land use and resources of Iraq. In which climate region do you see large areas of commercial farming? What is the probable source of water for commercial farming there?
- Analyzing Statistics** Use the unit Fast Facts table to rank the countries of the region by GDP, from highest to lowest. Then prepare a second list, ranking them by literacy rate, from highest to lowest. Compare the two rankings. What does this comparison reveal about the relationship between educational level and a country's level of economic development?
- Creating a Population Pyramid** Use the HRW Web site to find statistics about Iran's population. Use those statistics to create a population pyramid that describes the population characteristics of Iran. Then predict future growth trends there.

Writing about Geography

Imagine that you are part of a Bedouin family that is about to move to a city in Saudi Arabia. Write a short journal entry describing how your way of life is about to change. After you have completed your journal entry, proofread it to make sure that you have used standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

SKILL BUILDING



Geography for Life

Organizing Geographic Information

Human Systems Use Internet or library resources to identify the largest sources of oil imports into the United States. Also investigate how the amount of imported oil compares to the total produced from wells in the United States. Then plan, design, and create a graph that shows your findings.

Major Earthquakes in Iran (1978–2003)

Date	Location	Estimated number of deaths
Sept. 16, 1978	Northeastern Iran	15,000
June 11, 1981	Southern Iran	3,000
July 28, 1981	Southern Iran	1,500
June 20, 1990	Western Iran	40,000+
Feb. 28, 1997	Northwestern Iran	1,000+
May 10, 1997	Northern Iran	1,560
Dec. 26, 2003	Southeastern Iran	30,000+

Source: *World Almanac and Book of Facts 2003*; *New York Times*

Interpreting Charts

Study the chart above. Then answer the questions that follow.

- Which region of Iran suffered the most earthquakes during the period?
 - northern Iran
 - southern Iran
 - southwestern Iran
 - southeastern Iran
- On what dates did Iran suffer its three deadliest earthquakes during this period? List the earthquakes from deadliest to least deadly.

Building Vocabulary

To build your vocabulary skills, answer the following questions. Mark your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- Theocracy* means the same as
 - a country governed by religious law.
 - a population that shares a common cultural background.
 - the policy of gaining control over territory outside a country.
 - a movement that stresses the strict following of basic traditional principles.
- Fossil water* means the same as
 - water surrounded by the bones of ancient dinosaurs.
 - Persian Gulf water processed into freshwater.
 - groundwater not being replaced by rainfall.
 - lake water supplied by streams and old rivers.

Alternative Assessment

PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

Learning about Your Local Geography

Group Project: Field Work

The handmade rugs of Southwest Asia are famous throughout the world. Plan, organize, and complete a research project with a partner to discover what craft industries are important in your community. Conduct a survey to determine what craft items are produced there. Where are these items sold? Is your community widely known for any crafts? Present your findings in a report. Include illustrations of some of the community's craft products. When you have completed your report, proofread it to make sure that you have used standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

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Internet Activity: go.hrw.com
KEYWORD: SW3 GT19



Choose a topic on the Persian Gulf and interior to:

- report on Islamic culture.
- research oil productivity and transfer your information into a graph or chart.
- understand the technology of desalinization.

