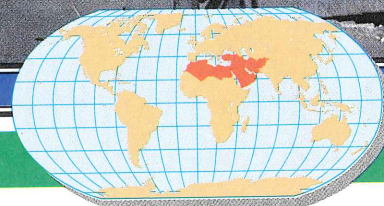
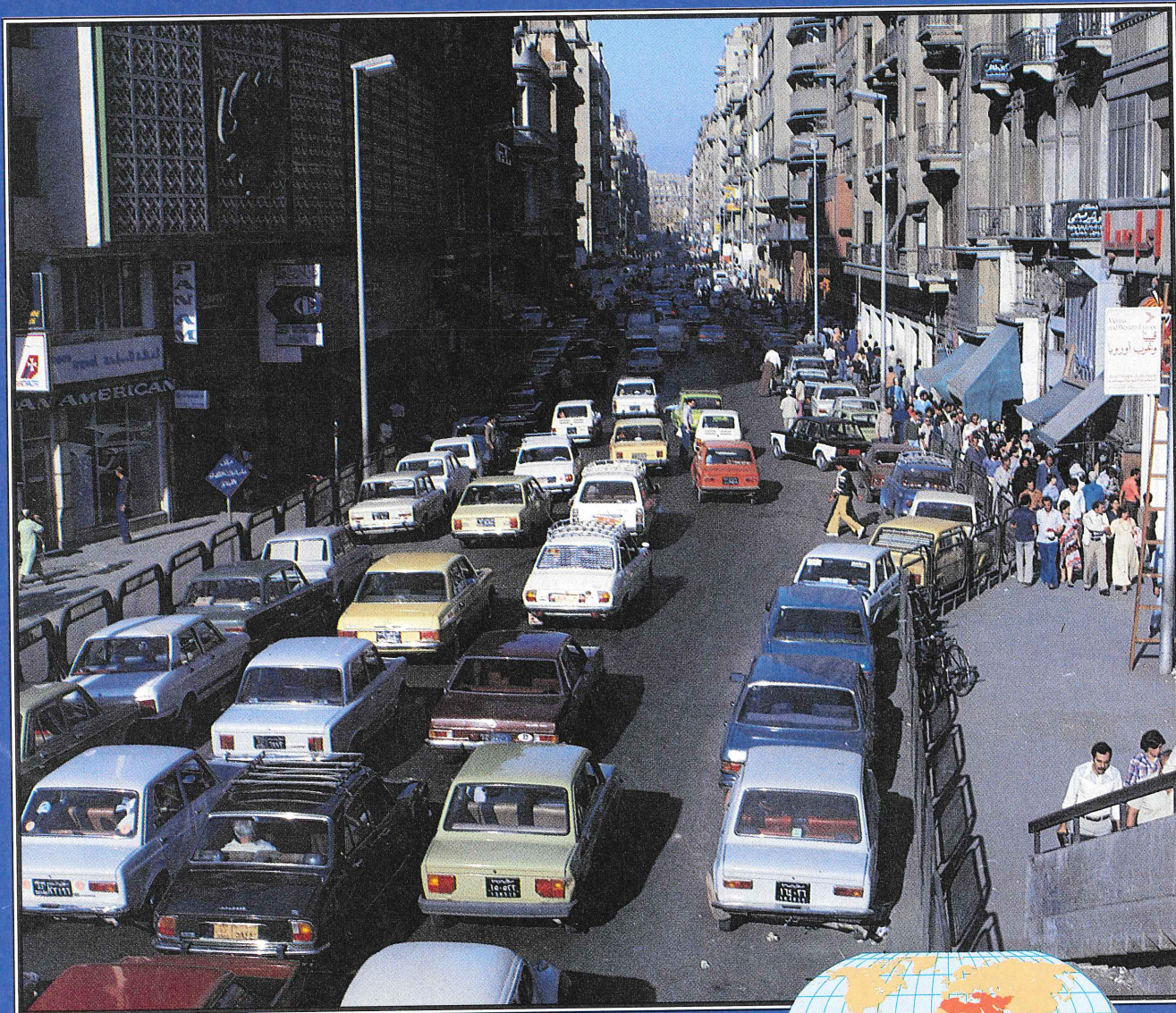


# The Cultural Geography of North Africa and Southwest Asia



## CHAPTER FOCUS

### Geographic Setting

The culture region of North Africa and Southwest Asia has been the crossroads for people from Asia, Africa, and Europe who have adopted ways of life necessary for survival in a harsh environment.



### Geographic Themes

#### Section 1 Population Patterns

**MOVEMENT** The movement and interaction of people in the region have led to ethnic diversity.

#### Section 2 History and Government

**REGION** The region's people

have settled near water sources.

#### Section 3 Cultures and Lifestyles

**PLACE** Southwest Asia is the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

▲ **Photograph:** Cairo, Egypt



# Population Patterns

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the different ethnic groups that inhabit North Africa and Southwest Asia.
- the areas in the region where most of the people live.
- the recent trend toward urbanization.

### Key Term

- ethnic diversity

### Identify and Locate

Maghreb, Cairo, Bahrain, Israel, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Tehran, Damascus, Baghdad, Kuwait, Riyadh, Istanbul, Jerusalem

Tehran, Iran

I would like to tell you about one of our holidays, called Norose. It was established by an ancient empire, and it begins on the first day of each new year. On this day we visit relatives and neighbors. Children receive gifts of money and candy. We also have 15 days of vacation beginning on the first day of the new year. This is one of my favorite holidays.

Your friend,  
Soroush Firouzmandi



**S**oroush Firouzmandi, who lives in Iran, describes one of the many festivals celebrated by the peoples of North Africa and Southwest Asia. North Africa and Southwest Asia is a complex culture region with a mixture of racial and ethnic groups, languages, religions, cultures, and lifestyles.

### PLACE

## Human Characteristics

**F**or centuries, North Africa and Southwest Asia has served as the crossroads for the people of Africa, Europe, and Asia. As a result, the region has much **ethnic diversity**—a difference in peoples based on their origins, languages, customs, or beliefs.

## Arabs

The vast majority of the people of North Africa and Southwest Asia are Arabs. Most Arabs are Muslims who practice Islam. Their culture, especially the Arabic language, has had a profound impact on the entire region.

Before the spread of Islam in the 600s, Arabic-speaking peoples lived in the Arabian Peninsula and some areas north of the peninsula. Not all Arabic-speaking people, however, trace their roots to the Arabian Peninsula. Many are descendants of such ancient groups as the Canaanites, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians, all of whom became Arab by learning Arabic. Today Arabs live in 21 countries in the region, including the Maghreb—the area of North Africa now comprised of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.





## Israelis

About 6 million people of the region are Israelis, citizens of the country of Israel. Of these, about 4.9 million are Jewish and 1 million are Arab.

Israeli Jews trace their ancestral roots to the Hebrews, who settled the region in ancient times and believed that God had given them the land as a permanent home. Over the centuries, wars and persecution drove many of the Jews, as the descendants of the Hebrews were called, to settle in other countries. Their religious identity, however, kept alive their links to their ancient homeland until Israel was founded as a Jewish homeland in 1948.

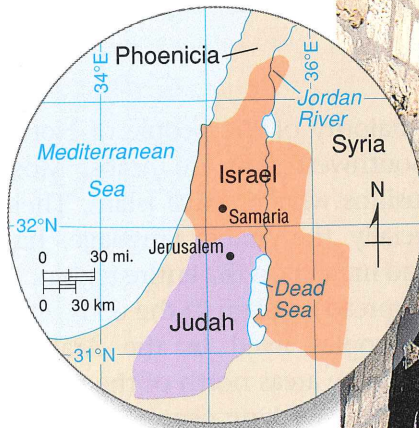
The Arabs of the region, however, did not want a Jewish state on territory that had been their homeland for centuries. As a result, conflict broke out between Arabs and Jews. It brought severe hardship to all the people, including the Palestinians, or the Arabs living in territory on which Israel was established. Today, however, peace agreements between Is-



### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Israel

United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat (right). The three continue to meet to find peaceful resolutions between Palestinians and Israelis. *How many countries of the region are predominantly Arab?*



### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Western Wall, Jerusalem

Devout Jews from all over the world pray before the Western Wall, which was part of the Jews' holy temple during ancient times. *What two kingdoms formed the ancient homeland of the Hebrews?*





rael and Palestinian leaders have led to greater self-rule for Palestinians in the area.

## Turks

The people of Turkey are a blend of the many people who have lived for centuries in Southwest Asia. The most notable of these were the Ottoman Turks, whose empire ruled much of the eastern Mediterranean world for more than 600 years.

The Turks are not Arab, but like the Arabs, most practice Islam. They also speak their own Turkish language and have developed a culture that blends Turkish, Islamic, and Western elements.

## Iranians and Afghanis

Today more than 64 million people live in Iran, once called Persia. The term *Iran* means “land of the Aryans,” and many Iranians believe they are descendants of the Aryans, Indo-Europeans who migrated into the region from southern Russia about 1000 B.C. Iranians today speak Farsi, an Indo-European language that is distantly related to English. Most Iranians practice a form of Islam known as Shiism.

On the eastern border of Iran is Afghanistan, another of the non-Arab countries in the region. Afghanistan is a country of many ethnic groups that reflect the centuries of migrations and invasions of different peoples. A common adherence to Islam is the thread that helps hold the country together.

## Cypriots

Another non-Arab nation in North Africa and Southwest Asia is the island nation of Cyprus. The people of Cyprus include a Greek majority and a significant Turkish minority. After the island gained independence from the United Kingdom, a violent civil war erupted between the two groups. Today Cyprus remains a divided nation of Greeks and Turks.

## Armenians and Kurds

The region also includes two large ethnic groups—the Armenians and the Kurds. For many years, both groups have struggled to form their own countries.

Before World War I, most Armenians lived in Turkey. During the Greek-Turkish conflict, an estimated 1 million Armenians were massacred, deported, or died of illness at the hands of the Turks. The survivors fled, many settling in other parts of Southwest Asia as well as Europe and the United States. Recently, Armenians have celebrated the independence of the Armenian republic in the former Soviet Union.

The Kurds live in the border region separating Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and the former Soviet Union. They call their land Kurdistan, but their efforts to win self-rule have been repeatedly crushed.

## HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

# Water and Population

Most of the people of North Africa and Southwest Asia live near water. People live along seacoasts, rivers, or near highlands, and near oases. For example, most Egyptians live along the Nile River or near the Suez Canal. In Iraq, many people live in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley.

The environment in these areas makes it possible to grow crops and raise animals. Drinking water is also readily available in these locations. Farming, mining, fishing, and trading are the major economic activities.

The desert areas of North Africa and Southwest Asia are largely unpopulated except for the cities, where oil-related industries provide jobs. Nomadic herders live in or near the desert oases.

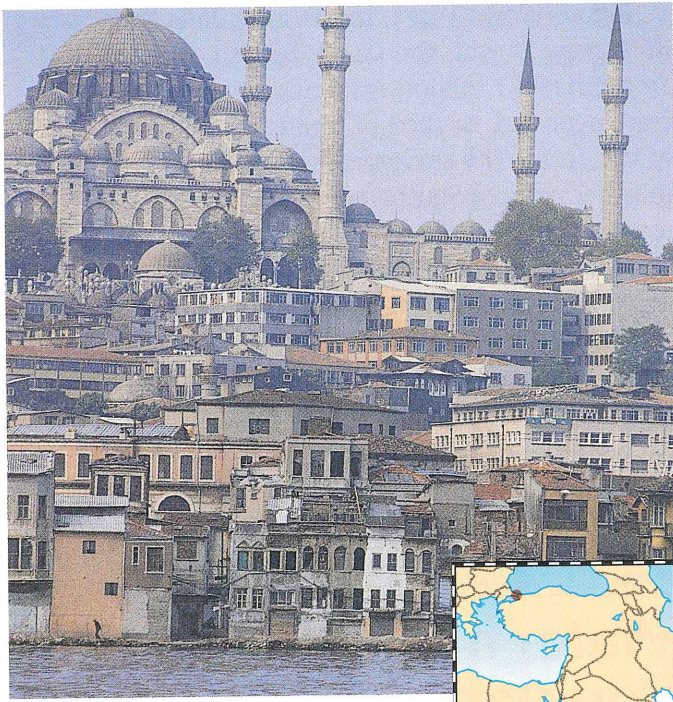
## PLACE

# Population Densities and Growth

The most populous countries in the region are Turkey, Egypt, and Iran. Each of these countries has a population of more than 60 million. Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan have populations ranging between about 20 million and 35 million. The







## Geographic Themes



### Location: Istanbul, Turkey

Istanbul's location near the point where the Black Sea meets the Mediterranean Sea has made it an important trading city. *What religion do most Turks practice?*

remaining countries have populations of roughly 16 million or fewer. Tiny Bahrain on the Persian Gulf is the most densely populated, with about 2,400 people per square mile (927 per sq. km).

Overall the populations of the countries of the region currently total about 400 million and are growing at a rapid rate. The result is that citizens in a number of countries already are finding it hard to find jobs and are migrating to other nations to work. This migration serves as a safety valve for some nations, but changing conditions, such as a reduction in oil production, could lead to a decline in the need for foreign workers and become a source of unrest.

## PLACE

# Urbanization

Many great cities once existed in North Africa and the Middle East. For centuries, however, the region's population was

rural rather than urban. Since World War II, most of the major oil-and-gas-producing countries, however, have rapidly become urbanized.

Urban growth has been due, in part, to rural villagers moving to the cities in search of a better life. This population shift, however, has caused problems because the cities have grown faster than have the means of supplying food and housing. As a result, food and housing shortages have become problems in some cities.

Cairo is one of the region's largest cities with more than 11 million people. Located on the Nile River, Cairo is the capital as well as the cultural and economic center of Egypt. Alexandria, Egypt's other major city, is a seaport on the Mediterranean Sea.

The other major cities in North Africa are all located on the coast. They include Tripoli, the capital of Libya; Tunis, the capital of Tunisia; Algiers, the capital of Algeria; and Casablanca in Morocco.

The major cities in the eastern part of the region are Tehran, the capital of Iran; Baghdad, the capital of Iraq; and Istanbul in Turkey. This area also includes two cities that originally developed around oases—Syria's capital, Damascus, and Saudi Arabia's capital, Riyadh (ree•AHD).

## SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** ethnic diversity.
- 2. Locating Places** Where in the region are the largest concentrations of people?
- 3. Place** What different peoples make up the region?
- 4. Movement** What has been the trend in the distribution of population in North Africa and Southwest Asia since World War II?

### Critical Thinking

- 5. Analyzing Information** What challenges does a growing population bring to the region?





# Where is the lowest point on earth?

- Archaeological site
- Spa or hot springs
- ☪ Industry

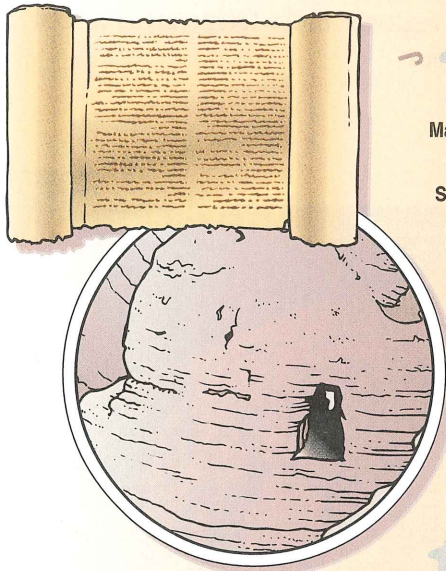
0 10 km  
0 10 mi

**JERUSALEM**  
Bethlehem •  
Cross section below

**ISRAEL**

## DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Discovered in caves near Qumran in 1947, the leather scrolls are more than 2,000 years old. The caves served as hideaways for an ascetic sect of Judaism.

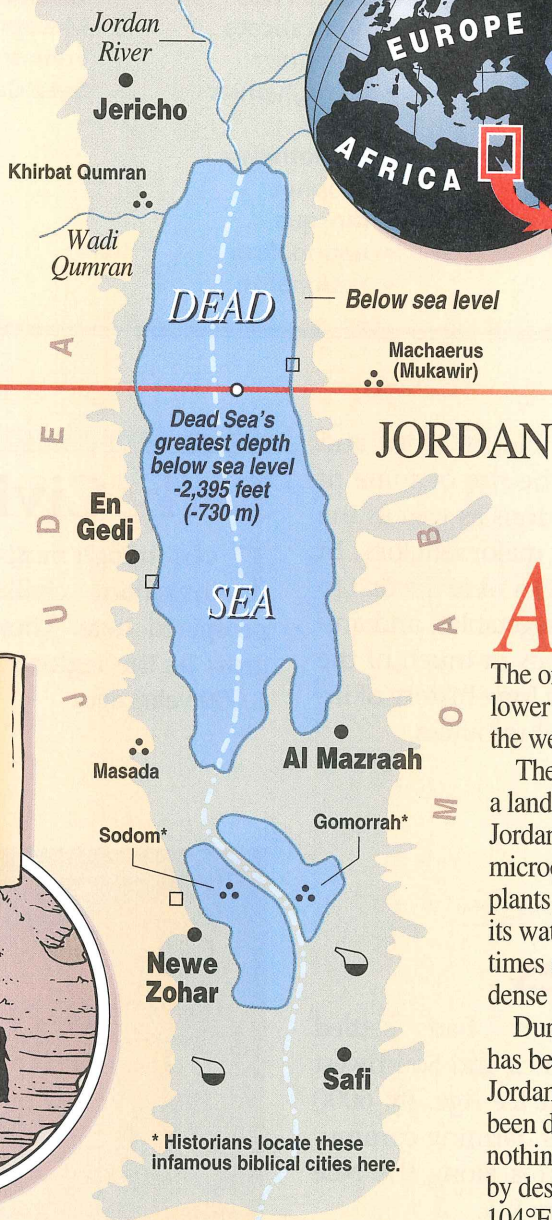


## CROSS SECTION

Mediterranean Sea

SEA LEVEL

Designed by **BILL PITZER**



At 1,312 feet (400 m) below sea level, the shore of the Dead Sea is the lowest point on the earth's surface. The only place where land is known to be lower is completely covered by ice, a spot in the western part of Antarctica.

The Dead Sea is not really a sea at all, but a landlocked lake split between Israel and Jordan. It is not really dead either; microorganisms can live in it. Fish and plants cannot live in the Dead Sea because its water is the saltiest on the planet—nine times saltier than the ocean. The sea is so dense that swimmers cannot sink.

During the past 50 years, the Dead Sea has become even saltier and smaller. The Jordan River, a source of freshwater, has been diverted for agriculture, leaving nothing to balance the evaporation caused by desert air temperatures that often top 104°F (40°C).

800—  
400—  
0  
-400—  
-800— meters

Vertical scale is exaggerated approximately eight times.

Dead Sea



# History and Government

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the natural environment of two of the world's earliest civilizations.
- the nature of three of the world's major religions.
- the influences created by the interaction of different peoples in the region.

### Key Terms

- domesticate
- cuneiform
- hieroglyphics
- qanat
- monotheism
- prophet
- mosque
- nationalism
- nationalize

### Identify and Locate

Mesopotamia, Arabian Peninsula, Ottoman Empire, Suez Canal

**T**he culture region of North Africa and Southwest Asia saw the rise of some of the world's greatest civilizations as well as the birth of three of the world's major religions. In addition, farmers of the region were the first to raise many of the cereals, vegetables, and animals still used as staple foods in much of the world. The region also has a long history of intense conflicts over land and resources.

### HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

## Early Civilizations

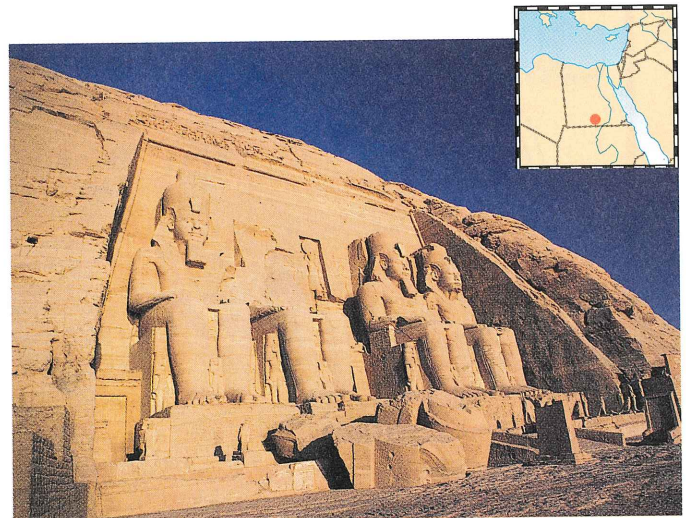
**E**ven though most of the region is semiarid, important civilizations developed and prospered here. These civilizations began to grow in the region's most fertile areas about 6,000 years ago.

### HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

## Early Peoples

**H**unters and gatherers had settled throughout North Africa and Southwest Asia by the end of the last Ice Age. By 6000 B.C., about 4,000 years later, farming communities had spread to the area along the Nile River and the Mediterranean Sea.

The region's farmers were among the first people in the world to **domesticate**, or take plants and animals from the wild and make them useful to people. These early farmers also captured and herded cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and camels. Some of these animals were used for food. Farmers used the hides of some other animals to make clothes and shelters.



### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Abu Simbel Monument, Egypt

The ancient Egyptians built monuments and pyramid tombs for their rulers. *What were other achievements of ancient Egyptian civilization?*



## Mesopotamia

The Sumerian civilization was one early society that developed in Mesopotamia, the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Mesopotamia's warm climate allowed the Sumerians to raise crops year-round. Irrigation canals and flood-control dikes were used to bring the nearby river water to the land. Efforts to improve water distribution led to progress in the study of mathematics, engineering, and soil science. The Sumerians kept records by carving wedge-shaped symbols on wet clay tablets. These tablets were then baked and hardened. This writing system is called **cuneiform**.

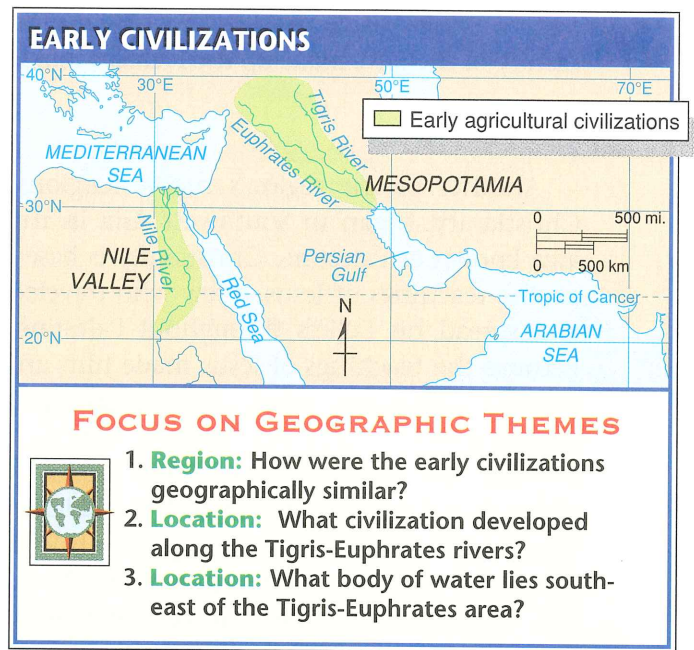
## Egypt

Egyptian civilization grew along the Nile River. Because of sophisticated irrigation methods and the alluvial-soil deposits resulting from the annual flooding of the Nile, farmers could grow 2 or 3 crops each year. The Egyptians' cultural achievements included building pyramids as tombs for their rulers and developing a calendar with a 365-day year. In addition, the Egyptians developed a form of picture writing called **hieroglyphics**.

## Later Civilizations

The Phoenician civilization arose along the Mediterranean coast of present-day Israel and Lebanon. The Phoenicians' most important achievement was the development of an alphabet in which letters stood for sounds. This alphabet formed the basis for the alphabet used throughout much of the Western world today.

During the 500s B.C., the Persian Empire developed. The Persian Empire extended from beyond the eastern border of the region to the Nile River and the Aegean Sea. Realizing that irrigation water for their settlements would evaporate if carried across the desert in surface canals, the Persians constructed a system of **qanats**, or underground canals, to carry water from the mountains across the desert to farmlands.



The Sumerians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Persians, and other empires to the west and to the east had many cultural and economic exchanges. Because of these exchanges, North Africa and Southwest Asia became known as the crossroads of civilization.

### REGION

## The Birthplace of Three Major Religions

Three of the world's major religions began in Southwest Asia. One of the earliest, Judaism, developed as the religion of the Hebrews.

### Judaism

Once a nomadic people, the Hebrews established the kingdoms of Israel and Judah along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. There they made the city of Jerusalem their capital and religious center. The followers of Judaism, called Jews, based their religion on **monotheism**—the belief in one God. In addition, Judaism taught the importance of obedience to God's laws and the creation of a just





society. Books based on these laws and on the history of the Jews make up the Hebrew Bible.

## Christianity

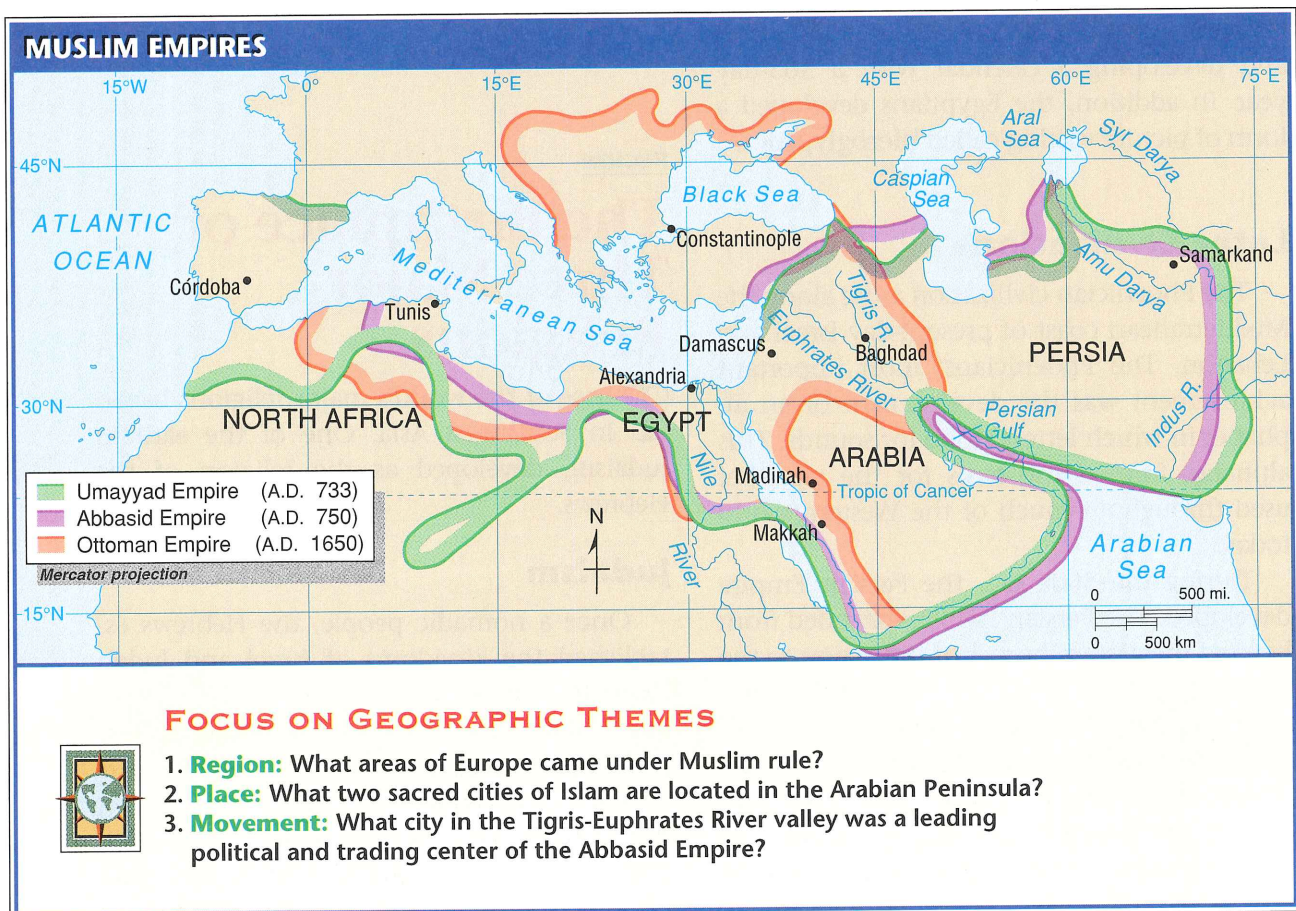
Another of the region's major religions, Christianity, began in Southwest Asia in the area known as Palestine. Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus, a Jew who traveled and spread his beliefs throughout Palestine. Because the teachings of Jesus made him unpopular with many people, he was tried and crucified.

After the death of Jesus, his followers claimed that he had risen from the dead and was the Son of God. Those Jews and non-Jews who followed Jesus's teachings became known as Christians. Many Christian teachings were detailed in books about Jesus and the early churches, which Christians added to the Hebrew Bible. The new books are called the New Testament.

## Islam

Another major religion that emerged in Southwest Asia, and the religion followed by the vast majority of the people in North Africa and Southwest Asia today, was Islam. This religion began in the Arabian Peninsula about A.D. 600 with Muhammad, a merchant of the city of Makkah (Mecca). Believing that he was God's **prophet**, or messenger, Muhammad proclaimed that people should change their ways of living and believe in the one true God. It is estimated that today as many as one-fifth of the world's people are Muslims—a term from an Arabic word meaning “those who submit to the will of God.” Muslims pay close attention to the rules of their faith that are set down in the Islamic holy book, the Quran. They pray in **mosques**—houses of public worship.

By the A.D. 800s, Islam had spread to North Africa, South Asia, Southwest Asia, and parts





of Europe. Islamic scholars, particularly those in the Muslim empires of North Africa and Southwest Asia, made important contributions in the natural sciences, medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. They introduced the Arabic number system, based on the numerals 0 to 9, into the region. The scholars also translated Greek writings into Arabic.

## REGION

# The Modern Era

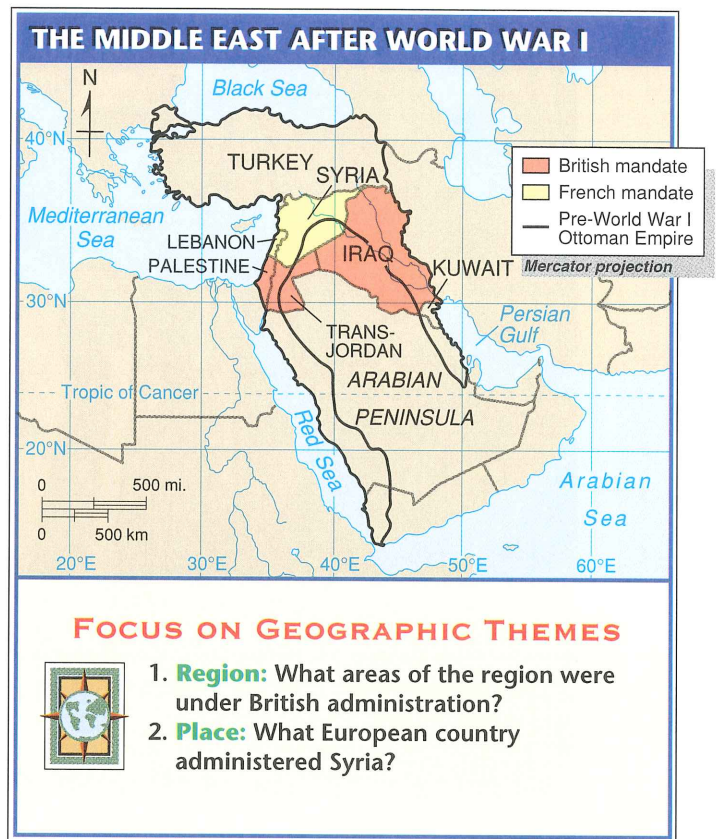
Over the years, the Muslim empires of North Africa and Southwest Asia began to decline. By the late 1800s, the region was largely under the control of Europeans. The region's decline was due in part to the many wars fought on its lands. Some major conflicts included the Crusades and the Mongol invasions.

Another reason for the decline was the lack of resources, such as minerals, wood, and coal. The region lacked many of the raw materials needed to fuel an industrial revolution such as the one that took place in Europe.

The peoples of the region chafed under European control. During the 1800s a well-educated urban middle class developed. Trained in European ways, the new middle class accepted European ideas about **nationalism**, or the right of each people to have its own independent nation. This development stirred nationalistic feelings that provided the basis for the modern nations that have been carved out of the region.

## Independence

The continuing rise of nationalism after World Wars I and II gradually brought an end to direct European rule. By the 1960s most of the Arab countries in North Africa and Southwest Asia had achieved independence. European nations, however, often controlled the newly independent countries' economies. To counter the European presence, some countries seized European property. Iran, Iraq, and Libya, for example, **nationalized**, or placed



under government control, the foreign-owned oil companies in their countries.

Not all the newly independent nations in the region were Arab or Muslim. Many Jews had returned to Palestine since World War I, and in 1948 the United Nations agreed to create the state of Israel. Arab opposition to Israel's existence and Israel's concerns for its security led to a series of wars. An ongoing issue in the Arab-Israeli dispute is the status of the Palestinians, who want a separate homeland in areas occupied by Israeli forces in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. In 1993, a considerable move toward peace in the region was taken when Israel and the Palestinians agreed to a peace settlement. The agreement called for eventual Palestinian self-rule in return for Arab recognition of Israel's right to nationhood.

Other trouble spots in the region also have led to armed conflicts. In Lebanon there have been continuing struggles between Christians and Muslims over control of the government.





### Geographic Themes

**Place: Tel Aviv, Israel**

Israelis celebrate their country's independence day. *What development in the 20th century led to the emergence of independent countries in the region?*

In addition, border conflicts, such as the conflict between Iraq and Iran that led to years of warfare, still exist.

The most recent dispute arose in 1990 after Iraq invaded its oil-rich neighbor Kuwait. Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait ended only after a coalition of nations led by the United States expelled the Iraqi forces and forced Saddam Hussein, Iraq's president, to withdraw his army.

### Today's Governments

The independent nations of North Africa and Southwest Asia have several different types of governments. Monarchs rule eight of the nations in the region. Other types of government include Israel's parliamentary democracy, Egypt's republic with a strong national government and a president, Libya's military dictatorship, and Iran's government based on Islamic laws.

## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** domesticate, cuneiform, hieroglyphics, qanat, monotheism, prophet, mosque, nationalism, nationalize.
- 2. Locating Places** What rivers were the bases for the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations?
- 3. Movement** Why was North Africa and Southwest Asia called the crossroads of civilization?
- 4. Region** How are the governments of North Africa and Southwest Asia organized?

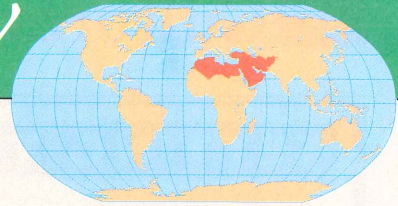
### Critical Thinking

- 5. Drawing Conclusions** Why was the domestication of plants and animals so important to the founding of permanent settlements?





# Geography and History

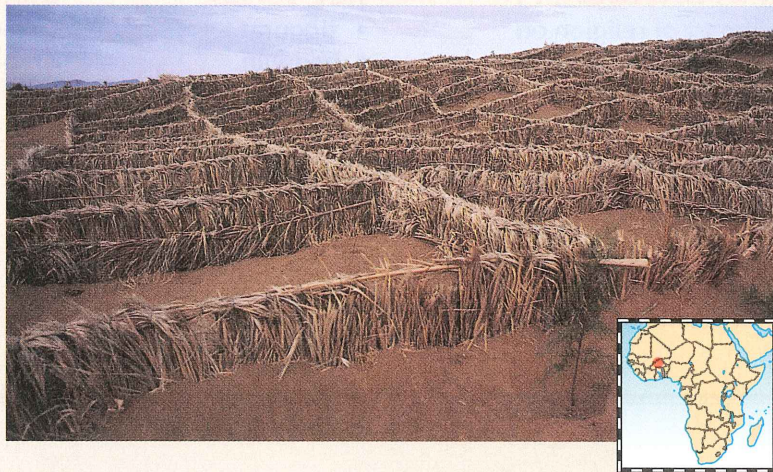


## THE SAHARA: GROWING OR SHIFTING?

As you read, examine how the Sahara has changed and may change in the future.

### Region

The vast, dry Sahara covers about 3.5 million square miles (9 million sq. km)—an area roughly equal to the size of the continental United States. At the Sahara's center are volcanic mountains. Plains broken by plateaus and boulders surround the mountains; at the very edge of the Sahara are seas of sand dunes.



Farmers living in grasslands bordering the Sahara have built shelter belts to prevent soil from being blown away and to control the movement of sand into their fields. Efforts to control the effects of desertification, however, have not always met with success.

### A Glorious Green Past

The Sahara as it is today gives no hint that in the past grasslands and forests covered the region. Geologists have determined that the Sahara's climate slowly began to change about 10,000 years ago. By about 4000 B.C., an arid region had appeared at the center of the once fertile area.

The climate continued to slowly dry out through the centuries. People living in the area also contributed to the desert's growth by practicing *shifting cultivation*. They cut down trees in an area, uprooted the shrubs for firewood and building materials, and let their herds overgraze. When they had depleted the resources of an area, the people moved on to another place. With no ground cover

to protect the soil in the abandoned area, the desert took over, increasing its size.

### Population Overload

Desertification of the Sahara continues today at an even more alarming rate than in the past. Beginning in the 1940s, foreign aid and enhanced technology increased the population living on the edges of the Sahara. The human activities that contribute to desertification have increased: uprooting bushes and grass, cutting down trees, overgrazing. In the late 1970s, scientists reported that the Sahara was "growing" in a southward direction of 2 to 6 miles (3 to 10 km) a year.

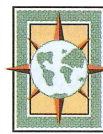
Important new studies in the early 1990s suggested that the Sahara's southward move-

ment might be more like a sea tide, shifting back and forth within a 145-mile (269-km) zone, rather than a permanent increase. Scientists cautioned, however, that whatever natural activity may be taking place, it does not alter the need to change the human behavior in the region.

### Checking for Understanding

1. Study the illustration at the top of the page. How has the Sahara region changed since the end of the Ice Age?

2. **Human/Environment Interaction** How have humans contributed to the Sahara's growth?





# Cultures and Lifestyles

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the impact of religion on the cultural and political development of North Africa and Southwest Asia.
- three different ways of life for most people in North Africa and Southwest Asia.
- the geographic factors that have contributed to the region's standard of living.

### Key Terms

- ziggurat
- bedouin
- *sūq*

### Identify and Locate

Lebanon, Cyprus, United Arab Emirates

**R**eligion is an important unifying element within each of the cultures of North Africa and Southwest Asia. These cultures have also been enriched by contact with the peoples of the three continents for which this region has been a crossroads.

### REGION

## Religion

**T**he great majority of people in the region follow Islam. The religion influences the language, arts, government, and lifestyles of its followers. Islam is the major religion of all

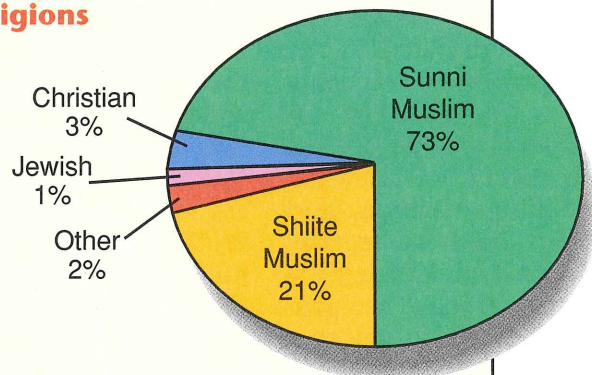
the countries in the region with the exception of Israel and Cyprus.

Even though Judaism and Christianity have their roots in the region, only a small percentage of the current population is either Jewish or Christian. Although Algeria and Morocco have some Jewish residents, the overwhelming majority of Jews in the region live in Israel.

The countries of Lebanon and Cyprus have large Christian populations. The majority of the Lebanese Christians are Maronites, which is a branch of Roman Catholicism. In contrast, most Cypriot Christians follow the Eastern Orthodox faith.

### North Africa and Southwest Asia: Religions

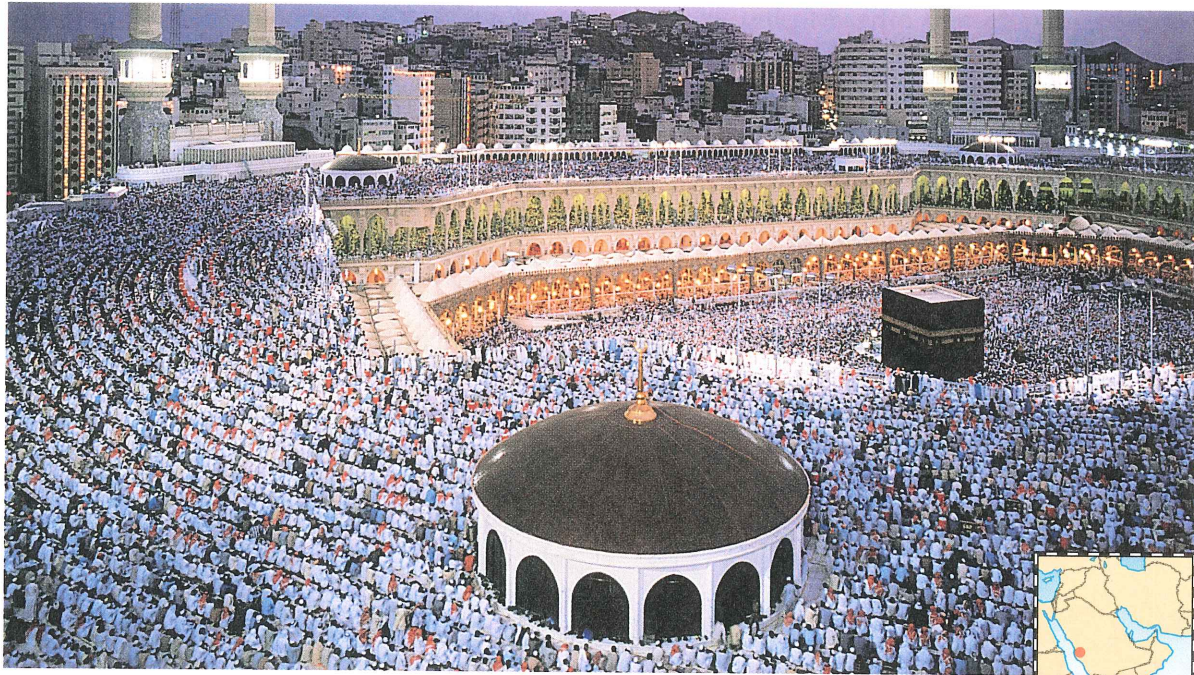
Sunni Muslim	290,000,000
Shiite Muslim	82,000,000
Christian	13,000,000
Jewish	6,000,000
Other	11,000,000



Sources: Population Reference Bureau, 1998  
*The World Almanac*, 1998







### Geographic Themes

**Location: Grand Mosque, Saudi Arabia**

The Grand Mosque, the center of worship for all Muslims, stands in the heart of Makkah, the holiest city of Islam. *What art forms do Muslim artists use in mosques and other public buildings?*

### REGION

## Languages

Because the Quran was originally written in Arabic, non-Arab Muslims often learned Arabic in order to read the Quran. Thus, as more people converted to Islam, Arabic became the region's main language. Other major languages include Hebrew in Israel, Berber in southern Morocco and Algeria, Turkish in Turkey and Cyprus, Greek in Cyprus, Pushtu in Afghanistan, and Farsi in Iran.

### REGION

## The Arts

The arts of North Africa and Southwest Asia are based on the achievements of early civilizations. Later, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam provided inspiration for architects, writers, and artists. Today, the arts reflect the influence of East and West as well as the old and the new.

## Architecture and Art

The region's early civilizations produced fine metal craftwork and stone sculptures. These civilizations, however, were best known for their architecture. In Mesopotamia large temples—**ziggurats**—made of mud brick rose in step-like fashion above the flat landscape. In Egypt large blocks of stone were painstakingly fitted to form the towering pyramids. The Persians later built great palaces of stone decorated with beautifully patterned woven textiles.

The best-known forms of Islamic architecture are its mosques and palaces. Because Islam did not encourage the images of living figures in religious art, artists have used geometric patterns and floral designs to decorate buildings. Beautiful writing is also often used for decoration. Many mosques are decorated with passages from the Quran.

## Literature

The region's strong oral tradition has made epics and poetry the dominant literature





among the Arabs and other Muslim peoples. The epic *Shahnameh* (*King of Kings*) describes heroic events in early Persian history. A well-known example of another kind of literature is the *Arabian Nights*—a collection of Arab, Indian, and Persian stories. These stories often reflect life in the early period of the Muslim empires.

Today poets and writers in many parts of the region deal with the problems of change in traditional society. Much of the modern literature also has nationalistic themes. Many new rhythms and rhyme patterns in recent poetry reflect the increased influence of the West.

## REGION

### Varying Ways of Life

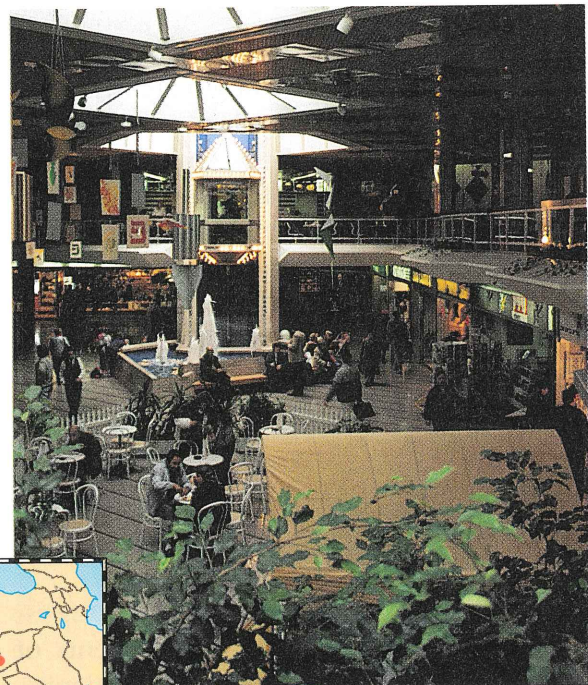
During the 1900s the way of life of the people of North Africa and Southwest Asia has changed dramatically. Since 1900 the population of the region has grown rapidly. This growth has led to many lifestyle changes

as more people have moved from rural to urban areas. Current estimates are that less than 50 percent of the region's people cultivate the land and that only a very small percent are **bedouins**, or desert nomads.

### Standards of Living

Countries in the region with economies based on manufacturing and trade or oil, such as Israel and Qatar, enjoy a relatively high standard of living. Many countries, however, have poverty-stricken populations. Population growth in such countries as Afghanistan and Egypt has surpassed economic growth. As a result, economic systems often cannot provide people with basic necessities.

Most hospitals in the region are government-owned. In addition, medical care in many of the wealthy oil-producing countries is free. Medical treatment, however, is available mainly in the region's towns and cities. There also is a shortage of doctors in many countries. These factors contribute to low life expectancies in much of the region.



#### Geographic Themes

##### Place: Southwest Asian Markets

In many cities of the region, the traditional *sūq* provides a marked contrast to modern department stores. *What are the staple foods of North Africa and Southwest Asia?*





## Meeting Human Needs

Methods of meeting the needs of the people vary throughout the region. Housing, for example, differs from country to country. In many areas the people live without running water and electric lights. As a result, people must carry water from pumps and use lanterns or candles for light.

In some cities, such as Jerusalem, many of the buildings are made of stone and are hundreds of years old. Farmers and rural workers in North Africa and Southwest Asia usually live in tin or stone structures, or shelters made from wood and iron. A writer describes a typical Egyptian rural home:

— ❖ —

*Houses, mostly flat roofed, are generally built around a courtyard and face south to absorb the winter sun. Within the compact enclosure live dozens of people of all ages with their water buffalo, cattle, an ox or camel, an ass, and a few scrawny chickens. Furniture, if it exists at all, is sparse, and the average hut is furnished only with a crude grass mat or carpet to cover the earthen floor. Bread is the staff of peasant life, supplemented by some vegetables. Occasionally, on festive days such as the Prophet's [Muhammad's] birthday, there are eggs, meat, and fruit.*

— ❖ —

The staple foods of the region consist of wheat, barley, and rice, sometimes supplemented by meat, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables. People often buy food at a *sūq*, or an enclosed marketplace.

Many of the people of the region wear traditional long, loose cotton clothing. They also wear a head covering to reflect the hot sunlight. In many cities, however, people wear clothing like that found in North America and Europe.

## Education

Primary education is free, and enrollment is increasing in the region. Many students

complete both primary and secondary school, and a small percentage enroll in universities. Well-known institutions of higher learning in the region include Cairo's University of Al-Azhar, which was founded in A.D. 970. It is one of the oldest universities in the world.

## Leisure Time

Family ties are important to the people of the region. Family hospitality is taken very seriously, and leisure time is often spent visiting and entertaining family members.

Popular sports include soccer, hunting, and fishing. Board games such as backgammon are popular in some countries. The people also enjoy going to movies and watching television.

Religious holidays are important throughout the region. *Īd al Adha*, or the Feast of Sacrifice, is a very important Muslim celebration during which many Muslims go on pilgrimage to Makkah. Such Jewish holidays as Passover, Yom Kippur, and Hanukkah and such Christian holidays as Christmas and Easter are observed in some countries in the region.

### SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

#### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** ziggurat, bedouin, *sūq*.
- 2. Locating Places** What ancient civilization built pyramids?
- 3. Region** Why does the art of the region use geometric patterns, floral designs, and beautiful writing?
- 4. Human/Environment Interaction** What economic factors have enabled some countries in the region to enjoy a high standard of living?

#### Critical Thinking

- 5. Making Generalizations** Why did the cultures in the region often borrow from each other and from cultures outside the region?



# TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

## Using the Internet

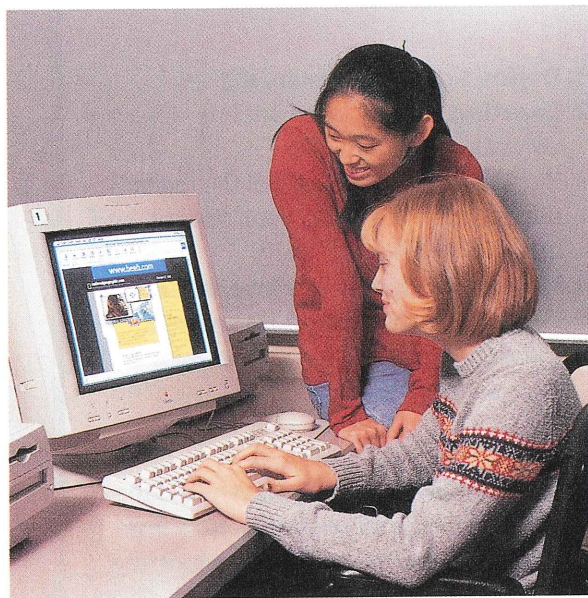
The Internet—often referred to as the “Net”—is composed of a massive number of computers linked together through a worldwide, high-speed telecommunications network. Originally created by the United States Department of Defense in the 1970s, the Internet makes it easy for people to share information and ideas worldwide.

### REVIEWING THE SKILL

To get on the Internet, you will need three items. First you need a personal computer. Then you need a *modem*—a device that connects your computer to a telephone line. Finally, you need an account with an Internet service provider (ISP) such as America Online or a local provider. You log on the Internet through your ISP.

Now you can “surf” the Net—send E-mail, join a newsgroup, subscribe to a mailing list, or explore the World Wide Web (WWW). Of all the segments of the Internet, the WWW is the most popular. Through the use of software called a *Web browser*, you can examine page after page of information about almost anything you can imagine.


The World Wide Web contains a tremendous number of *Web sites* maintained by companies, universities, government organizations, nonprofit groups, and also ordinary individuals. Web sites consist of one or more pages of information, depending on their purpose. The main page of a site is called the *home page*, which may function like a table of contents in a book.



Each Web page has its own address, called a URL (for Uniform Resource Locator). The URL of a Web page usually begins with the prefix *http://* The pages of the WWW are connected by *hyperlinks*, which usually appear on your screen as underlined text, and are set off in a special color. Hyperlinks make it easy to jump from one page or site to another and quickly find related information. They make the WWW a powerful tool for research.

The growing number of *search engines*, such as Yahoo!, Lycos, and Alta Vista, allow you to search the Web for any topic you enter. They make great starting points for searching for information on the Internet. Save the locations of your favorite Web sites as bookmarks. Through bookmarks, you can quickly locate the site without having to remember a long Web address.

### PRACTICING THE SKILL

 Select a search engine and use it to discover the answers to the following questions.

1. Where can you see ruins of the 6,000-year-old Dilmun civilization?
2. Where is the National Museum of Bahrain located?
3. In what year did Cyprus become the Republic of Cyprus?
4. Who is the mythical Egyptian goddess of war and weaving?
5. What is the Web address of a site that shows photographs of mosques around the world?

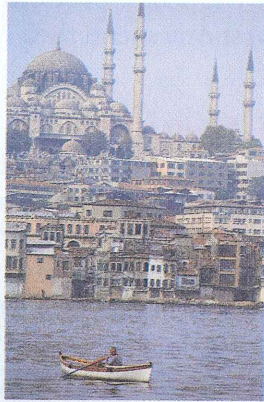
For additional practice in using the Internet, see *Practicing Skills* on page 388 of the Chapter 18 Assessment.



**1**

SECTION

**Population Patterns**



KEY TERMS

**ethnic diversity**  
(p. 371)

**Istanbul's mosques and palaces along the Golden Horn harbor**

SUMMARY

- The culture region of North Africa and Southwest Asia has been a crossroads for the peoples and cultures of Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- The heaviest concentrations of population in North Africa and Southwest Asia are in coastal and river valley areas where water is available.
- Rapid population growth and rising urbanization have characterized the region since World War II.

**2**

SECTION

**History and Government**



Israelis celebrate their Independence Day

KEY TERMS

**domesticate** (p. 376)  
**cuneiform** (p. 377)  
**hieroglyphics** (p. 377)  
**qanat** (p. 377)  
**monotheism** (p. 377)  
**prophet** (p. 378)  
**mosque** (p. 378)  
**nationalism** (p. 379)  
**nationalize** (p. 379)

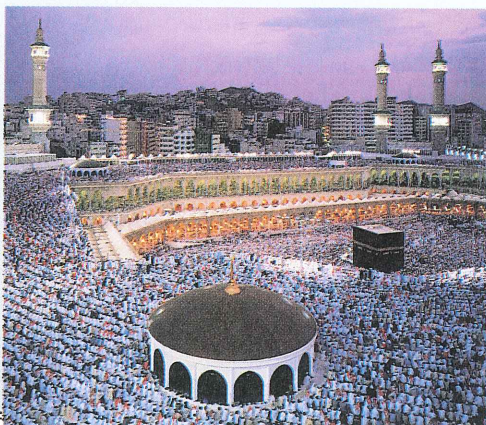
SUMMARY

- North Africa and Southwest Asia was the birthplace of two of the world's earliest civilizations—Mesopotamia and Egypt—and three of the world's major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- After centuries of European influence, independent states arose in North Africa and Southwest Asia during the 1900s.

**3**

SECTION

**Cultures and Lifestyles**



Makkah's Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest shrine

KEY TERMS

**ziggurat** (p. 383)  
**bedouin** (p. 384)  
**sūq** (p. 385)

SUMMARY

- Islam and the Arabic language have been the primary unifying forces in North Africa and Southwest Asia.
- The people living in countries based on manufacturing and trade generally enjoy a high standard of living. The people living in countries where the economies are based on agriculture, however, have a lower standard of living.
- Family relationships are important to people in the region. Popular leisure activities include soccer, hunting, and fishing.





## Reviewing Key Terms

Choose the vocabulary term that best completes each of the sentences below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- ✓ ethnic diversity (p. 371)
- ✓ mosque (p. 378)
- ✓ cuneiform (p. 377)
- ✓ ziggurats (p. 383)
- ✓ qanats (p. 377)
- ✓ bedouin (p. 384)
- ✓ prophet (p. 378)

### SECTION 1

1. Differences in groups of people based on their national origins, languages, customs, beliefs, and/or religions is known as \_\_\_\_\_.

### SECTION 2

2. The Sumerian writing system was called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Muslims regard Muhammad as a \_\_\_\_\_, or messenger, of God.
4. A Muslim house of worship is known as a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The Persians constructed a system of \_\_\_\_\_, or underground canals, to carry water from the mountains across the deserts.

### SECTION 3

6. The Sumerians built step-like pyramids called \_\_\_\_\_.
7. A desert nomad is often called a \_\_\_\_\_.

## Reviewing Facts

### SECTION 1

8. How are population patterns in North Africa and Southwest Asia affected by the environment?
9. What large cities in the region are located near or on bodies of water?

### SECTION 2

10. Why did two early civilizations originate in North Africa and Southwest Asia?
11. What are the three major religions that originated in the region?

### SECTION 3

12. What was the outstanding architectural achievement of Islamic civilization?
13. How do the people of North Africa and Southwest Asia spend their leisure time?

## Critical Thinking

14. **Drawing Conclusions** Why do most of the people in North Africa and Southwest Asia live in areas near water?
15. **Predicting Consequences** What might have been the future of the nations in North Africa and Southwest Asia if there had not been the discovery of oil?
16. **Analyzing Information** What factors account for varying standards of living in North Africa and Southwest Asia?



## Geographic Themes

17. **Movement** How has the movement of peoples into North Africa and Southwest Asia affected its cultures?
18. **Region** How is the Islamic influence reflected in the languages of the region?

## Using the Unit Atlas

Refer to the cultural geography section of the Unit Atlas on pages 350–351.

19. Where do most people in Algeria live?
20. What city is a major religious center for Jews, Christians, and Muslims?



## Practicing Skills

### Using the Internet

Log on to the Internet. Then using a search engine, type in the following key words: *tourism, travel, [specific country name]*. Print out any articles on your topic. Using the information you retrieved, prepare an itinerary you would follow on a visit to that country.



## Projects

### Individual Activity

Select one North African country for study. Research that nation's population growth, and write a brief report about how that growth is affecting the way people live.

### Cooperative Learning Activity

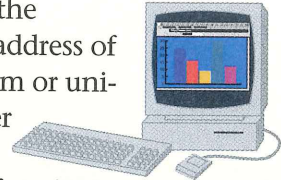
Working together in a small group, put together a meeting of representatives from each of four or five oil-producing nations. Each group member will research and report to the rest of the group on his or her nation's oil production and revenues and how the revenue should be spent. Upon completion, the report can be compiled and an overall summary can be presented to the entire class. Be prepared to answer questions from your classmates.

## Writing About Geography

**Description** Imagine you are traveling for your hometown newspaper in Saudi Arabia to write about the way of life and the type of housing of the people in one of the major cities. Your description should include the effects of the climate on the way people live.

## Technology Activity

**Using E-Mail** Search the Internet for the E-mail address of an international museum or university. Compose a letter requesting information about various aspects of ancient Egyptian culture such as architecture, religion, hieroglyphics, or medicine. Write a short report from your response. Share your report with the class.



### Locating Places

#### THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF NORTH AFRICA AND SOUTHWEST ASIA

Match the letters on the map with the places in North Africa and Southwest Asia. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Suez Canal | 6. Israel      |
| 2. Riyadh     | 7. Cairo       |
| 3. Istanbul   | 8. Cyprus      |
| 4. Iran       | 9. Tripoli     |
| 5. Tehran     | 10. Casablanca |

