



CHAPTER
27

Japan



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How has Japan balanced its ancient traditions with its modern economy?

1

GEOGRAPHY

Land of the Rising Sun

2

HISTORY & CULTURE

Samurai to Animé

3

GOVERNMENT & ECONOMICS

Economic Giant

CONNECT

Geography & History



Use the map and the time line to answer the following questions.

1. When did Heian become Japan's capital?
2. What is the capital of Japan today?



A.D. 300

History

◀ **300s** The Yamato clan gains control of Japan. (Seventh-century ruler Shotoku Taishi)

History

1100s Shogun rule is established. (Japan's first shogun, Minamoto no Yoritomo) ▶



Government

◀ **794** Heian period begins, and the capital moves from Nara to Heian, modern Kyoto. (Phoenix Hall)



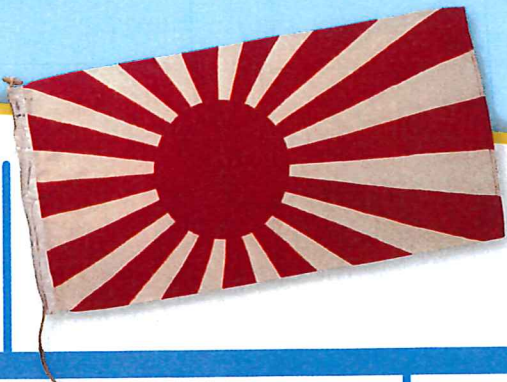
Present-Day Japan

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History

1941 Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, forcing the United States into World War II. (Japan's World War II naval battle flag) ▶



Today

Culture

◀ **1600s** Poetry called haiku develops. (Haiku poet Matsuo Basho)

Economics

1980 Japan becomes the largest producer of automobiles worldwide.



**SECTION
1**

Reading for Understanding

▶ Key Ideas

BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

The Korean Peninsula is a ruggedly mountainous landmass in East Asia, bordered by China, Russia, and Japan.

NOW YOU WILL LEARN

The mountainous islands that make up Japan provide the country's people with scant living space, a varied climate, and limited resources.

▶ Vocabulary

TERMS & NAMES

Honshu Japan's largest and most populous island

Mount Fuji Japan's highest mountain peak

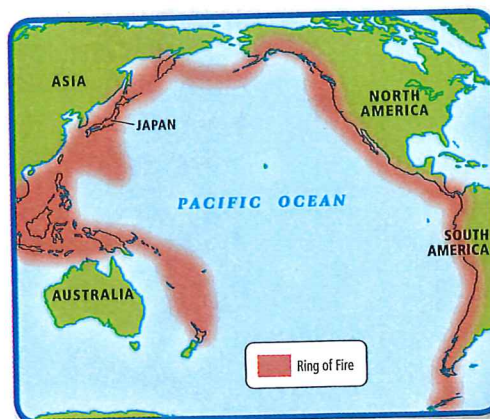
Kanto Plain the largest lowland of Japan, which extends from the Japanese Alps east to the Pacific

Hokkaido (hah•KY•doh) Japan's northernmost and second largest island

Kyushu (kee•OO•shoo) Japan's southernmost island and home to several large cities

Shikoku (shee•KAW•koo) Japan's smallest and least populated major island

Ring of Fire a geographic zone that extends along the rim of the Pacific Ocean and has numerous volcanoes and earthquakes



Visual Vocabulary Ring of Fire

▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the chart shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the chart to analyze the causes and effects of Japan's physical geography.



Skillbuilder Handbook, page R8

ANALYZE CAUSES AND EFFECTS

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY	CAUSES AND/OR EFFECTS
Crowded Islands	
Located on Ring of Fire	
Varied Climate	
Limited Resources	
Abundant Wildlife	



GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

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Land of the Rising Sun

Connecting to Your World

Think about the most beautiful scenery you've ever seen. You might recall majestic mountains, spectacular sunsets or sunrises, thundering waterfalls, or rapidly flowing rivers cutting through canyons. Japan possesses all of this natural beauty. Perhaps as a result, many of the Japanese people have a strong emotional bond with nature. In fact, the Japanese name for their country, *Nippon*, refers to nature. *Nippon* means "source of the sun" and is often translated as "Land of the Rising Sun."

Mountainous Islands

KEY QUESTION What are the main geographic features of Japan's four major islands?

Japan is made up of about 4,000 islands. It lies to the east of the Korean Peninsula, China, and Russia. The island nation is surrounded by the East Sea, or Sea of Japan, to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the south and east. The islands of Japan are actually the tops of a huge, mostly underwater, mountain range.



Cherry Blossoms

Cherry trees from Japan blossom in Washington, D.C.

Mount Fuji A high-speed train runs past Mount Fuji.



Major Islands Although Japan has thousands of islands, most of its people live on the four largest ones: Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku. Locate the islands on the map on the opposite page.

- **Honshu** **A** is Japan's largest island and is home to about 80 percent of its people. Honshu is a land of extreme elevations. The towering Japanese Alps run down the center of the island. Honshu also contains **Mount Fuji** **B**, Japan's highest peak. The largest lowland of Japan, the **Kanto Plain** **C**, extends from the Japanese Alps east to the Pacific.
- **Hokkaido** (hah•KY•doh) **D** lies to the north and is the second largest of Japan's four major islands. It has many mountains and thick forests. This island is sparsely populated, but its long winters make it ideal for winter sports.
- **Kyushu** (kee•OO•shoo) **E** is the southernmost of the major islands. A steep chain of mountains runs down the center of this island. The heavily populated northwestern plains are home to several large cities.
- **Shikoku** (shee•KAW•koo) **F** is the smallest of Japan's main islands. Because almost all of Shikoku is covered with mountains, only about 3 percent of Japan's population lives there.

CONNECT

Geography & History

Japan and the Ring of Fire As you can see on the inset map on the opposite page, Japan is located along the **Ring of Fire**. This zone, which extends along the rim of the Pacific Ocean, has many active volcanoes and is subject to many earthquakes. Japan has about 80 active volcanoes and experiences about 1,500 earthquakes each year. Most of these earthquakes are minor—but not all. In 1923, the Great Kanto earthquake struck the Tokyo area, resulting in the deaths of about 140,000 people. The Kobe earthquake of 1995 killed about 6,000 people in that city. Some of the damage caused by the Kobe earthquake is shown here.

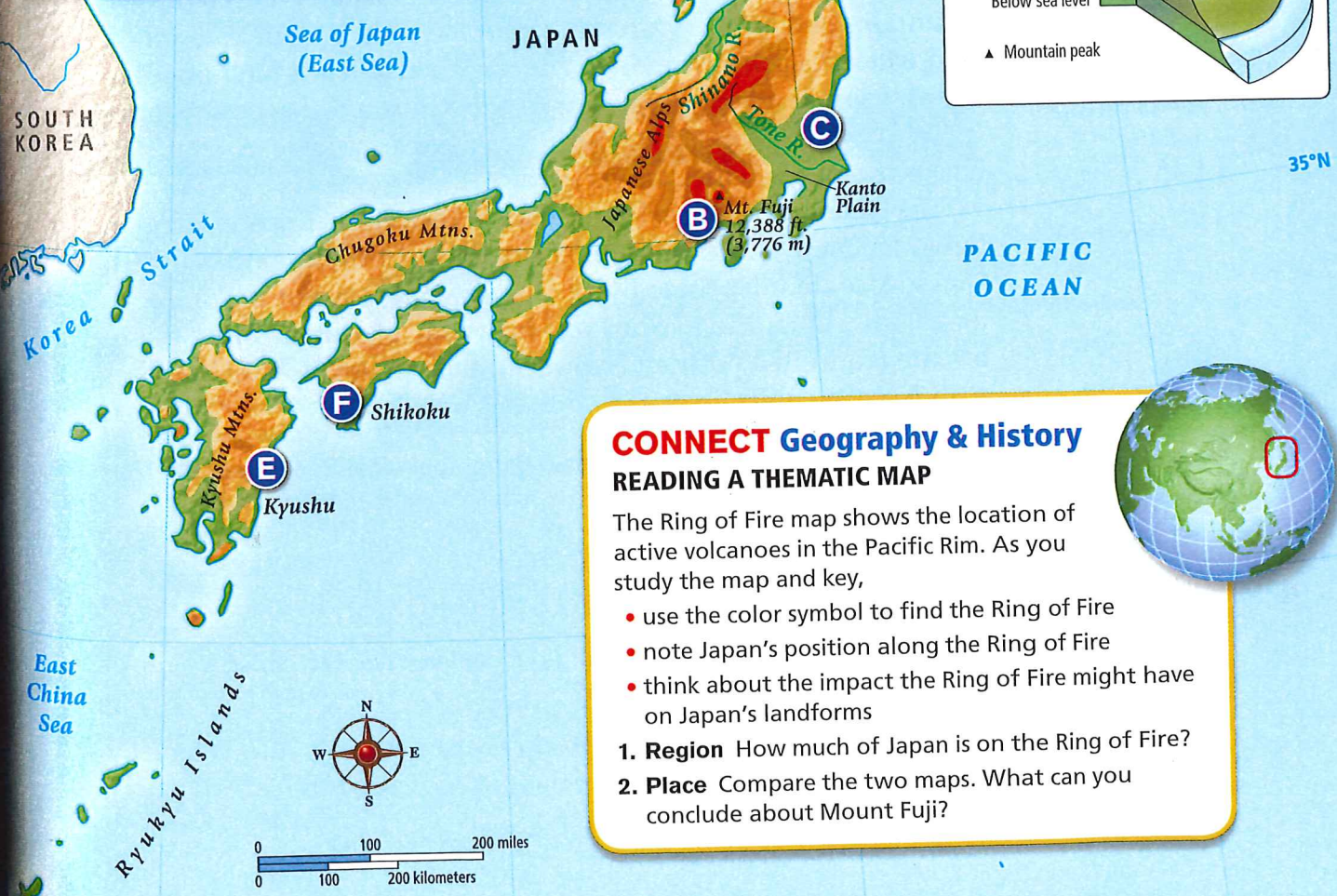
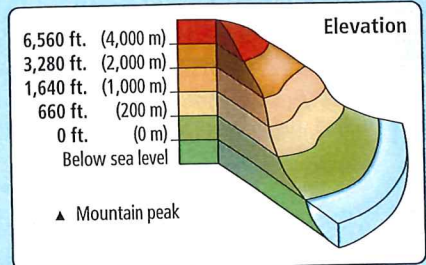
CRITICAL THINKING

Summarize What damage is apparent in this photograph of the Kobe earthquake?



Physical Geography of Japan

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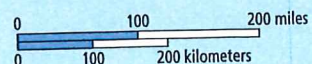
CONNECT Geography & History

READING A THEMATIC MAP

The Ring of Fire map shows the location of active volcanoes in the Pacific Rim. As you study the map and key,

- use the color symbol to find the Ring of Fire
- note Japan's position along the Ring of Fire
- think about the impact the Ring of Fire might have on Japan's landforms

- 1. Region** How much of Japan is on the Ring of Fire?
- 2. Place** Compare the two maps. What can you conclude about Mount Fuji?





Fun Facts!

CAPSULE HOTELS

To save space, some Japanese cities offer capsule hotels. The tiny plastic rooms in these hotels are about six feet long and three feet wide. They are stacked like sleeping compartments on a train and contain a bed, a TV, and a reading light. At the capsule's opening is a screen, which can be pulled down for privacy.

A Shortage of Space About 70 percent of Japan is covered with mountains and hills. As a result, Japan has only a small amount of land where its people can live. The nation also has a high population density. To give you an idea, Japan is just a little smaller than California, but it has about four times as many people. As you can imagine, Japanese cities are very crowded.

The Japanese have learned to adapt to their limited space. For one thing, Japanese homes tend to be smaller than those in the United States. Also, many people live in apartments. It is not uncommon for a family of four to live in a one-bedroom apartment. Since these dwellings are often noisy and crowded, students usually study at their schools or in public libraries.

SUMMARIZE Describe the main geographic features of Japan's four major islands.

Climate and Resources

KEY QUESTION What impact do mountains have on Japan's climate, resources, and wildlife?

Since Japan consists of many islands, the sea strongly affects its climate. The mountainous terrain of these islands also influences Japan's climate and its resources.

A Varied Climate The climates on the major islands are influenced by their latitudes and by the currents of the Pacific Ocean. The northern islands of Japan have generally cool weather, while the southern ones have a more tropical climate. The central islands have a moderate climate, with warm summers and mild winters. The mountains throughout the islands have colder temperatures because of their higher elevations. Most of Japan gets at least 40 inches of rain each year.

Resources and Wildlife Japan has deposits of coal, lead, and silver, but many of these are of poor quality. Forests are abundant, but they are located in remote mountain areas and are difficult to harvest. Not surprisingly, given its vast coastal waters, Japan looks to the sea for food. In fact, Japan has one of the largest fishing industries in the world.

Despite its dense human population, Japan has a great deal of wildlife, especially in regions that are thickly forested. Bears, wild boars, raccoon dogs, and deer can be found in these areas. Japan's wilderness also contains a large, shaggy-haired monkey called the Japanese macaque (muh•KAK).



Japanese Macaques
Also called snow monkeys, Japanese macaques live farther north than any other monkeys in the world.

ANALYZE EFFECTS Discuss the impact of mountains on Japan's climate, resources, and wildlife.

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Section 1 Assessment

TERMS & NAMES

1. Explain the importance of

- Honshu
- Kanto Plain
- Mount Fuji
- Ring of Fire

USE YOUR READING NOTES

2. Analyze Causes and Effects Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

Why does Japan have such limited living space?

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY	CAUSES AND/OR EFFECTS
Crowded Islands	
Located on Ring of Fire	
Varied Climate	
Limited Resources	
Abundant Wildlife	

KEY IDEAS

3. On which two islands do most of the Japanese people live?
4. Why does Japan have so many earthquakes?
5. How does latitude affect Japan's climate?

CRITICAL THINKING

6. **Evaluate** What characteristics do the Japanese reveal in their ability to live on their crowded island nation?
7. **Draw Conclusions** What do you think is Japan's most important natural resource? Explain.
8. **CONNECT to Today** Subway employees push passengers into Tokyo subways and trains during rush hour. What does this tell you about the city?
9. **WRITING Pen a Journal Entry** Imagine that you are on a hike in the Japanese Alps. Write a journal entry about your experiences in these mountains. Record the sights you might see, the type of weather you might deal with, and the vegetation and wildlife you might encounter.