

SECTION  
**2**

# Reading for Understanding

## ▶ Key Ideas

### BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

Southeast Asia is made up of mainland countries and island chains.

### NOW YOU WILL LEARN

The nations of mainland Southeast Asia have closely connected histories and diverse cultures.

## ▶ Vocabulary

### TERMS & NAMES

**Indochina** the name for a former French colony in Southeast Asia made up of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

**Khmer** (kmair) **Empire** an empire that began in the 500s and had gained control of much of mainland Southeast Asia by the 800s

**colonialism** the control by one power over a dependent area or people

**Tet** the Vietnamese New Year and most important holiday in Vietnam

**Siam** the former name of Thailand

**constitutional monarchy** a government in which the powers of the king or queen are limited by a constitution

**Aung San Suu Kyi** (awng sahn soo chee) leader of the democracy movement in Myanmar

**microstate** an independent country that is very small in area and population



Visual Vocabulary celebration of Tet

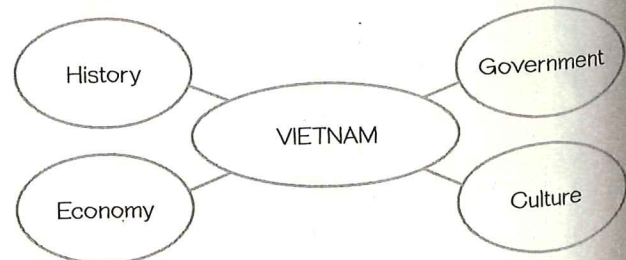
## ▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the web diagram shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use a different copy of the diagram to summarize the history, government, economy, and culture of each mainland country.



See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R5

### SUMMARIZE



GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Go to Interactive Review @ [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com)

A yellow circular graphic with the word "SECTION" in a curved banner at the top and the number "2" in the center.

FOCUS ON

# The Mainland Countries

## Connecting to Your World

What have you already learned about the Vietnam War? Maybe you know that the war was fought between Communist and anti-Communist forces in North and South Vietnam. You might also know that the United States got involved in the conflict and that this involvement deeply divided the country. Vietnam is one of the mainland countries of Southeast Asia. In this section, you'll learn about the history and politics of mainland Southeast Asia and some of the causes that led to the Vietnam War.

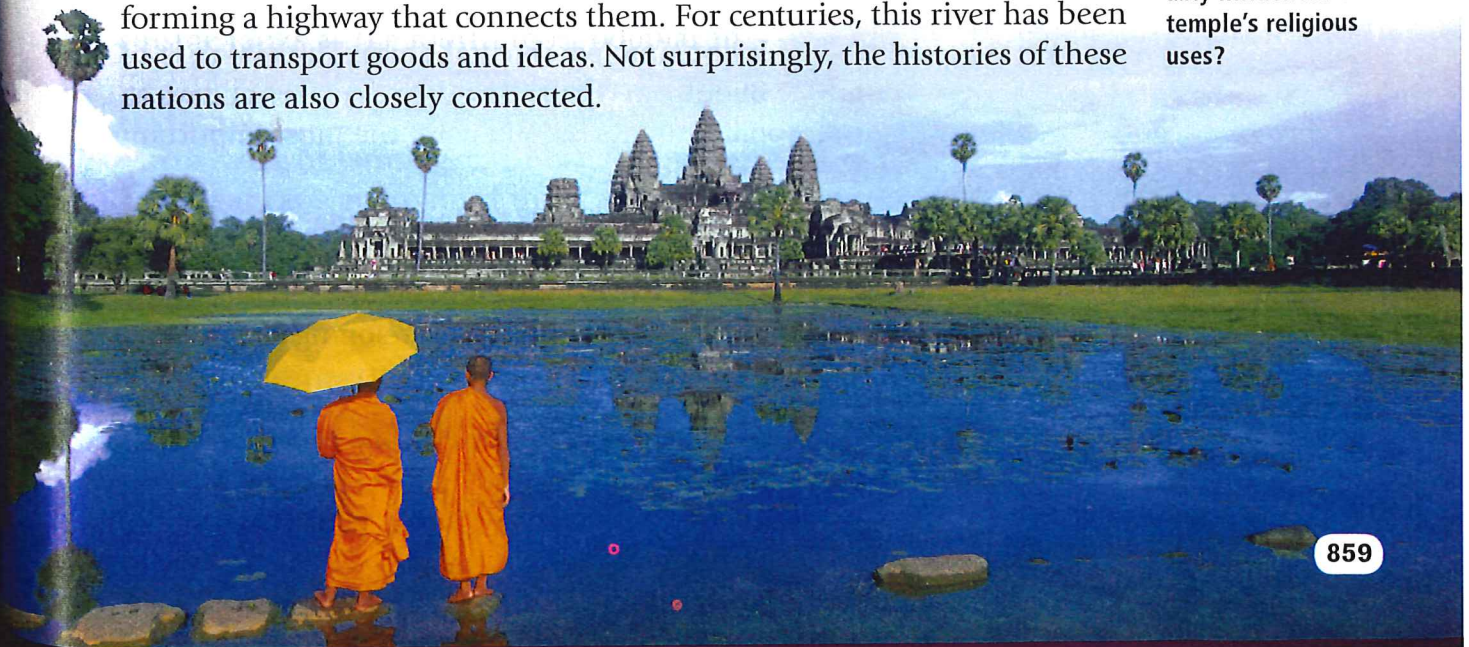


## Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

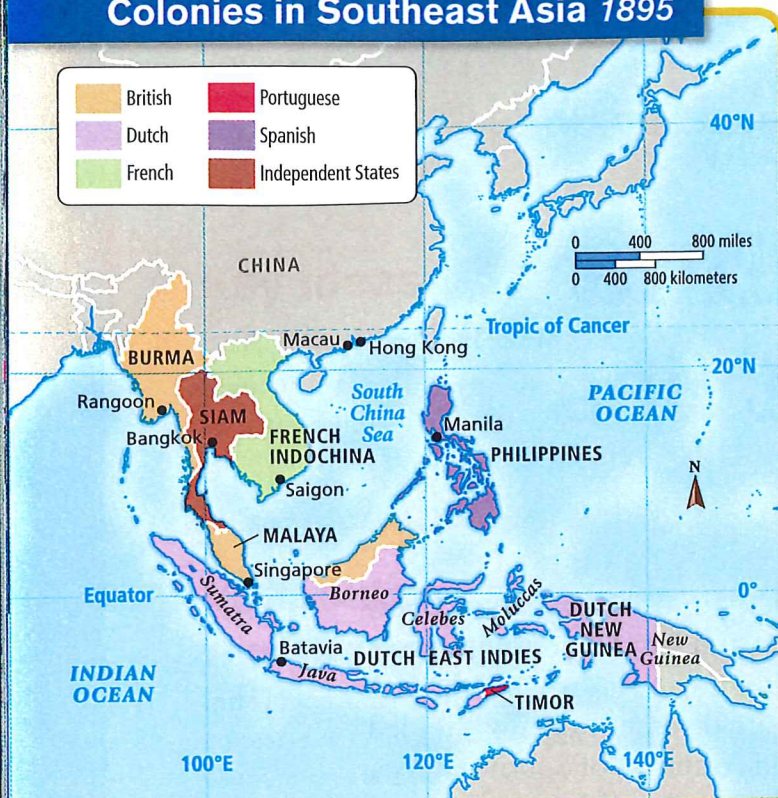
**KEY QUESTION** How are the histories, cultures, and economies of Indochina connected?

**Indochina** is the name given to a former French colony made up of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Indochina got its name because of its location east of India and south of China. India and China have also had a strong influence on Indochinese culture. The Mekong River flows through Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, forming a highway that connects them. For centuries, this river has been used to transport goods and ideas. Not surprisingly, the histories of these nations are also closely connected.

**Angkor Wat** This temple in Cambodia was built in the 1100s as a Hindu temple but became a Buddhist temple about 100 years later. Which two countries probably influenced the temple's religious uses?



## Colonies in Southeast Asia 1895



### CONNECT Geography & History

- 1. Location** What colony was controlled by France?
- 2. Region** Which European country could access both the Indian and the Pacific oceans from its colony?

**History and Government** By the 800s, the **Khmer** (kmair) **Empire** had gained control of much of mainland Southeast Asia. The empire reached its peak around 1200. At different times, the Chinese also exerted political influence over parts of the mainland.

European colonists had been arriving in Southeast Asia since 1509. In the 1850s, France began to take control of Vietnam. The French also seized Laos and Cambodia. They took over the countries' political, economic, and social systems in order to obtain wealth, a policy called **colonialism**. By the 20th century, Europeans had colonized all of Southeast Asia except Siam (now Thailand).

In 1953, Laos and Cambodia gained their independence from France. The following year, a peace agreement ended fighting between Vietnam and France, dividing the country into a Communist north and a non-Communist south. But in 1957, a war between North Vietnam and South Vietnam broke out. In time, the fight-

ing involved the United States and also spilled over into Cambodia and Laos. Finally, in 1975, South Vietnam was taken over by North Vietnam. Both Vietnam and Laos established Communist governments. Cambodia was ruled by a brutal Communist dictator until it became a democracy in 1993.

**Culture and Economy** More than 80 percent of the people in the three nations of Indochina live in rural areas. The majority of Indochinese practice Buddhism. They celebrate religious holidays as well as other traditional holidays. In Vietnam, the most important holiday is **Tet**, the Vietnamese New Year.

Laos and Cambodia have developing economies made up of small industries, such as clothing and textiles. Most of the people work as rice and peanut farmers. Vietnam, on the other hand, has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It is developing its oil industry and exports more coffee than any other country except Brazil.

▲ **EVALUATE** Explain how the histories, cultures, and economies of Indochina are connected.



## Thailand

**KEY QUESTION** What events in Thailand's past have helped the country prosper?

Thailand is one of the most prosperous countries in Southeast Asia. For most of its history, it was known as **Siam**. Some scholars believe that the word *Siam* means "golden." The nation changed its name to Thailand in 1949.

**History and Government** The first people to live in the region of Thailand called themselves the Thai, which means "free." The Thai remained free, even after the Europeans began to arrive in Southeast Asia in the 1500s.

In the mid-1800s, Thai leader King Mongkut began to modernize his country. He and his son, King Chulalongkorn, started schools, built railroads, and abolished slavery in Siam. Through their leaders' guidance, the Siamese people escaped the harsh treatment that many other Southeast Asians experienced under foreign control.

Thailand has been a **constitutional monarchy** since 1932, a government in which the powers of the king or queen are limited by a constitution. Thailand came under the control of Japan in 1941. After World War II, a series of military dictators ruled the country. In the mid-1970s, Thailand began to develop a more democratic government. This process was halted in 2006, however, when the military overthrew the prime minister.

**Culture and Economy** Most of Thailand's people live in rural areas. In the early 1960s, though, large numbers of Thai began to move to cities in search of work. By 2006, the capital city of Bangkok had over 9 million people.

Thai food, including a noodle dish called pad thai, has become very popular in the United States and other countries. In fact, Thai cuisine ranks as the fourth most popular in the world.

Nearly 50 percent of the workers in Thailand earn a living by farming or fishing. Rice, corn, and sugar cane are some of the crops grown. Thailand's industries produce automobiles, electronic equipment, clothing, and plastics. Tourism is also a booming industry.

**DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Identify the events in Thailand's history that have helped the country prosper.

### CONNECT Geography & History

#### Neutral Zone

Siam lay between British-controlled Burma (now Myanmar) and French Indochina. Siamese kings skillfully promoted their country as a neutral zone between the two powers. However, King Chulalongkorn was influenced by European architecture. He had the palace shown here decorated with marble imported from Italy.





## Myanmar and Malaysia

**KEY QUESTION** How do Myanmar and Malaysia compare?

Thailand's neighbors, Myanmar and Malaysia, present contrasting pictures. Malaysia has a thriving market economy and freely elected officials. However, Myanmar has widespread poverty and suffers under a military dictatorship.

**History and Government** In 1044, the Myanmar region united into a kingdom. Its people adopted Buddhism, which arrived from India. Since the main ethnic group of the kingdom was Burman, the region came to be called Burma. During the 1800s, Great Britain colonized Burma. Although Burma won its independence in 1948, it soon came under the control of a military dictator. In 1989, a new military government changed the country's name to Myanmar. A pro-democracy movement led by **Aung San Suu Kyi** (awng sahn soo chee) has struggled against this government ever since.

For hundreds of years, much of Malaysia was known as Melaka. This country was founded around 1400 and was strongly influenced by Arab Muslim traders. In the 1500s, Melaka came under the control of European colonizers and other rulers. Finally, in 1963, the states of Malay, Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore united to form the Federation of Malaysia. Singapore left this group in 1965. Today, Malaysia is governed by a constitutional monarchy.

**Culture and Economy** Most of the people of Myanmar live in rural areas, while more than half the population of Malaysia lives in cities. About two-thirds of Myanmar's population are Burmese who practice Buddhism. Malaysia is ethnically much more diverse. About 60 percent of the people are Muslim.

Myanmar's economy is based on agriculture. Rice and teak are important crops. Malaysia, on the other hand, has an industrialized economy. The country produces a wide range of goods, including electronics and automobiles, which it trades on the international market.

**COMPARE AND CONTRAST** Compare and contrast Myanmar and Malaysia.



### HISTORY MAKERS

#### **Aung San Suu Kyi** born 1945

Suu Kyi and other peace activists traveled throughout Myanmar, calling for democratic reforms and free elections. In 1989, after thousands of peaceful demonstrators had been shot and killed, Suu Kyi herself came face to face with an army unit that had been ordered to shoot her. At the last minute, however, an army major stepped in and withdrew the order. In 1991, while under house arrest, Suu Kyi's efforts to establish democracy in her country earned her the Nobel Peace Prize.



#### **ONLINE BIOGRAPHY**

For more on the life of Aung San Suu Kyi, go to the Research & Writing Center @ [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com)



# Singapore

**KEY QUESTION** What type of economy and government does Singapore have?

Singapore is a densely populated island nation located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. It is sometimes called a **microstate** because of its very small area—about 225 square miles. Singapore is a wealthy and powerful country. Its industrialized economy depends heavily on its exported goods, including electronics, chemicals, and clothing. In addition, the nation is a major financial center and has many banks and a stock exchange.

Officially, Singapore is a republic, but the government is dominated by one political party. This party limits freedom of speech and controls economic activities. Because Singapore favors order over liberty, the government enforces strict rules on its people. As a result, the country has a clean, corruption-free image throughout the world.



**Singapore** The Central Area district is the hub of economic activity in Singapore.

**SUMMARIZE** Describe Singapore's economy and government.

**ONLINE QUIZ**  
For test practice, go to  
Interactive Review  
@ [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com)

## Section 2 Assessment

### TERMS & NAMES

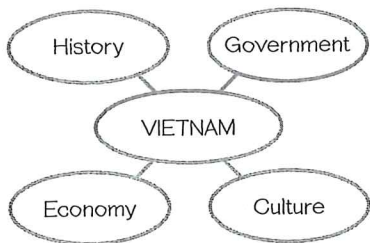
**1. Explain the importance of**

- Indochina
- Khmer Empire
- Siam
- Aung San Suu Kyi

### USE YOUR READING NOTES

**2. Summarize** Use your completed web diagrams to answer the following question:

Which mainland countries appear to have the strongest economies?



### KEY IDEAS

3. How did the war between North Vietnam and South Vietnam affect Indochina?
4. How did Siam avoid colonization?
5. What is the Federation of Malaysia?

### CRITICAL THINKING

6. **Identify Problems** In your opinion, what are the most difficult problems facing the mainland countries of Southeast Asia?
7. **Make Inferences** What influences might account for the fact that about 60 percent of the population of Malaysia is Muslim?
8. **CONNECT to Today** How might colonialism have affected the ability of some Southeast Asian countries to establish stable governments and economies?
9. **WRITING Write a Feature Article** Imagine that you have been assigned to write a feature on the Vietnamese holiday of Tet. Research to find images and information on the holiday's history and traditions.