

SECTION
3

Reading for Understanding

▶ Key Ideas

BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

Spain and Portugal both created empires to supplement the natural resources of the Iberian Peninsula. Spain's economy is stronger than Portugal's economy.

NOW YOU WILL LEARN

Over the centuries, France's natural resources have helped it prosper. Through economic union, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands have also prospered.

▶ Vocabulary

TERMS & NAMES

Benelux (BEHN•uh•LUHKS) name for the economic union formed by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg to ensure the fast and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within these nations

polders (POHL•durz) land reclaimed by draining it of water with the use of a dam and pump

duchy the territory ruled by a duke or duchess

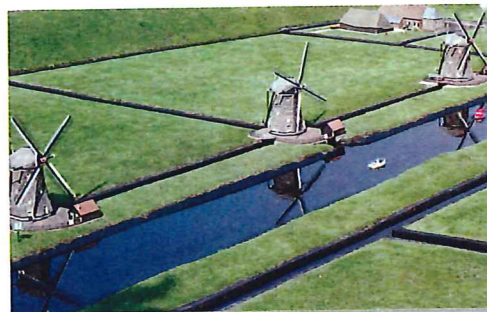
multilingual able to speak many languages

BACKGROUND VOCABULARY

autonomy self-governance or independence

REVIEW

Northern European Plain vast area of flat or gently rolling land from France to Russia



Visual Vocabulary polders in the Netherlands

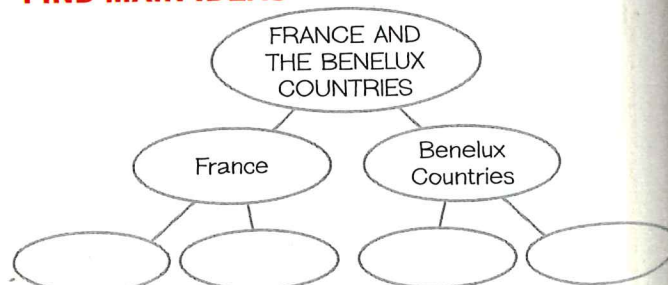
▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the web diagram shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the diagram to help you find the main ideas about France and the Benelux countries.



Skillbuilder Handbook, page R4

FIND MAIN IDEAS



GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Go to Interactive Review @ClassZone.com

SECTION
3

FOCUS ON

France and the Benelux Countries

Connecting to Your World

Can you imagine spending three weeks riding your bike from Chicago to Los Angeles? Every July, about 200 riders in the Tour de France bicycle race cover that distance and more in one of the world's most watched sporting events. The course of the race runs through much of France and some of the surrounding countries. Riders cover terrain from the mountainous roads of the Alps to the cobbled streets of Paris. The race is a great source of national pride for the French people.



Tour de France

Cyclists race down a curvy mountain road in western France.

France

KEY QUESTION How has its colonial empire changed the population of France?

France is the largest country in Western Europe. Its landscape ranges from the peaks of the Alps and the beaches on the Mediterranean Sea to cities such as Paris and fishing villages along the Atlantic Ocean. For much of its history, kings ruled this territory. Then, in 1789, the French were inspired to fight for their independence. Since then, France has gone back and forth many times between monarchy and democracy.

Arc de Triomphe

This monument in Paris celebrates military victories.



History In 1792, French revolutionaries decided to make France a democracy. Soon after, Napoleon Bonaparte seized power and ruled as emperor until his defeat in 1815. France then returned briefly to a monarchy. In 1848, a second, less violent revolt occurred that led to another democracy. Voters chose Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, a nephew of Napoleon, as president of the new government, but like his famous uncle, he declared himself emperor. After his armies suffered major defeats, he was forced to step down, and France once again became a republic. Political instability and frequent changes in government continued. Then, in 1958, French voters agreed to a new constitution that gave their president greater power.

Despite its many changes in government, France became a powerful nation. Like other major powers, it developed a colonial empire in Africa and Asia that boosted its economy. In the 1900s, however, many battles of World War I and World War II were fought on French soil. These conflicts devastated France. Millions died, and the destruction of factories, farms, and cities shattered the French economy. In the 1960s and 1970s, the French colonies overseas gained their independence, another blow to the French economy. It has since recovered, as a result of hard work and access to natural resources.

CONNECT to History

Bastille Day is celebrated each year on July 14. It marks the beginning of the French Revolution. On July 14, 1789, an angry mob took control of the Bastille, a French prison. On August 4, 1789, frightened French nobles allowed the common people a greater role in government. In June 1791, fearing for his life, King Louis XVI tried to escape from France. He was imprisoned in August 1792. In January 1793, revolutionaries beheaded the king. Three constitutions were adopted during the revolution, one in 1791, one in 1793, and the last in 1795. In October 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte seized power, ending the revolution.



Bastille Day parade in Paris

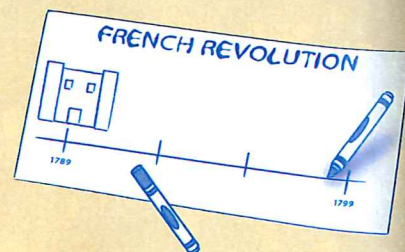
Activity

Make an Illustrated Time Line

Materials

- markers
- butcher paper

1. To create a French Revolution time line, pick beginning and end dates.
2. Draw a line and divide it into segments. Leave room to illustrate each event.
3. Choose three or four events to show on the time line.
4. Use markers to create drawings and write short captions describing each event.



THE EIFFEL TOWER

Culture Most French citizens have a very strong cultural identity, and take pride in French culture, history, and language. In recent decades, France has become more diverse. People have emigrated from its former colonies in North Africa and Asia. Many Muslims now live in this primarily Roman Catholic nation.

France, like much of Western Europe, is highly urbanized and densely settled. Three out of four people live in cities. Because space is scarce, apartments are more common than houses. People often walk or ride public transportation. In fact, many cities limit car use and parking on city streets.

French culture has had a global influence. French painters such as Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir influenced the popular Impressionist style of painting in the late 1800s. French chefs are well-known for creating culinary masterpieces. Chefs in restaurants around the world try to master French techniques. Each year on July 14, the French celebrate their nation and its culture on Bastille Day. Fireworks displays and parades commemorate French independence.

Government and Economics Today, France is a parliamentary democracy with power concentrated at the national level. Its government spreads power across executive, legislative, and judicial branches, like the United States. In France, however, the executive branch includes a president and a prime minister. France's president serves a five-year term and oversees foreign affairs. He or she appoints a prime minister to take care of the daily operation of the government.

After the devastation of World War II, France worked hard to modernize its economy. Now, its economy is one of the world's strongest. Although a small percentage of French workers are farmers, France is Europe's largest exporter of farm produce. This is because of the fertile soil of the **Northern European Plain** that covers much of France, as well as modern farming methods. France, an EU member, is a major producer of cars, high-speed trains, and airplanes.

Tourism is a key industry. France has been the world's top tourist destination for several years running. Many people travel to France to visit its museums, castles, and cathedrals. Visitors also wait in long lines to go to the top of the most famous landmark in Paris, the Eiffel Tower.

ANALYZE EFFECTS Explain how France's colonial empire has changed its population.

Height: 1,063 feet

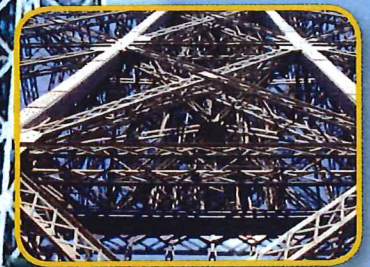
Weight: 10,100 tons

Date Completed:
March 31, 1889

Elevators: Seven elevators travel over 64,000 miles each year, equal to more than two and a half times around the Earth.

Materials: The tower is made of iron, and is painted about every 5 years with 50 to 60 tons of paint to keep it from rusting.

Composition: It consists of 18,038 pieces, joined together by 2.5 million rivets.





The Benelux Countries

KEY QUESTION How has belonging to an economic union helped the Benelux countries?

The Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg belong to an economic union known as the **Benelux** (BEHN•uh•LUHKS) countries. The name was created by combining the first few letters of each country's name. The Benelux nations are alike in many ways. All are constitutional monarchies. All are highly urbanized with well-developed economies. All belong to the EU and depend on trade with larger neighbors.

The Netherlands Following centuries of foreign rule, the Dutch declared their independence from Spain in 1581. Spain finally recognized the Netherlands as an independent nation in 1648. The 1600s were an era of prosperity and achievement for the Dutch. They became a great sea power with colonies in Southeast Asia and the Americas. Dutch is the official language of the Netherlands. Many people also speak English, German, or French. Most Dutch are Christians, though many Muslim immigrants have come from former Dutch colonies in Indonesia and Suriname.

The Netherlands is very densely populated. Because nearly half of its land is below sea level, living space is scarce. The Dutch have used dikes, dams, canals, and pumping systems to reclaim land that is below sea level. The drained lands, called **polders** (POHL•durz), have rich soil and are often used for farming. The Dutch also build factories and towns on them. Forty percent of the land in the Netherlands is from polders.

The Netherlands is also highly urbanized. Because of the shortage of land, Dutch rural areas are close to cities. Bicycles are very common, both for recreation and as a means of transportation in crowded cities.

Belgium and Luxembourg For many years, Belgium was part of the Netherlands. It gained its independence in 1830. Belgium's central location has been both an advantage and a disadvantage. It has enabled Belgium to prosper through trade with its neighbors. But it also made Belgium a battleground during the two world wars, which caused great destruction and loss of life.

CONNECT Geography & Economics

Tulip Mania

In the early 1600s in the Netherlands, people went crazy over tulips imported from Turkey. Dutch families bought rare varieties of bulbs, not for their gardens but as an investment. Tulip prices soared. One man traded his mansion for just three bulbs. When prices dropped, many people lost everything. The craze ended, but tulips were in the Netherlands to stay. Today, the country is one of the world's biggest exporters of tulip bulbs.





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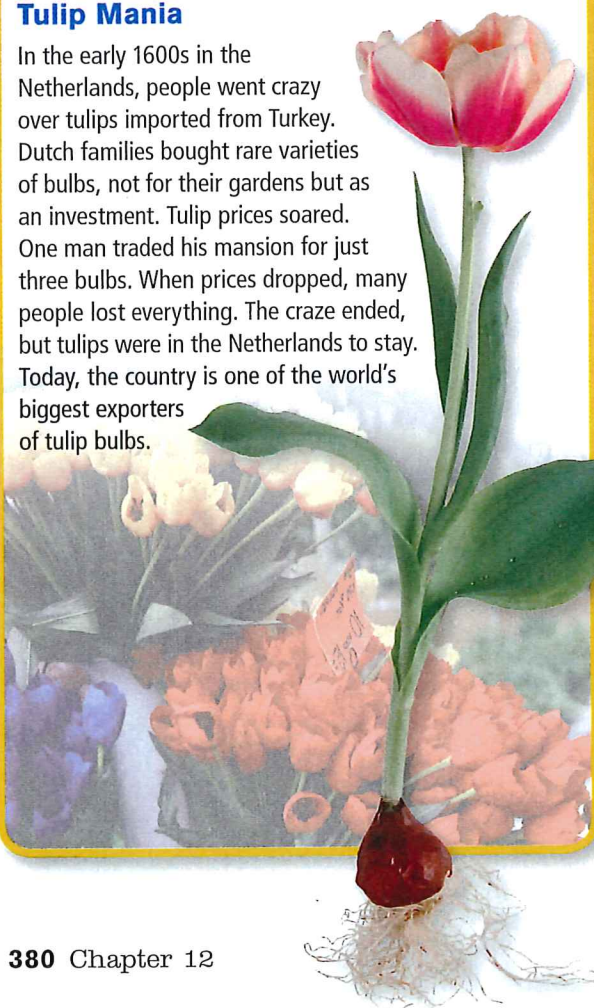
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At one time, cultural differences between Dutch-speaking Flemings in the north and French-speaking Walloons in the south caused serious tensions. In recent years, the government has eased tensions by giving both ethnic groups greater **autonomy**. Now, the Belgian constitution recognizes separate cultural communities based on language, as well as separate economic regions for the two groups.

Luxembourg is one of the smallest countries in Europe. In 1890, it broke away from the Netherlands to become a **duchy**, a state ruled by a duke or duchess. The country has three official languages: French, used in government; German, used in newspapers; and Luxembourgish, used for everyday matters. Many of its people are **multilingual**, or able to speak several languages. This has made Luxembourg attractive to foreign companies looking for new locations. At one time, steel was Luxembourg's most important product. Today, its economy is more diversified, with banking and other financial services making up a key segment of its economy.



Antwerp, Belgium

The cafés in this square in the heart of Antwerp's historic district are typical of Europe's outdoor cafés.

MAKE INFERENCES Explain how belonging to an economic union has helped the Benelux countries.

Section 3 Assessment



ONLINE QUIZ

For test practice, go to
Interactive Review
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TERMS & NAMES

1. Explain the importance of

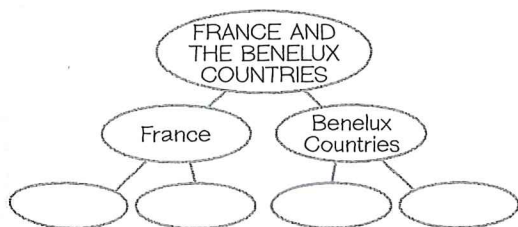
- Benelux
- polders
- duchy
- multilingual

USE YOUR READING NOTES

2. Find Main Ideas

Use your completed web diagram to answer the following question:

How are France and the Benelux countries similar?



KEY IDEAS

3. What are France's leading industrial products and services?
4. How have the people of the Netherlands used technology to reshape their environment?
5. What cultural differences have caused problems within Belgium?

CRITICAL THINKING

6. **Make Inferences** How has France's location been beneficial for its economy?
7. **Analyze Effects** How do the Benelux countries benefit from their nearness to Germany and France?
8. **CONNECT to Today** Why might France object to trade barriers on farm produce?
9. **WRITING** **Create an Advertisement** You have been asked by a French travel agency to make a list of the top five reasons to visit France. Create an advertisement explaining why France is an interesting and fun place to visit.

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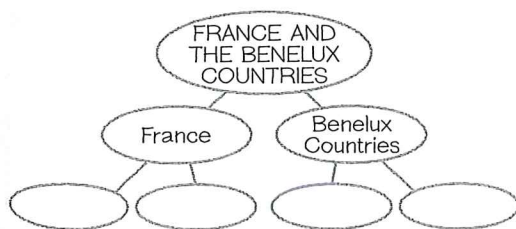
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