



CHAPTER

22

# Southwest Asia

1

FOCUS ON

Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran

2

FOCUS ON

Israel and the Palestinian Territories

3

FOCUS ON

Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How might changes in political culture affect the stability of the region?

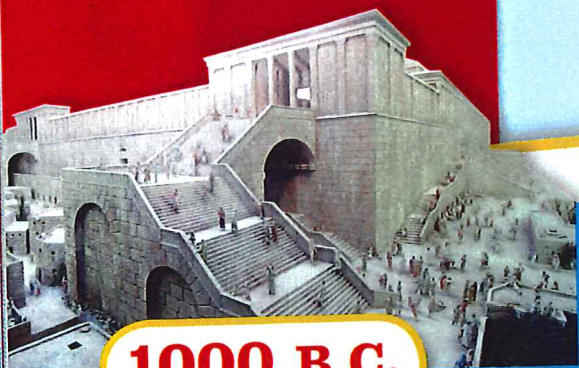
CONNECT

Geography & History



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

1. Which country in the region has the world's largest oil reserves?
2. What body of water is surrounded by oil-producing nations?



1000 B.C.

### History

◀ c. 960s B.C. Solomon, king of Israel, builds a temple.

### Culture

about 4 B.C. Jesus of Nazareth is born.

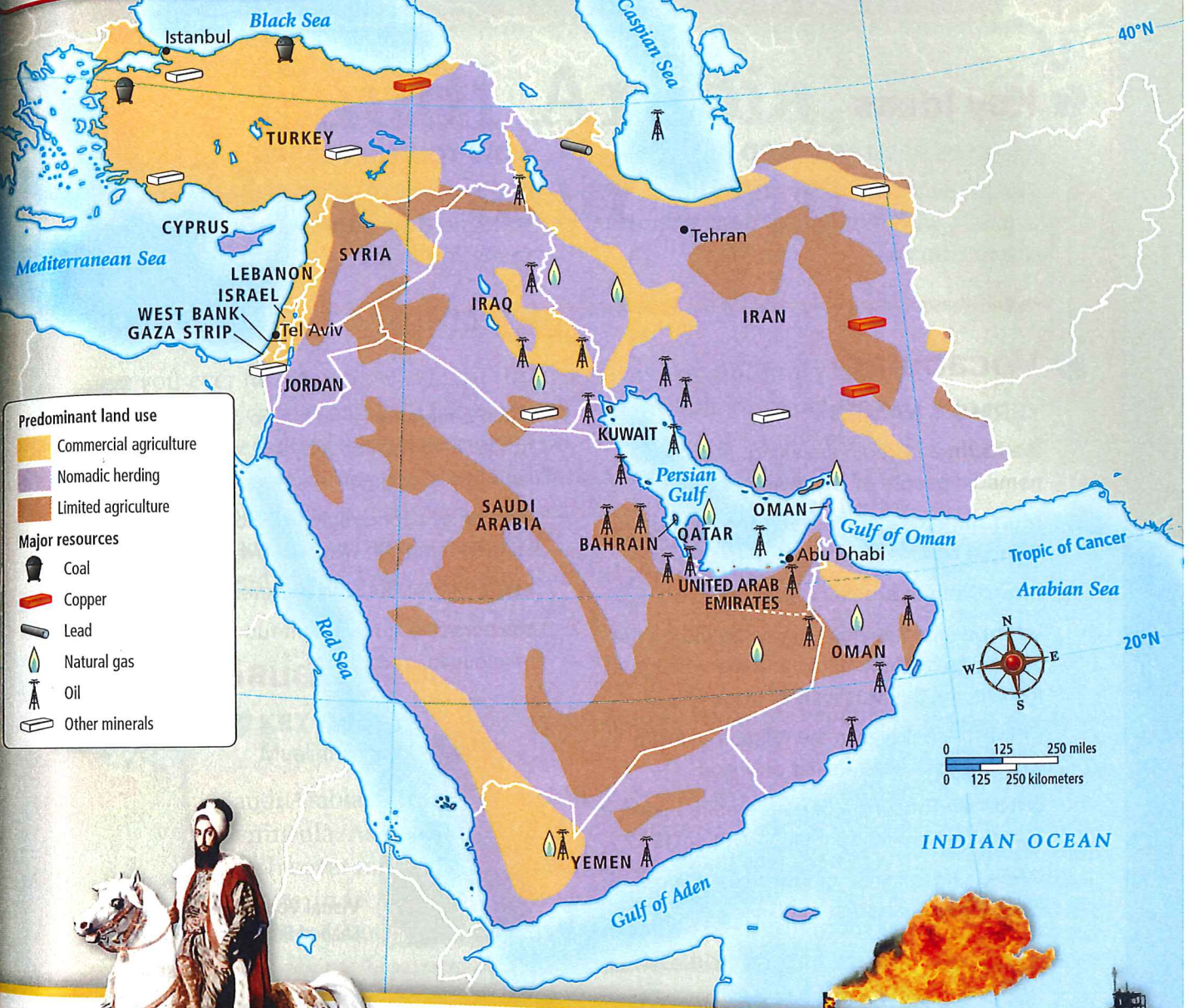
### Geography

c. 330 B.C. Alexander the Great (at right) conquers Palestine. ▶



# Economic Activity of Southwest Asia

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**Predominant land use**

- Commercial agriculture
- Nomadic herding
- Limited agriculture

**Major resources**

- Coal
- Copper
- Lead
- Natural gas
- Oil
- Other minerals



## History

◀ **1520** Suleyman I becomes sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

## Culture

about **A.D. 570** The prophet Muhammad is born.



## Today

## Economics

▲ **2006** Saudi Arabia has the world's largest oil reserves.

SECTION  
**1**

# Reading for Understanding

## ▶ Key Ideas

### BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

The physical geography of Southwest Asia is harsh, with mountains, deserts, and a severe climate.

### NOW YOU WILL LEARN

The physical geography of the region has influenced the history and culture of many countries.

## ▶ Vocabulary

### TERMS & NAMES

**Bedouin** an Arabic-speaking, traditionally nomadic people of Southwest Asia

**Muhammad** (also spelled Mohammed) the founder and major prophet of Islam

**monotheism** a belief in one god

**Islam** a monotheistic religion based on the teachings of Muhammad and the writings of the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book

**Muslim** a believer in the religion of Islam who accepts Allah as the only god

**Ottoman Empire** a Muslim empire based in Turkey that lasted from the 1300s to 1922

**OPEC** Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, founded in 1960

**Kurd** a member of an ethnic group that does not have its own country but whose homeland lies in parts of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran

**Persia** a historic region of Southwest Asia located mostly in what is now Iran

**shah** title for the king of Persia or Iran

**theocracy** a government run by religious leaders



**Visual Vocabulary**  
Shah of Persia (Iran)

## ▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the chart shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the chart to note the main ideas about the region's history, government, culture, and economics.



Skillbuilder Handbook, page R4

### FIND MAIN IDEAS

	SAUDI ARABIA	IRAQ	IRAN
History			
Government			
Culture			
Economics			



**GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**

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SECTION  
1

FOCUS ON



# Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran

## Connecting to Your World

Have you ever heard people say that they can't wake up until they've had their morning cup of coffee? Drinking coffee is just one of many things that our culture gained from Southwest Asia. The people of Southwest Asia (along with people in Egypt) invented algebra, recorded many observations about the stars, and discovered medicines that we still use today. Southwest Asia was also the birthplace of three major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. You will learn about Islam in this section.



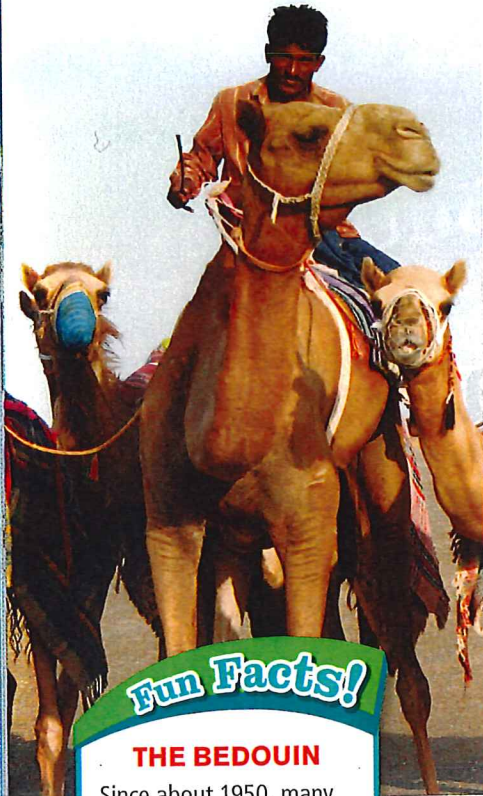
## Saudi Arabia

**KEY QUESTION** How did the Arabian Peninsula become a Muslim region?

Saudi Arabia occupies more than three-fourths of the Arabian Peninsula. As you learned earlier, deserts such as the Rub al-Khali cover most of the peninsula. Hardly anyone lives in the deserts; in fact, the name *Rub al-Khali* means “empty quarter.”

Lack of water is one of Saudi Arabia's biggest problems. No permanent rivers exist, and the country is using up its supplies of underground water.

**Saudi Arabia** Sand dunes are common in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, with an occasional water source such as the springs shown here. **How might scarcity of water affect settlement in the Arabian Peninsula?**



### Fun Facts!

#### THE BEDOUIN

Since about 1950, many Bedouin have given up their nomadic life. They have taken up farming or moved to cities in search of health care, education, and jobs such as police officers and oil workers.

To maintain their identity, some Bedouin return to the desert each year to live in tents and renew their sense of roots.

**History, Government, and Culture** Among the early inhabitants of Saudi Arabia were **Bedouin** nomads who moved around to find grazing for their herds. However, many trade routes crossed Saudi Arabia, and over time towns grew up along those routes. At first, most people in the towns believed in many gods. In the 600s, the prophet **Muhammad** began to preach a belief in one god, called **monotheism**. Muhammad's teachings and the writings of the Qur'an (the Muslim holy book) became the religion of **Islam**. Most people in Arabia became **Muslims**, or followers of Islam. Mecca, Muhammad's birthplace, became the holiest city of Islam. Various Muslim empires rose and fell over the next thousand years.

In the early 1900s, the **Ottoman Empire**, a Muslim empire founded in Turkey in the 1300s, ruled Arabia. A young Arab in the Saudi clan, Ibn Sa'ud, led a fight for independence, and after he succeeded in 1932, he became the king of Saudi Arabia. His family still rules the country. The king controls the government. The laws are based on Islamic religious law.

**Economics and Oil** Saudi Arabia has more petroleum deposits than any other country, and oil production creates about half the nation's wealth. Service industries, manufacturing, construction, and utilities account for much of the rest.

Beginning in the late 1800s, oil companies searched all over the world for oil resources. In 1938, these companies found large oil fields in the Arabian Peninsula. In 1948, portions of what would become one of the world's largest oil fields were discovered at al-Ghawar, just on the eastern edge of the Rub al-Khali. This field contains approximately one-quarter of Saudi Arabia's oil reserves.

**Arabian Peninsula Neighbors** A number of very small countries share the peninsula with Saudi Arabia. To the east are several states on the Persian Gulf—Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates. To the south, Oman and Yemen face the Indian Ocean. Each of these countries is a Muslim nation that relies on oil production.

The region grew in importance as the global demand for oil increased. Arabian Peninsula nations make almost all of their export money and a large share of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) from oil. Large increases in oil prices allow oil-producing nations to funnel money into the development of other parts of their economies.

In 1960, a group of oil-rich nations, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, established a cartel, or organization of independent groups, to coordinate policies on selling petroleum. The group is the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, also known as **OPEC**. The purpose of OPEC is to influence worldwide oil supply and prices.

## COMPARING Ethnic & Language Groups of Southwest Asia



### CRITICAL THINKING

**Compare and Contrast** Which ethnic group occupies the largest area in the region?

They do this by adjusting production quotas, or supply of oil. OPEC is a powerful force in international trade. Other members include Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Iraq, and countries outside the region such as Venezuela, Indonesia, Libya, and Algeria.

**SUMMARIZE** Explain how the Arabian Peninsula became Muslim.



### Iraq

**KEY QUESTION** How effective a ruler was Saddam Hussein?

The region in Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers is now part of the nation of Iraq, another Muslim country whose people speak Arabic. Islam spread to Mesopotamia during the 600s. After the rise and fall of a number of Muslim empires, the Ottoman Empire ruled the region at the start of the 1900s. But the Ottomans were on the losing side in World War I, so their empire ended. Great Britain took over Iraq temporarily.

**Government and Economics** Iraq became an independent monarchy in 1932. Iraq made much money by selling oil, but many Iraqis thought the government should have used the wealth to help the people more. In 1958, a group of army officers overthrew the king.

Saddam Hussein became president in 1979. He was an abusive ruler who imprisoned and killed opponents and started wars to take oil fields from other countries. By 2003, the United States and Britain feared that Hussein might use weapons of mass destruction against his neighbors. They led an invasion of Iraq and overthrew Hussein.

They found no weapons of mass destruction, but Hussein was put on trial and hanged for crimes against his people. The United States is helping Iraq form a democratic government. Iraq has great petroleum reserves. But the recent war in Iraq has damaged its refineries and pipelines. The war damage and lack of trade have crippled Iraq's economy.

**Culture** Arabs make up about 75 percent of the Iraqi population, and Kurds make up about 20 percent. The **Kurds** are an ethnic group that does not have a country but whose homeland lies in parts of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.

Most Iraqis are Muslim, but they practice two types of Islam—Sunni and Shi'a. Differences between the two, originally based on the issue of choosing leaders, have caused conflicts.

**SUMMARIZE** Describe Saddam Hussein.

## CONNECT Geography & History

### The Kurds

The Kurds lived as nomads for centuries, so they never founded a nation-state. Their home region includes lands that are legally part of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and other nations that don't want to give up land to form a new nation of Kurdistan. The Kurdish refugees below fled Saddam Hussein's Iraq for safety in a refugee camp in Turkey.



## Iran

**KEY QUESTION** What international conflicts has Iran been involved in since the 1979 revolution?

Iranians are a non-Arab people. Their ancestors were Aryans, who settled the Plateau of Iran in ancient times.

That region had been called **Persia** throughout much of history. Today the country is called Iran, which means "land of the Aryans."

**History, Government, and Economics** The Persian Empire controlled Southwest Asia and Egypt during the 500s B.C. and was a great rival of ancient Greece. From the 300s B.C. onward, a series of foreign powers ruled Persia off and on, but Iranians regained control in the A.D. 1700s. In 1925, an army officer took over the government and became **shah**, or king. He and later his son ruled for 54 years.

They promoted reforms. Conservative Muslims believed the reforms violated Islamic law, so revolutionaries overthrew the shah in 1979. A religious leader became the ruler of Iran and established a **theocracy**, a government run by clergy according to religious law. U.S. support for the shah led the revolutionaries to hold a group of U.S. citizens hostage for nearly 15 months.

Like many nations of Southwest Asia, Iran has petroleum reserves and an economy that depends on oil. Yet it has severe economic problems. The revolution of 1979 caused many trained workers to flee Iran, creating a shortage of skilled labor. In the 1980s, Iraq and Iran fought an eight-year war that was in part about oil. Bombing during the war damaged refineries. In 1995, the United States accused Iran of helping terrorists and cut off trade.



**Persian Rug Weavers**  
Iranian girls work on a Persian rug.

**Culture** People around the world prize Persian rugs, which are woven in highly decorative and colorful patterns, often featuring flowers. Mosques, Muslim places of worship, show Persian architecture at its best. Onion-shaped domes and slender towers called minarets give the buildings a graceful beauty.

**SUMMARIZE** Describe conflicts Iran has had since 1979.

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## Section 1 Assessment

### TERMS & NAMES

#### 1. Explain the importance of

- Muhammad
- Islam
- Kurd
- Persia

### USE YOUR READING NOTES

#### 2. Find Main Ideas

Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

What valuable resource do all three countries discussed in this section possess, and why is it so valuable?

	SAUDI ARABIA	IRAQ	IRAN
History			
Government			
Culture			
Economics			

### KEY IDEAS

3. Why does Saudi Arabia face a water problem?
4. Why did the United States and Britain lead an invasion of Iraq in 2003?
5. What type of government was set up in Iran in 1979?

### CRITICAL THINKING

6. **Analyze Causes** Why did towns grow in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula?
7. **Compare and Contrast** How is Iran different from Saudi Arabia and Iraq?
8. **CONNECT to Today** How might newspapers and schools help Iraq become a more democratic country? Explain.
9. **LANGUAGE ARTS** **Give a News Broadcast** Working with a partner, research in the library or on the Internet to learn more about the U.S.-Iran hostage crisis of 1979 to 1981. Use a word-processing program to create, format, and present a news broadcast on the topic.