



MI OPEN BOOK PROJECT

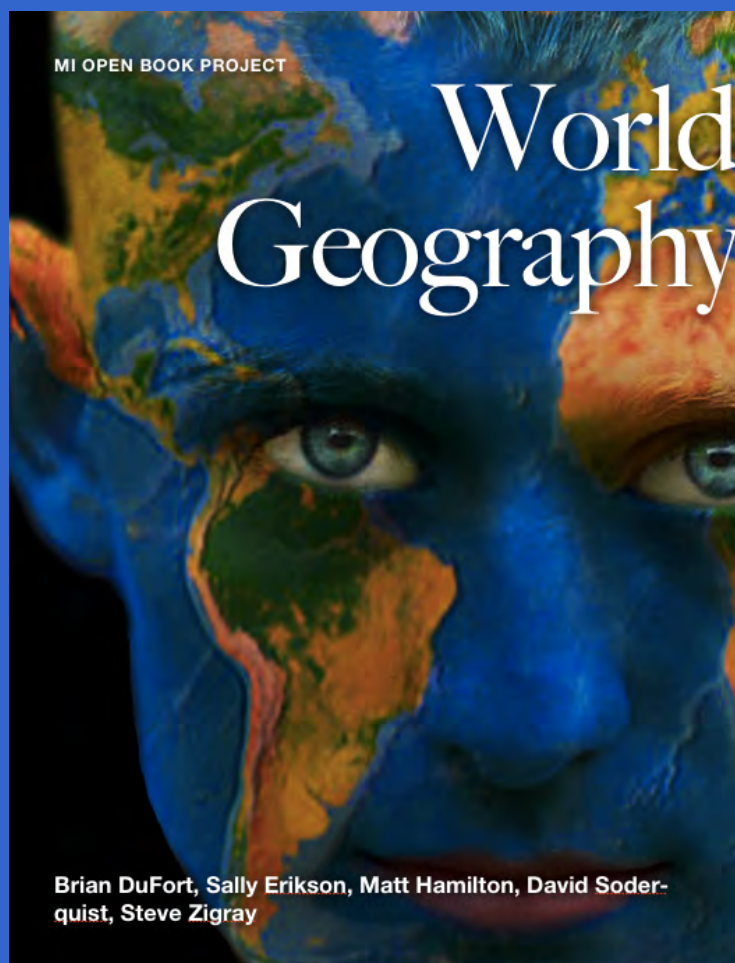
World Geography

Brian Dufort, Sally Erickson, Matt Hamilton,
David Soderquist, Steve Zigray

World Geography



MICHIGAN
OPEN BOOK PROJECT



This is version 1.4.4 of this resource, released in August 2018.

Information on the latest version and updates are available on the project homepage: <http://textbooks.wmisd.org/dashboard.html>



MICHIGAN OPEN BOOK PROJECT

The text of this book is licensed under a Creative Commons NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC-BY-NC-SA) license as part of Michigan's participation in the national #GoOpen movement.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:



Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.



NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.



Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike CC BY-NC-SA

The Michigan Open Book Project

Project Manager: Dave Johnson,
Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School
District

6th Grade Team Editor: Amy Salani,
Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School
District

6th Grade Content Editor: Carol Egbo

6th Grade World Geography Authors

Brian Dufort, Shepherd Public Schools

Sally Erickson, Livonia Public Schools

Matt Hamilton, East Jordan Public
Schools

David Soderquist, Three Rivers Schools

Steve Zigray, Concord Public Schools



MICHIGAN
OPEN BOOK PROJECT



Brian Dufort

Shepherd Public Schools

Odyssey MS/HS

Brian is originally from Midland, MI and is a graduate of Northern Michigan University. He has spent his entire teaching career at Odyssey Middle/High School, an alternative education program in the Shepherd Public School system. In 2001, his environmental studies class was one of seven programs from the United States and Canada to be chosen as a winner of the Sea World/Busch Gardens Environmental Excellence Award. Brian is also the Northern Conference director of the Michigan Alternative Ath-

Sally Erickson

Livonia Public Schools

Cooper Upper Elementary

Sally has taught grades 3-6, as well as special education. She has served as a district literacy leader for many years and participated in the Galileo Leadership Academy in 2001-03. She is proud to be a teacher.

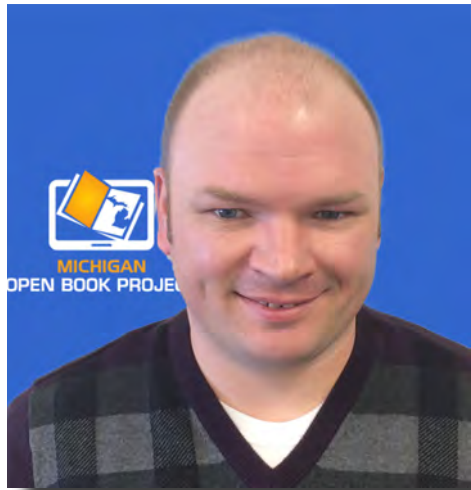


Matt Hamilton

East Jordan Public Schools

East Jordan Middle School

Matt grew up in Cadillac, MI. He holds a bachelor and masters degree from Michigan State University. He currently teaches middle school History and Geography. Matt started and advises a club at his school called the Shoe Club to inspire his students to Dream Big. His wife and two daughters enjoy traveling and spending time in the outdoors.



David Soderquist

Three Rivers Public Schools

Three Rivers Middle School

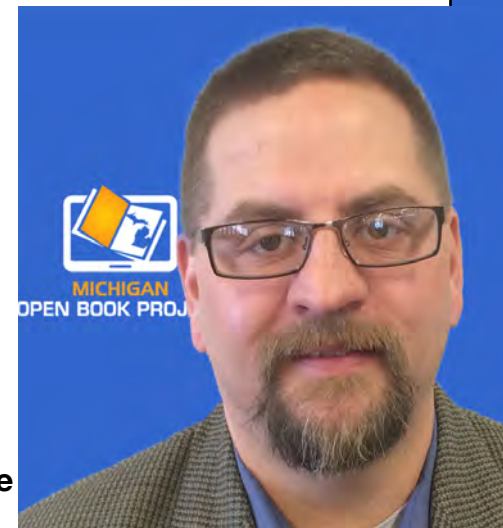
For the Past 11 years David has taught 6-8 grade Social Studies for Three Rivers Middle School. He serves as Department Head, School Improvement Member and Social Studies Rep for his area. Over the past few years he has completed his Masters Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and become a state recognized Instructional Coach.

Steve Zigray

Concord Community Schools

Concord Middle School

Steve Zigray is a 6th grade teacher. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from Central Michigan University and a Masters Degree in K-12 Administration from Eastern Michigan University. Honors Steve has been awarded are the 2001 Junior Achievement Educator of the Year and he was nominated for Jackson Magazine's, Educator of the year in 2014. He has also coached high school and middle school sports, worked on various school improvement committees, wrote the 6th grade Common Assessment tests for Jackson County ISD and is an active member in the community as well as the PTO. He lives in southeast Jackson County with his beautiful wife and three fantastic daughters.



**MICHIGAN
OPEN BOOK PROJECT**

North Africa and the Middle East

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. How are we, as members of a global society, interconnected?
2. Does where you live affect your viewpoint on the areas where others live?
3. How does culture impact a person's perspective?

Section 1

Introduction and Physical Geography

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. How are we, as members of a global society, interconnected?
2. Does where you live affect your viewpoint on the areas where others live?
3. How does culture impact a person's perspective?

Movement

How do we move from place to place?
How do ideas move from place to place?
How do products move from place to place?



Regions

What region do we live in?
What are a region's characteristics?
What type of region is it?
What makes a region?



Human/Environment Interaction

How have we adapted to or changed our landscape?



Location

Where are we?
Where is a place?



Place

What kind of place is it?
What is it like there?

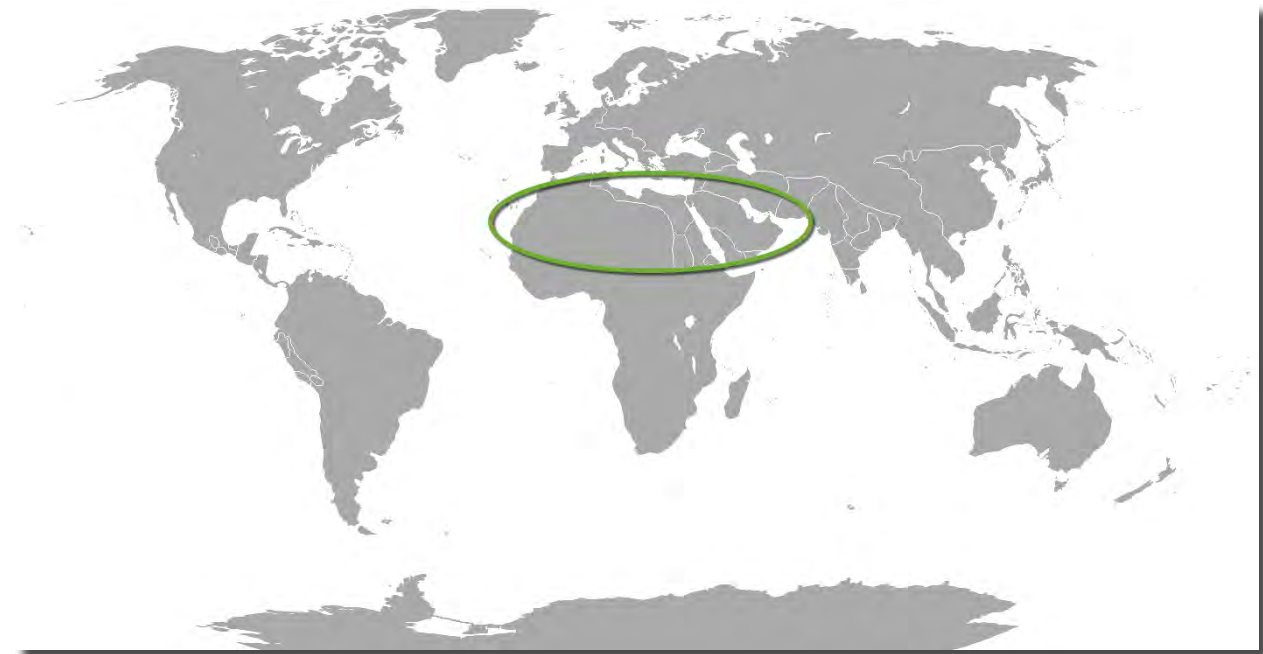


Image source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d0/BlankMap-World-1ce.png>

On the map above, the regions circled in green are North Africa and the Middle East. Using only this map, try and answer one of the questions geographers asked when studying place:

Where is it located?

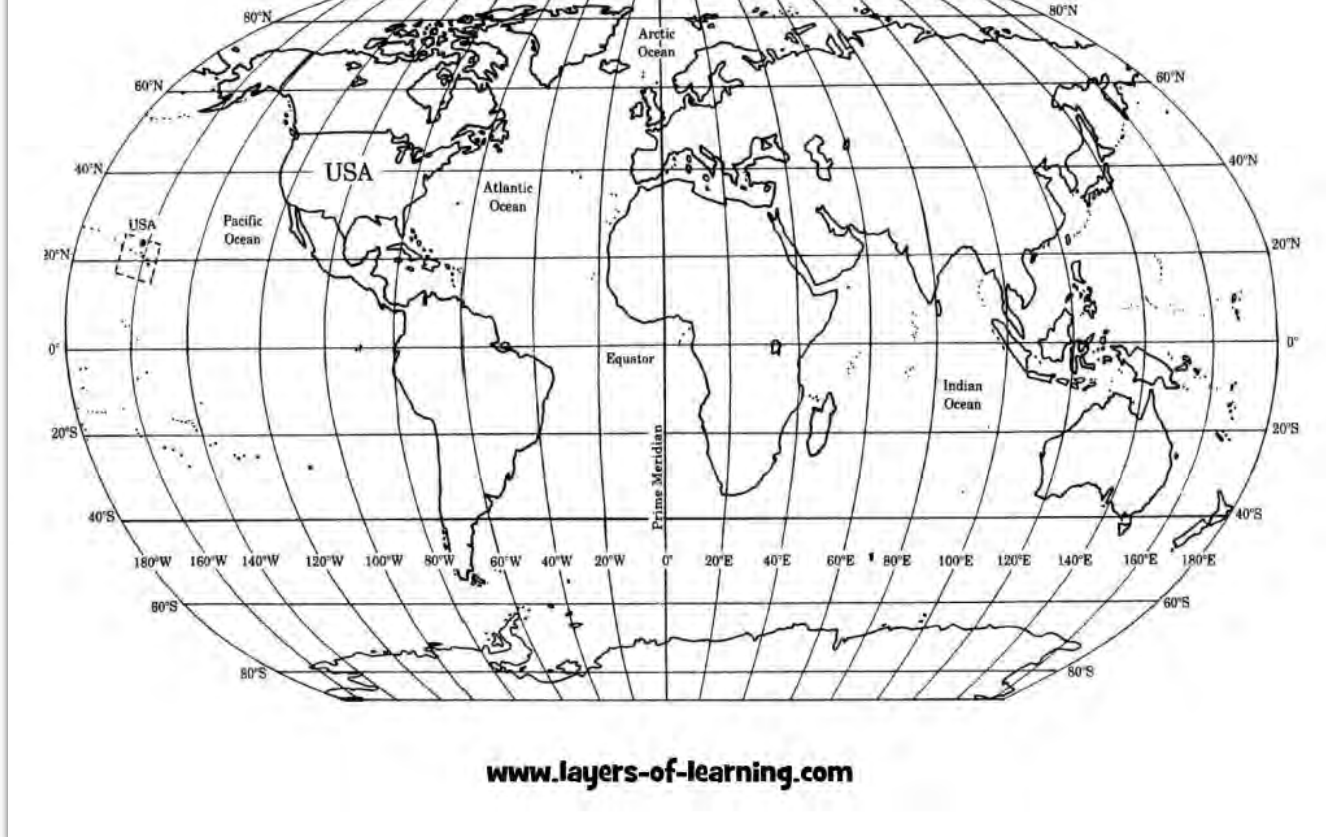


Image source: http://190152612307854813.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/6/8/12683649/9446804_orig.jpg

The map above contains lines of latitude and longitude which were discussed in the introduction. These imaginary lines run up and down, as well as across the world to give geographers the ability to assign coordinates which describe where a place is. Use the map above (Hint: You can click on it to make it bigger) to try and answer the same question you were asked before.

Where is it located?

In this chapter we'll explore another theme of geography: Location. In order to study a place you have to know where it is.

This allows you to then look at what is around it, and what is connected to it.

The region of North Africa and the Middle East lies at the continental crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe. At this intersection of the world, all three continents meet here at the Mediterranean Sea. The region extends from the eastern border of Pakistan to the Atlantic coast of Morocco in the west. The region includes many diverse landscapes. It contains rugged mountains, vast deserts, spacious plains and is surrounded by numerous seas. In this unit, you will learn how geography impacts the way people live. You will also discover how culture impacts a person's perspective.

Think about the following question:

Does where you live affect your viewpoint on the areas where others live?

When looking at this region, there are some different viewpoints on an appropriate name. The Middle East has been known by many different names throughout history, all depending on the viewpoint of the people referring to the area. Today Southwest Asia and Middle East are used interchangeably. With both terms

being used to describe the same region, it can be confusing at time as to which is appropriate. Geographically, Southwest Asia contains all of the countries of the Middle East as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan, Using the map on the previous page, what countries seem to make up the Middle East?

The use of the term “the Middle East” has been criticized recently as a primarily **Eurocentric** view. Having a Eurocentric view means that the worldview is centered on Western Civilization. According to the Associated Press, the term “The Middle East” would refer to the countries of the western part of the region and Near East referred to the countries of the east, but now they are interchangeable. With all this in mind, there are a number of different ways to refer to the region, however the current accepted terms are Southwest Asia and the Middle East. For simplicity, the term “Middle East” will be used in this chapter.

North Africa and The Middle East are two regions often grouped together because they have many things in common. The region is almost entirely composed of desert. In the region, Islam is the dominant religion and most people speak the Arabic language. These important factors bring the two different areas into one region. With all these things in common, there are many differences among the people.

- Christianity and Judaism are major religions in the area

- There are a number of different ethnic groups in the area. One example are the Kurds who live in parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. The Persians are the predominant ethnic group in Iran, connected by ethnic background and language.

As build your knowledge of North Africa and the Middle East, keep these questions in mind:

“How does where you live impact how you live?”

“How does culture impact a person’s perspective?”

Interactive 4.1 World Bank - The Middle East



The region of North Africa and the Middle East is a large, diverse region. There are many different geographic and human characteristics that make up the region. The varied landscape has influenced the way people live their lives.

North Africa and the Middle East have rich cultures and a history reaching far into the past. As you work through this section, you will look at the impact religion, government, and lifestyle play in how a person's perspective is shaped.

The region of North Africa and the Middle East covers almost 6.6 million square miles (17 million sq. km) in area, more than twice the size of the continental United States. North Africa consists of the countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The Middle East is made up of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Middle East and North Africa have long been linked together. For centuries camel caravans have crossed the region taking goods and ideas back and forth. This region became a crossroads for trade, connecting Africa, Europe, and Asia. Today trade still makes a lasting impact, with oil being the dominate good instead of the spices and silks of centuries ago.



Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trans-Saharan_trade#mediaviewer/File:Caravane_hoggar1.jpg

The rich history of the people in the region extends far beyond economics. The Middle East has long been known as the "cradle of civilization." This is where farming began. This is where the first cities developed and this region is also the birthplace of three major world religions.

Use this link to examine the area. Look at both the human and physical characteristics of the region. What are some of the things you observe? Zoom into the area, to some of the countries. Explore some of the pictures that show up at the bottom.

Economic Activity

Natural resources define the economic activity of North Africa and the Middle East. Petroleum, or oil, is the most important resource to the region due to the world's demand for it and the region having so much of it. Another major resource is water, which, in contrast to oil, is important due to the lack of fresh water in the region.

Interactive 4.2 Google Maps - North Africa and the Middle East



Use this interactive widget to learn more about the regions.

Fossil fuels are in high demand worldwide. Due to the large demand for oil, a **fossil fuel**, many countries in the region have grown very rich meeting the world's growing reliance. North Africa and the Middle East have the largest known oil deposits in the world. Oil is refined down and used in many different products. Gas is one product that comes from oil and is important since it is the fuel used by most cars, trucks, planes and ships worldwide.

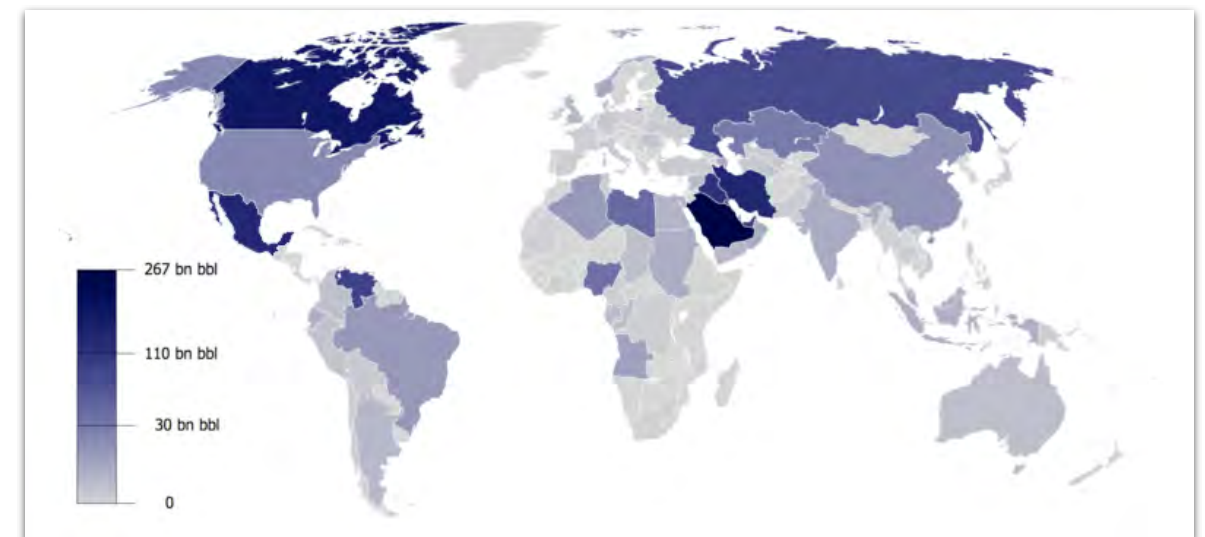


Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Oil_Reserves_Updated.png

Describe where oil is located in North Africa and in the Middle East.

The lack of water limits how much agriculture areas are able to support. Very few areas are able to have commercial farming or livestock. In most areas there is just enough water for **subsistence farming** and nomadic herding. Small areas of commercial farming produce olives. Wheat and fruit can be found along the Mediterranean coast. Nomadic herders move cattle from place to place in search of both food and water to feed their animals. Families who rely on subsistence farming live on small plots of land and will raise just enough food to feed their family. The people of the region have spent centuries learning how to adapt to the challenges of surviving in this dry region. North Africa is one of five subregions of Africa. The world's largest desert, The Sahara, is the main physical feature in the area.

Physical Features

The Sahara desert is a combination of large sand dunes and rocky terrain. As you travel the region small areas of fertile plains exist around the few rivers and the occasional oasis, giving the region its only sources of fresh water. The Nile, the longest river in Africa, runs through this region, emptying into the Mediterranean Sea. To the north, the Atlas Mountains stretch across the region.

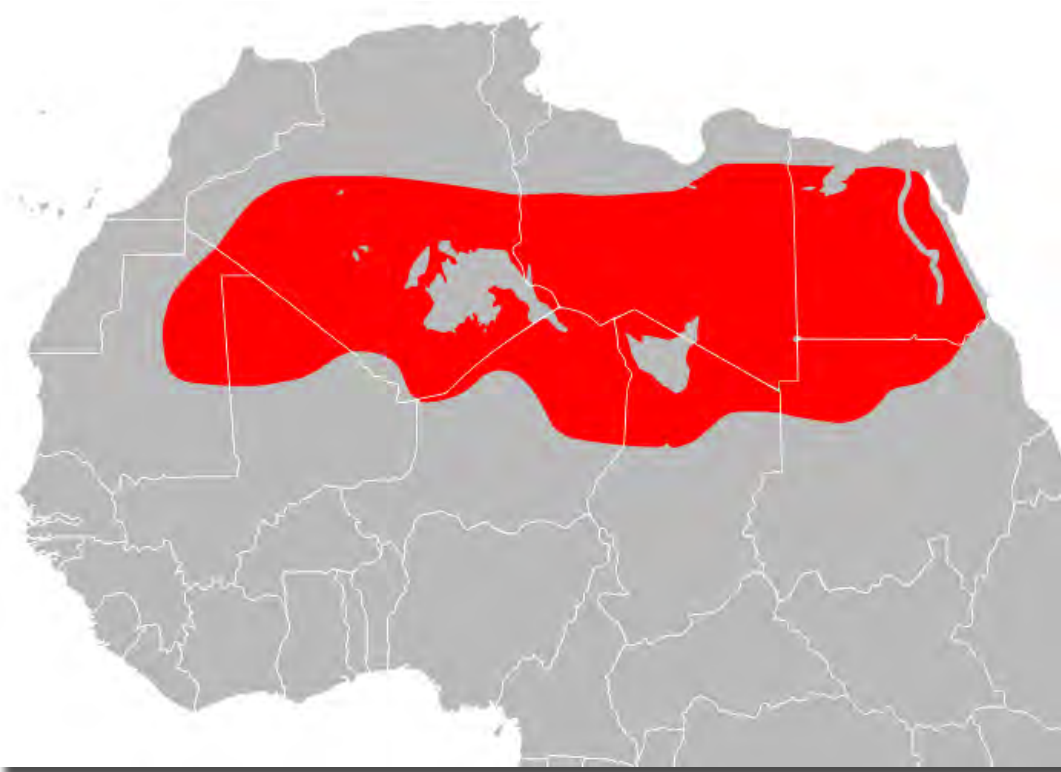


Image source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sahara_ecoregion.svg



Image source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/babeltravel/2762316959/in/photostream/>

The physical landscape of the Middle East is defined by great differences. The region has some of the world's highest mountains to the east and the world's driest areas in the deserts covering much of the region. The region also boasts a number of bodies of water, both fresh and salt water. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers come together in the area once known as Mesopotamia to create one of the most fertile river valleys in the world.



Image source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mesopotamia_geographic.png

With a vast network of seas and gulfs, in addition to abundant natural resources, this region boasts one of the largest shipping networks in

the world. In the south is the world's largest peninsula, the Arabian Peninsula, which covers more than a million square miles.

To the north, the Anatolia Plateau covers much of the rugged landscape of modern day Turkey.

Climate

Despite the many seas and rivers in the area, North Africa and the Middle East are regions of mostly arid and semiarid climate zones. An area with an arid climate receives less than 10 inches

Critical Thinking Skill:

What other regions of the world have a climate similar to North Africa and the Middle East?

Why would these other regions have a similar climate?

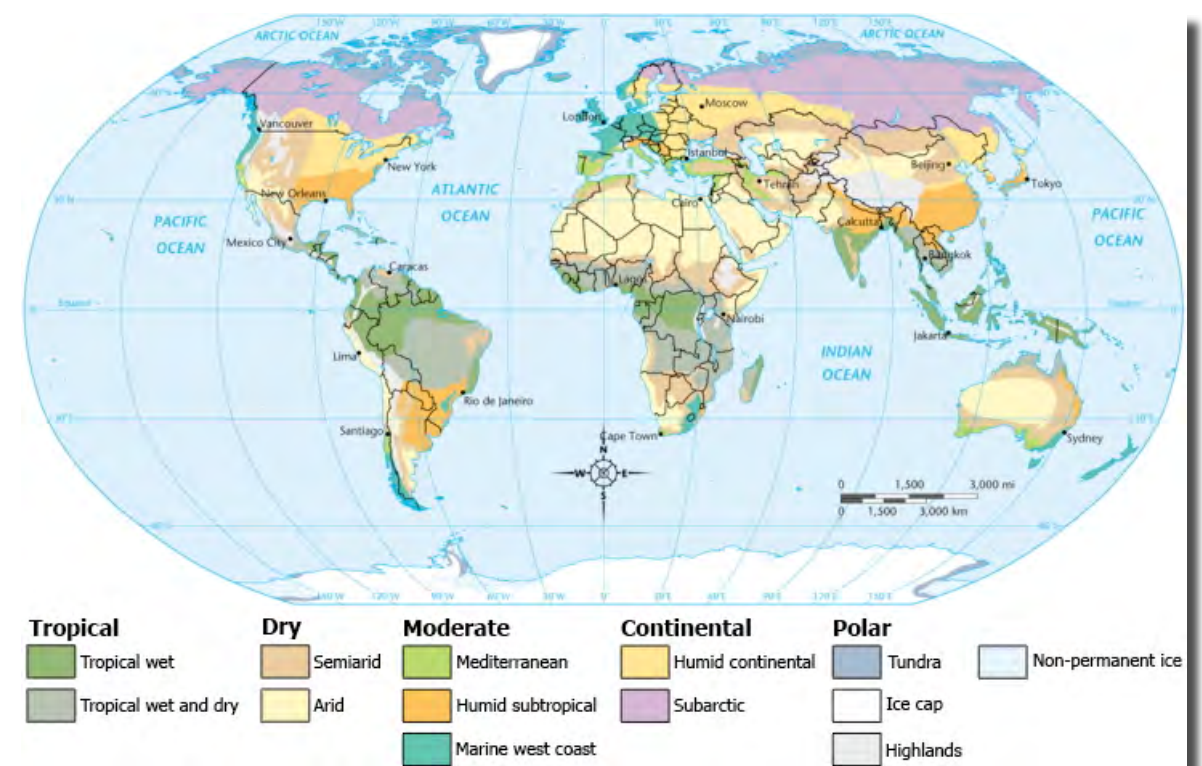
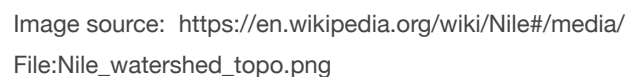


Image source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c2/ClimateMapWorld.png>

Along the coastal areas, the climate is more moderate. Much of the area enjoys a Mediterranean climate. Here summers are warm with little precipitation and winters are mild and wet. In other areas of the region, the climate can vary drastically due to changes in elevation. Generally, in the mountain areas, as the elevation goes up the temperatures drop.



The vegetation of the region is very limited due to the arid and semiarid climates. Much of the region is covered by desert scrub. Desert scrub is made up of small trees and shrubs that can survive in a region where water is scarce. Other vegetation zones exist depending mainly on the temperature and rainfall of an area. The river valleys are covered with mixed forest vegetation. In these areas, both coniferous and deciduous trees grow. In the Nile River Valley you will find the region's only area of broadleaf evergreen forest. Some small areas of temperate grassland appear in the cooler climate found in the highland area of Turkey. Finally, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, you will find chaparral. This area of small trees and bushes thrives in the warm Mediterranean climate.

Section 2

History and Religion

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. How are we, as members of a global society, interconnected?
2. Does where you live affect your viewpoint on the areas where others live?
3. How does culture impact a person's perspective?

Interactive 4.3 The Spread of Religion



View this animated timeline depicting the spread of the five world religions.

North Africa and the Middle East is a large, diverse region. There are many different geographic and human characteristics that make up the region. The varied landscape has influenced the way people live their lives.

As you work through this section, you will look at the impact religion, government, and lifestyle all play in how a person's perspective is shaped.

History and Religion- How does culture impact a persons perspective?

The civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt had a huge impact on later civilizations. The Middle East and North Africa is known as “the cradle of civilization.” This is where agriculture (farming) first began. The first cities developed here and the region is also the birthplace of three of the worlds major religions. Around 5,000 years ago, two civilizations developed in the region. In North Africa, Egypt grew along the banks of the Nile River. To the east, Mesopotamia, developed on a fertile plain located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

Ancient Egypt

Around 5,000 years ago, two civilizations developed in this region. In North Africa, Egypt grew along the banks of the Nile River. To the east, Mesopotamia developed on a fertile plain located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

These civilizations had a huge impact on later civilizations. This is why the region has been called 'the cradle of civilization.' This is where agriculture, or farming, was invented and where the first cities developed. The region was also the birthplace of three of the world's major religions.

Religion was very important in Egyptian society. The belief system was polytheistic. Polytheism is the worship of or belief in many gods or deities. All levels of Egyptian society were influenced by the beliefs of the Egyptian people. Egypt was a **theocracy**, a form of government where a religious leader or leaders rule. Egyptian rulers were called pharaohs and the Egyptians believed they were gods as well as rulers. The rest of society was broken down into many different levels. This complex social structure was based on



Image source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_fertile_crescent.svg

the position people held in society. At the top were the rulers and government officials, in the middle were business and craftspeople, and at the bottom were the farmers and slaves.

Ancient Mesopotamia

Around 4000 B.C.E., people began to settle and farm the area along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This area, also known as the Fertile Crescent, is an arch shaped area of fertile land that stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean sea. Very similar to Ancient Egypt, the people of Mesopotamia relied on yearly floods to provide them with fertile soil and fresh water for **irrigation**. To help control the flooding, the people developed a complex system of ditches, canals and dams. This also provided water for irrigation of the farms..

About 1000 years later the small farming villages began to develop into larger cities in the area of Sumer. These large cities included the main city, normally surrounded by tall walls, and the

farmland around it. As these Sumerian cities grew, each developed their own form of government and came to be called city-states. Each city-state also included a center area that had a large temple dedicated to the god of that city. Just like in Egypt, people in Mesopotamia practiced a polytheistic religion.

Critical Thinking:

Explain how you think people in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia felt about the floods. Was the effect positive or negative?

Three World Religions

Is there a church, synagogue or a mosque in your area? These three places of worship represent three of the world's major monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. All three religions were "born" in the region and continue to claim portions of this region as holy land. While you will learn more about these religions in later grades, a brief history is necessary to understand this region of the world.

History of Religion

Judaism

Judaism is the oldest of the three religions. Judaism originated in Israel from Israelites or Hebrews also known as Jews. Today, Israel is still the center of the Jewish religion, but many believers are spread worldwide.

Jewish history and religion is found in their holy book, the Torah, or Hebrew Bible. In the first four books of the Torah, Judaism was founded by a man named Abraham. Around 1800 B.C.E God told Abraham to leave his home along the Euphrates River and move his family to the land of Israel. The Torah states that God made a covenant or agreement with Abraham. If he moved to the land of Canaan (Israel), he and his family would be blessed. The descendants of Abraham, known as Israelites today, believed they would continue to be blessed as long as they followed God's laws.

The Jewish people believe the most important laws were given to a prophet, or messenger of God, named Moses. According to the Torah, Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt. After escaping slavery, the Hebrew people endured the long journey



Image source: http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Do_Th%C3%A1i_gi%C3%A1o

back to the promised land. Along the way Moses received God's laws, the most important being the Ten Commandments. These laws were very different from others of the time because they were based on how the people should worship God.

Around 1000 B.C.E. the kingdom of Israel was created in the area of present-day Israel by King David.

Interactive 4.4 Judaism Overview



Learn a little more about Judaism through this YouTube video (requires internet connectivity)

The capital city of Jerusalem was established and a temple built. Later on the kingdom split into two states- Israel and Judah. In the coming centuries, the people of Israel would be conquered by outside invaders and forced to leave their homeland. This scattering of the Jews is known as the Jewish Diaspora.

Christianity

Christianity, another monotheistic religion, began about 2,000 years ago with a Jew named Jesus. About 30 C.E. Jesus began preaching in the present day region of Israel. The life and teachings of Jesus are presented in the four Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament. The New Testament is part of the Bible, the Christian holy book. Jesus taught that God loved all people, even those who had sinned. He explained that if people

placed their trust in God, their sins would be forgiven. Jesus' followers declared he was the son of God and savior of all people.

Many people viewed Jesus as a savior sent by God to save them. The large following that he was building worried many of the Roman leaders in Israel. Jesus was convicted of treason under Roman law and sentenced to be crucified. According to the Gospels, Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to his followers.



Image source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ChristianitySymbolWhite.PNG>

Over time, Jesus' followers spread his message all throughout the Mediterranean region. Churches formed in communities large and small. Eventually the Gospels, accounts of Jesus' life, and other writings from early Christians came together to form the Christian Bible. Christianity spread all over Europe and became the dominate religion there and eventually around the world. It is presently the world's largest religion with about 2 billion followers.



Islam

Islam is the third monotheistic religion developed in the region in the 600s CE in present day Saudi Arabia. Muslims are followers of Islam. Muslims believe a man named Muhammad was the last and greatest prophet of Islam. He followed the prophets Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

Muhammad, born around 570 C.E., was a merchant living in the trading city of Mecca. According to the Quran, the holy book of Islam, Muhammad was given messages about God from an angel. The angel told him that God wanted him to preach to the people, telling them that there is only one God, Allah. In his messages, Muhammad was also sent to tell people that all whom believed in Allah were equal in his sight.

After the death of Muhammad in 632 C.E., a group of religious leaders known as caliphs ruled the Muslim community. For the next few centuries, Islam spread into Asia, North Africa, and parts of Europe. Muslim control of trade in these areas helped their cities grow. These cities became centers for trade, learning and government in the Muslim world. Muslim scholars made many important contributions to math, chemistry and medicine.



Image source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki_Israel_13177_Christianity_and_Islam.jpg

How does where you live impact how you live? Living in the Middle East exposes people to three of the world's major religions. How do you think these religions influence the way people your age live in the Middle East?

Interactive 4.5 Comparative Religions



Complete this handout with your knowledge from this section and any additional research you need.

Cultures and Government - North Africa

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. How are we, as members of a global society, interconnected?
2. Does where you live affect your viewpoint on the areas where others live?
3. How does culture impact a person's perspective?

Cultures and Lifestyles

Culture is the way of life shared by a group of people. It includes their ideas, traditions, values and beliefs. All these areas are influenced by the viewpoints, rules and institutions found among the people. There are a number of traits that can describe a people's culture. This section will focus on six: art, language, food, government, religion, and ethnic background. Why does this matter? The region of

North Africa and the Middle East has served as the crossroads for the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. This has resulted in a region that has been home to many different groups and cultures.

The people of North Africa have a long and rich past. As the birthplace of one of the world's earliest civilizations, Ancient Egypt, the region has a rich cultural heritage. Many of the traditions and cultures of some of the ethnic groups have changed and adapted over time. Modernization and urbanization have had an impact on the way of life for the people of the region. Despite this, many still



Image source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_cameleer_with_his_traditionally_decorated_camel._Cairo,_Egypt,_North_Africa.jpg

hold on to their traditional ways.

Ethnic Background

The people of North Africa are a mix of indigenous and Arab cultures with a strong European influence. The main indigenous people, the Berbers, existed long before the Arab invasions. Of the some 15 million Berbers who occupy the area, most are farmers or pastoral nomads. These people mostly live in the Atlas Mountains and areas of the Sahara desert.

The majority of people in the region are Arabs. United by language, the Arabic-speaking people migrated to the region from the Arabian Peninsula in the 600s C.E. Bedouin herders can still be found raising animals in the desert where water can be found to support vegetation.

Government

Early on, the people of North Africa were hunter-gatherers that lived in small groups. As time passed the Egyptian civilization developed in the Nile River Valley. This civilization had a theocracy, government based in religious belief. The pharaoh was not only the head of government but seen as a god as well. As centuries passed, different groups fought for control of the region. Finally in the 1800s a period of European colonial rule took control. The European states took control of the governments and

separated the area into geometric boundaries, separating the land using straight lines. These boundaries were drawn by the colonial powers and did not take into account natural and cultural features that existed in the area. This created conflict among the new countries. In the mid-1900s nationalism began to take hold and many North African countries were able to gain their independence.

Today many different types of governments exist. European colonization still has a great impact on the governments of the region. Stability is difficult to obtain. Civil wars have been common. Some countries are beginning to develop democracy and constitutional monarchies that look to create some equality and stability for the people in North Africa.



Language, Food and Art

How does where you live impact things like your language, food and the art or music you enjoy? In a region as culturally diverse as North Africa, it has a large impact. Due to the high degree of cultural diversity, the region's food, language and arts have developed a flavor of their own. The diet of people living in the region is based on staple foods that can be grown and raised in the harsh desert environment. Food like seafood, goat, lamb, beef, dates, almonds, olives, and other fruits and vegetables make up the staple diet of the people. Highly influenced by Muslim culture, most dishes served in the region follow Islamic Law for food and meal preparation.



The history and cultures have also had a large impact on the languages spoken in North Africa. Today most people speak Arabic. This is a result of the dominant influence of the Islamic religion on the area and the conquering of the area by the Arab Islamic armies in the 600s C.E. In some areas the traditional Berber

language still is spoken. With the continued growth of the world community, in many of the larger cities English is spoken.

History and the world community have had a strong influence on art and music. Much of the art that comes from the region has a strong mystical feel to it. Berber and Islamic culture heavily influence the style of the region's art. Traditional symbols and signs are used to draw connections to pre-Islamic times. Music is influenced much the same way. Many of the original peoples of the area, like the Berbers, enjoy traditional music styles. Much of the music is Muslim influenced. Today, popular music contains aspects of these traditional roots as well as popular music that has been imported.

Interactive 4.6 Music of Morocco



Learn more about the Music of Morocco at this Interactive Website

Image source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/37/IlkhanateSilkCircular.jpg>

Cultures and Government - The Middle East

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. How are we, as members of a global society, interconnected?
2. Does where you live affect your viewpoint on the areas where others live?
3. How does culture impact a person's perspective?

Very much like North Africa, the Middle East has a rich history and heritage. As the birthplace of civilization and three major world religions, the region has had a number of traditional, religious and ancient influences on the cultures in the region. Modernization and urbanization have also had an impact on the way of life for the people of this region. Despite this, many still hold on to their traditional ways.



Ethnic Background

Almost 350 million people live in the Middle East today, more than the current population of the United States. There is a variety of backgrounds as a result of migration from neighboring areas. This is a result of a long history of migration of people into the region from neighboring areas.

Arabs make up the largest ethnic group in the region. The term refers to people who originally inhabited the Arabian Peninsula, but today the term connects the people who speak the Arabic language. A number of other ethnic groups make up the region. In Israel there are the Palestinians and Jews, in Iran the Persians, and

the Kurds spread throughout Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey.

Government

Early on, the people of the Middle East were hunter-gatherers who lived in small groups. As time passed and civilization developed in Mesopotamia, so did government. City-states developed within the area. Many of these city-states had monarchies and theocracies both supported by their religious beliefs. As centuries past, different groups fought for control of the region.

The Ottoman Empire, centered in present day Turkey, held political control from the early 1500s until after World War I. Following the empire's collapse, portions of the region gained independence, however much of the region was placed under the colonial control of a few European countries. By the 1970s, many of the countries were able to gain their independence. These new governments varied in style from monarchies to dictatorships. Many would continue to see periods of unrest and war that has extended into the present day. Since the 1990s many, but not all, countries have slowly moved towards democracy. This push towards a democratic system of government has been driven by the peoples' desire for more participation and freedom in the political life of the countries.

Language and Food

Most people in the region speak Arabic. However, there are many areas that speak Turkish, Farsi and other local languages and dialects. Many areas speak unique dialects through the combination of other languages spoken in the region. For example, some people in Lebanon speak a blend of English and French mixed in with the local Arabic dialect.

Middle Eastern food's unique flavors have been influenced by diverse populations throughout the region. Middle Eastern cuisine is as mixed and diverse as the people who make up the region. Even with this diversity, the food holds some common aspects across the region. Sharing similar characteristics and staple foods, much of the cuisine is based on food like olives, olive oil, pita bread, honey, dates, chickpeas, mint and parsley. Staple meats include lamb and some beef. All foods share the same characteristic of being able to grow in the fertile valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Global Connections

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. How are we, as members of a global society, interconnected?
2. Does where you live affect your viewpoint on the areas where others live?
3. How does culture impact a person's perspective?

Interactive 4.7 Dubai - Then and Now



Learn a little more about Dubai at this website.

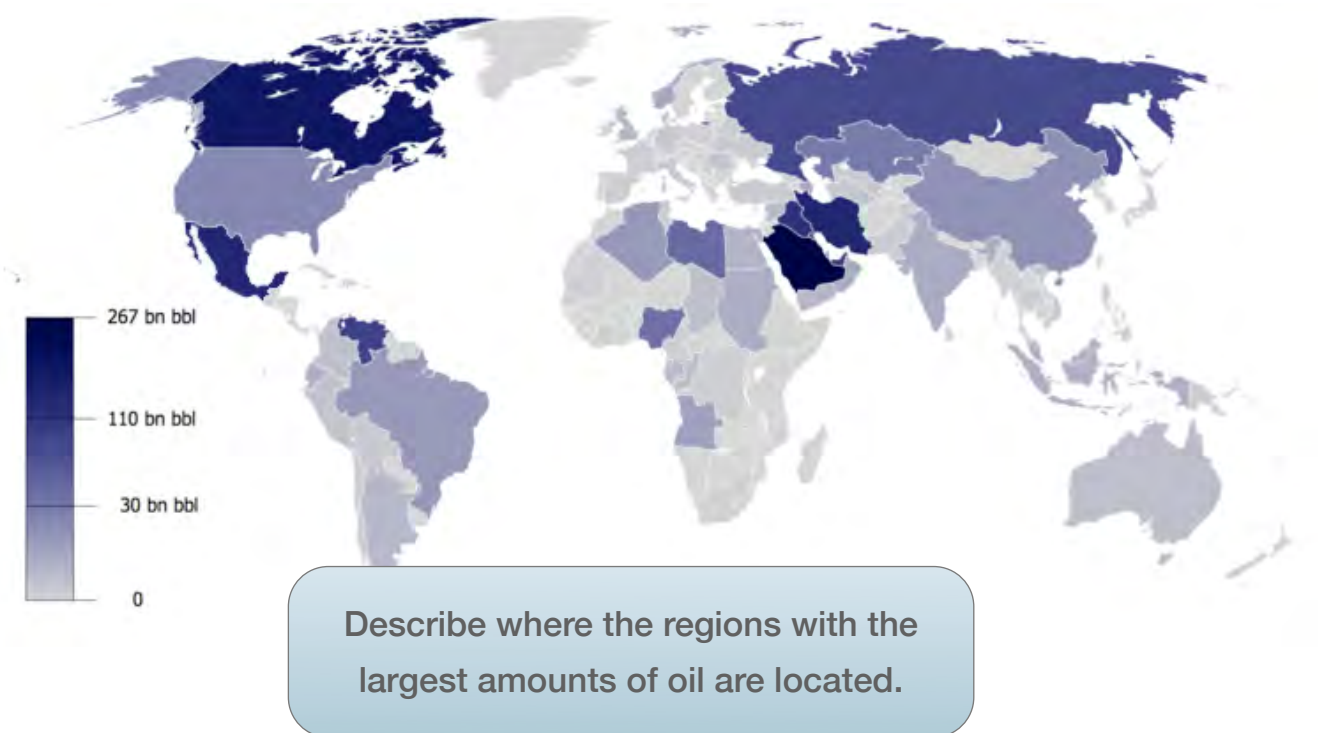
Global Connections-"How does having a valuable natural resource impacted the people of the region?"

You've never known life without a Playstation (1994), Wifi (1999), or even the iPhone (2007). Can you imagine what people did prior to these inventions? In a short amount of time much can change the way people live. Other parts of the world such as the Middle East have radically changed as well. Take Dubai for example, by clicking on the Interactive 4.7 link you'll see what fifteen short years did to that city. What brought about such rapid and dramatic change to this jewel of the Middle East?

Dubai is one of a collection of seven states that make up the United Arab Emirates. Not that long ago this was a small town where nomads raised cattle in the nearby desert oasis. Today it is a growing city with all the modern amenities. What could cause such a dramatic change in this small Middle Eastern state?

The Middle East sits on the largest oil reserve in the world. It is estimated that the countries of the Middle East control approximately half of the entire oil reserves in the world. Along with the abundance of oil, large natural gas reserves give the

region a wealth of the natural resources that are seen nowhere else in the world. World demand for oil has been growing year after year. As mentioned earlier, crude oil is refined down into many different products. As demand for these products has gone up, the countries who control the oil have become very wealthy. In the next chapter you are going to learn how having such a valuable resource has affected the way people in the Middle East live.



Oil: So whats the big deal?

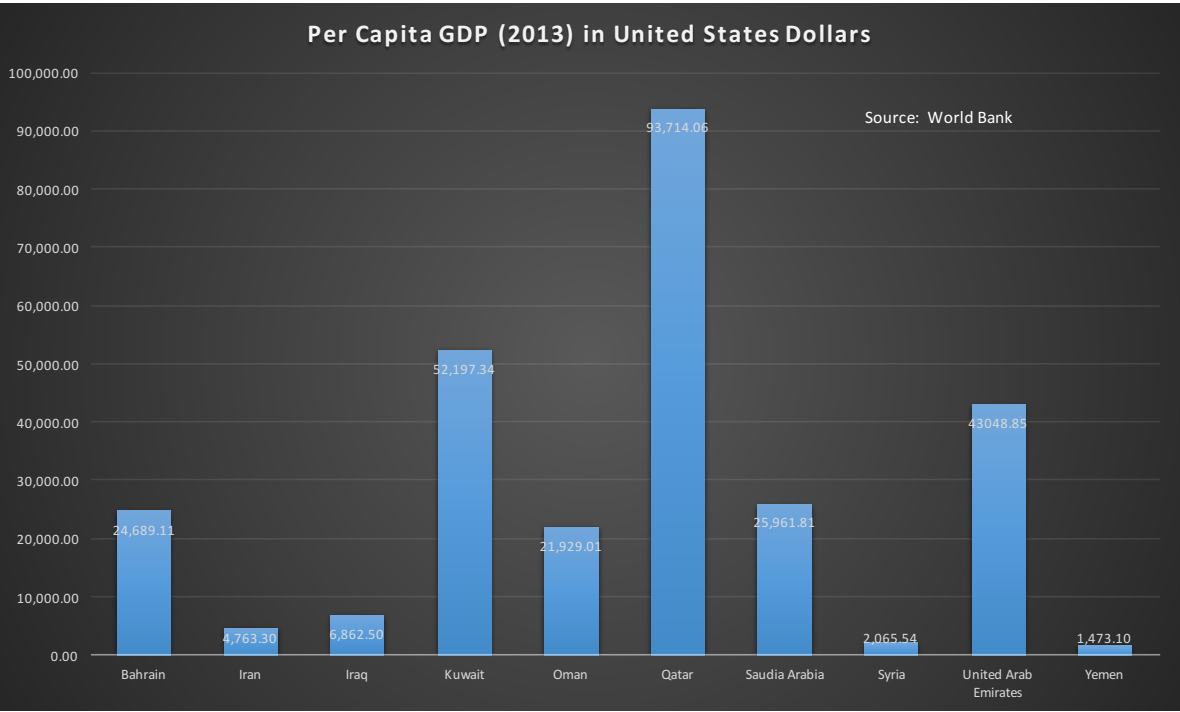
The Middle East is not the most welcoming region of the world. Much of land is hot and dry. The area is characterized by large deserts, rugged mountains and plateaus. However, beneath this formidable exterior is a vast reserve of oil and natural gas. More

than half the world's reserves of crude oil or petroleum is found under the lands of the Middle East. Worldwide demand for oil and natural gas remains high. These two factors have given countries of the Middle East a wealth not seen elsewhere in the world.

Most countries have become very dependent on fuels produced from crude oil to meet their energy demands. Many forms of transportation run on fuels refined from oil. Power plants burn oil to create electricity to power the homes and electronics we use daily. Oil is also used in many products such as medicines, plastics, cosmetics and other goods. As demand continues to grow the reserves will one day begin to shrink. Oil is a nonrenewable resource. There is a limited supply of it and it cannot be recreated. Once the supply is gone, we will have to turn our attention to renewable forms of energy to take its place.

Oil is not distributed equally throughout the world. It takes very special conditions for the earth to take plant and animal remains and change it into oil. Distribution of oil in the Middle East is uneven as well. Saudi Arabia is the region's largest country and has the most oil. On the other hand countries like Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are much smaller in proportion to Saudi Arabia, but have almost have as much oil as their Middle Eastern neighbor. Other countries, like Bahrain and Syria, have some oil but it is far less than most of the region.

Oil Wealth



Oil has brought great wealth to the people and countries of the Middle East. The graph above shows the per capita **Gross Domestic Product** of 10 Middle Eastern countries. This data shows the comparison of how rich one country is to another. As you may observe, not all oil countries are the same and a country's oil wealth is not divided evenly among the people. Some are very, very rich while others are extremely poor.

The oil wealth of many Middle Eastern countries has impacted the people in positive ways. In general the money from oil production has improved the lives of many of the people. Life expectancy has increased and the infant mortality rate has fallen. Both factors can be attributed to countries using their wealth to

improve the health care of the region. As seen in the changes in Dubai, both public and private wealth from oil has improved and expanded cities in the region.

How might having this valuable resource affect the people of the Middle East? Give two ways you think this resource will affect the region in the future.

Oil has not improved life for all people in the region. Oil has not ended poverty in the Middle East. Many countries, like Yemen, remain among the poorest countries in the world. A number of countries in the Middle East do not share the same amount of oil, in turn their oil wealth does not meet the needs of their poor population. Some countries have made a lot of money on oil but have not used that money to improve the lives of their people.



Image source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OPEC.svg>

Oil and the World

So, how does having this valuable resource affect the world? Many oil producing countries of the Middle East depend on oil sales as a major part of their country's economy. Due to this dependance, many countries have the goal of a steady oil supply. This allows countries to have a steady flow of money coming into their country.

To meet this goal, several countries have formed the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries or OPEC. Currently OPEC has 12 member countries, six of the members are Middle Eastern countries: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The other 6 non-Middle Eastern countries are

Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Libya, Nigeria, and Venezuela. These member countries want to keep oil pricing steady, not too high not too low. To do this they control the production of oil. If too much oil is pumped, there will be less competition for it and the price it sells for will be too low. If there is too little produced, there will be more competition between buyers, forcing pricing to rise too high.

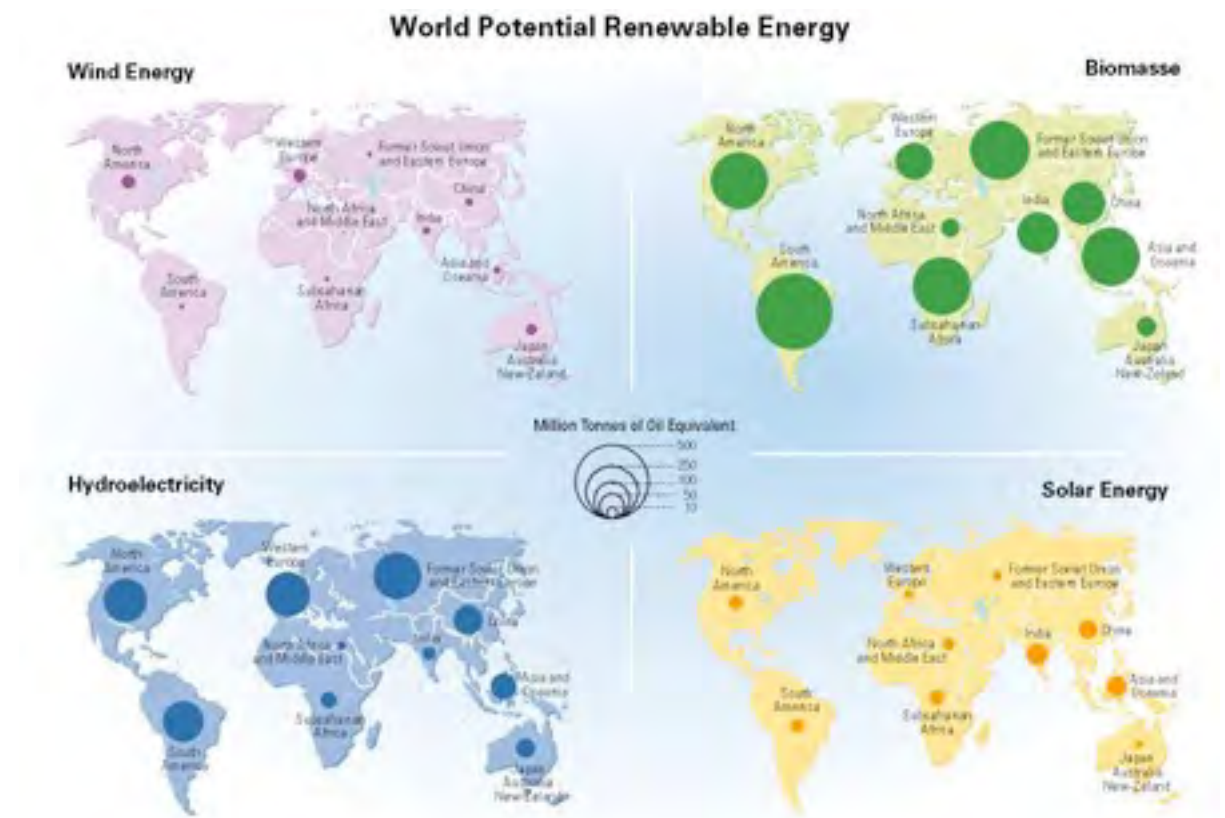


Image source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9a/Renewable_energy_potential.jpg

Despite all this power over oil production, there are some things that limit what OPEC is able to control. First, OPEC cannot control all of the oil sales in the world. Member countries control less than half the oil that is exported around the world. The rest comes from various non-OPEC countries. Another factor is that members do not always act as a group. Some members act independently and refuse to follow the decisions that OPEC makes about how much oil to produce or who to sell to.

The world's dependence on oil has been increasing year after year. Countries become more dependent on oil as they develop economically. Simple economics shows that as more people demand a product like oil, the price will continue to rise. As you have learned in this unit, oil is a nonrenewable resource. With more people demanding oil and oil products, the world has begun to look at new renewable energy resources. Examples include solar and wind

energy. As oil demand stays high and resources run out, more and more people will have to begin using alternative forms of energy.

Looking through the Eyes of the World Your interactive journey through geography: Record your thoughts to the essential questions in your journal.

Interactive 4.8 Interactive Journal



Please note: once you have created your own copy of this document, this widget will only return you to the blank copy. You will need to access yours by opening from your own Google Document.