UNIT 7
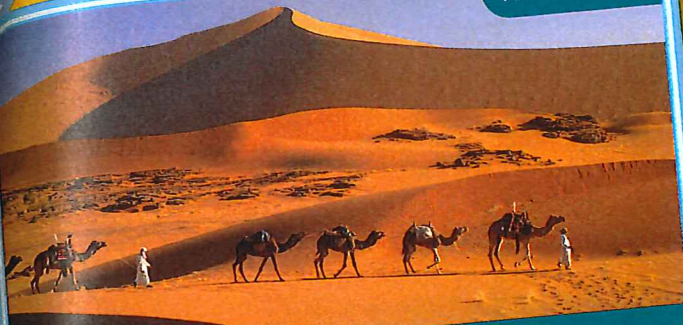
Southwest Asia and South Asia

Why It Matters:

Southwest Asia is the home of oil rich lands, vast deserts, and difficult political problems. South Asia is a region of ancient cultures, spectacular landforms, and rapidly growing populations.

Arabian Desert

CHAPTER 21
Southwest Asia and South Asia

Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem

CHAPTER 22
Southwest Asia

Taj Mahal in Agra

CHAPTER 23
India

Marketplace in Bangladesh

CHAPTER 24
South Asian Neighbors

Southwest Asia and South Asia

Southwest Asia and South Asia span a large area of an enormous continent. As you study the maps, notice geographic patterns and specific details about the region. Complete the GeoActivity with each map.

As you study the graphics and data on this page, compare the landmass, population, rivers, and deserts of Southwest and South Asia with those of the United States and, in a few cases, other regions. Then jot down answers to the following questions in your notebook.
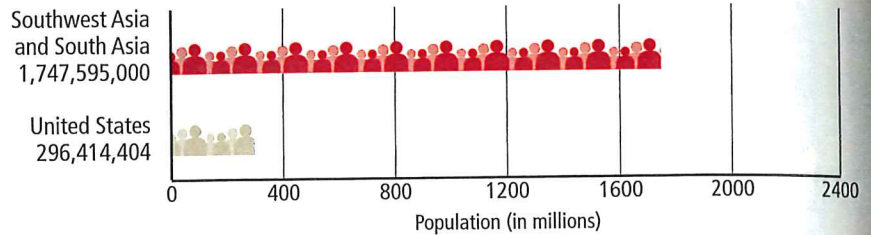
Comparing Data

1. Which has the larger landmass—the continental United States or Southwest and South Asia?

2. Approximately how many times larger is the combined population of Southwest and South Asia than that of the United States?

3. How much longer is the Nile than the longest rivers in South Asia?

4. How much larger than the Mojave Desert is the Rub al-Khali?
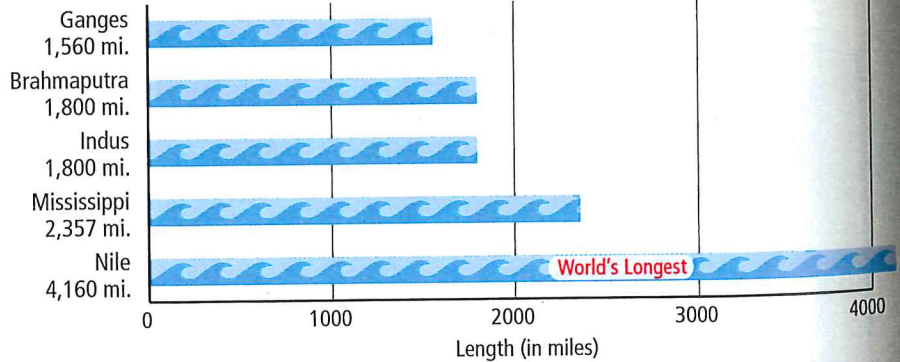
Comparing Data

Landmass

Southwest Asia and South Asia
4,298,900 sq. mi.

Continental United States
3,165,630 sq. mi.

Population

Southwest Asia and South Asia
1,747,595,000

United States
296,414,404

| 0 | 400 | 800 | 1200 | 1600 | 2000 | 2400 |

Population (in millions)

Rivers

Ganges 1,560 mi.
Brahmaputra 1,800 mi.
Indus 1,800 mi.
Mississippi 2,357 mi.
Nile 4,160 mi.   World's Longest

| 0 | 1000 | 2000 | 3000 | 4000 |

Length (in miles)

Deserts

World's Largest
Sahara
Africa
3,500,000
sq. mi.

U.S. Largest
Mojave
United States
25,000
sq. mi.

Rub al-Khali
Arabian Peninsula
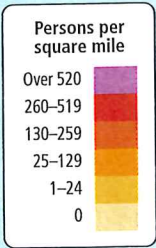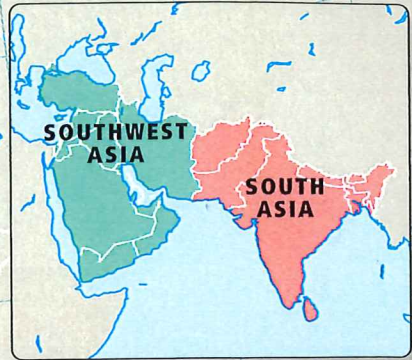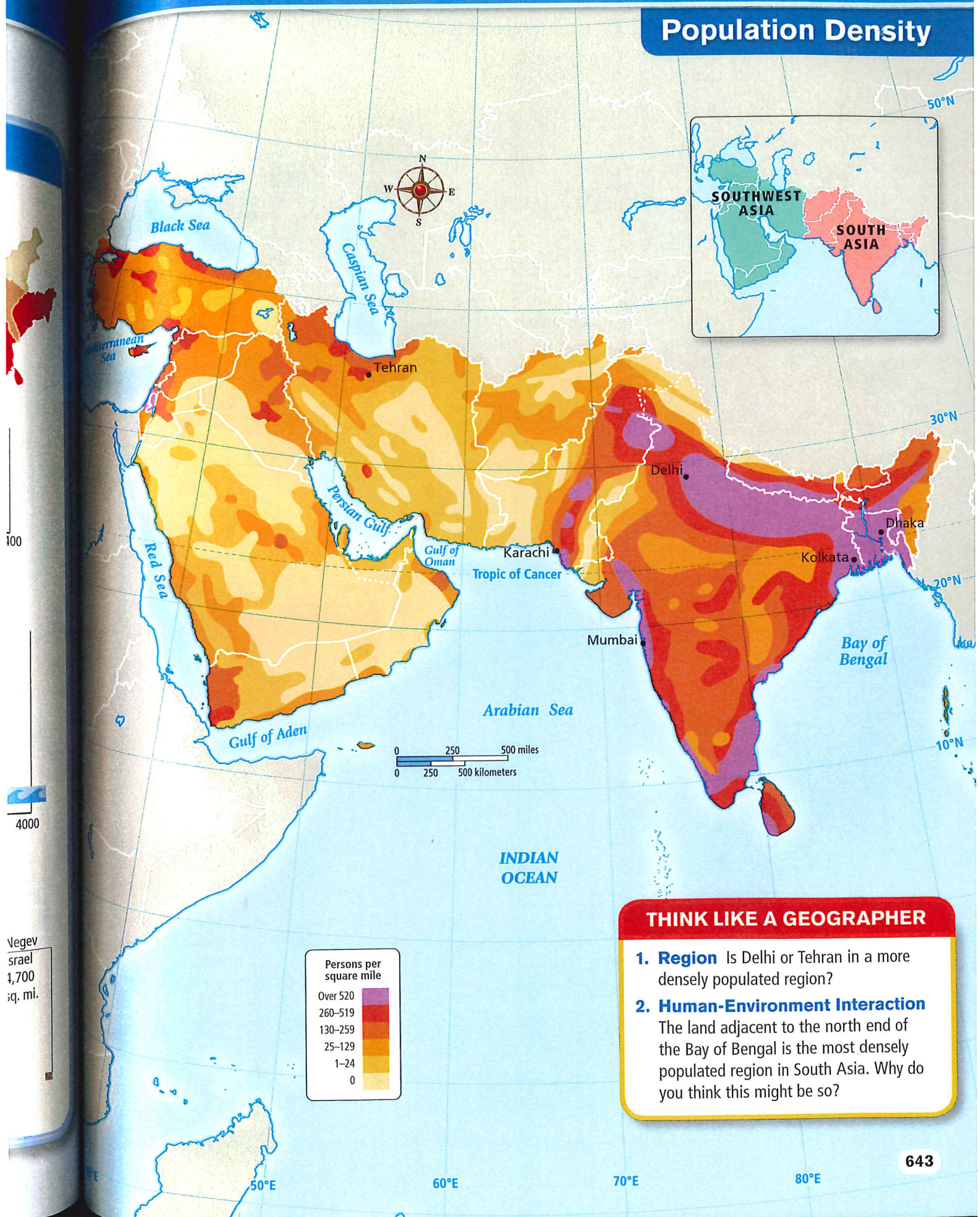250,000
sq. mi.

An-Nafud
Arabian Peninsula
25,000
sq. mi.

Negev
Israel
4,700
sq. mi.

Black Sea

Caspian Sea

Mediterranean Sea

Tehran

Red Sea

Persian Gulf

Delhi

Dhaka

Gulf of Oman

Karachi

Kolkata

Tropic of Cancer

Mumbai

Bay of Bengal

Gulf of Aden

Arabian Sea

0 250 500 miles
0 250 500 kilometers

INDIAN OCEAN

10°N

20°N

30°N

50°N

50°E 60°E 70°E 80°E

Negev
Israel
4,700
sq. mi.

Persons per square mile

Over 520
260–519
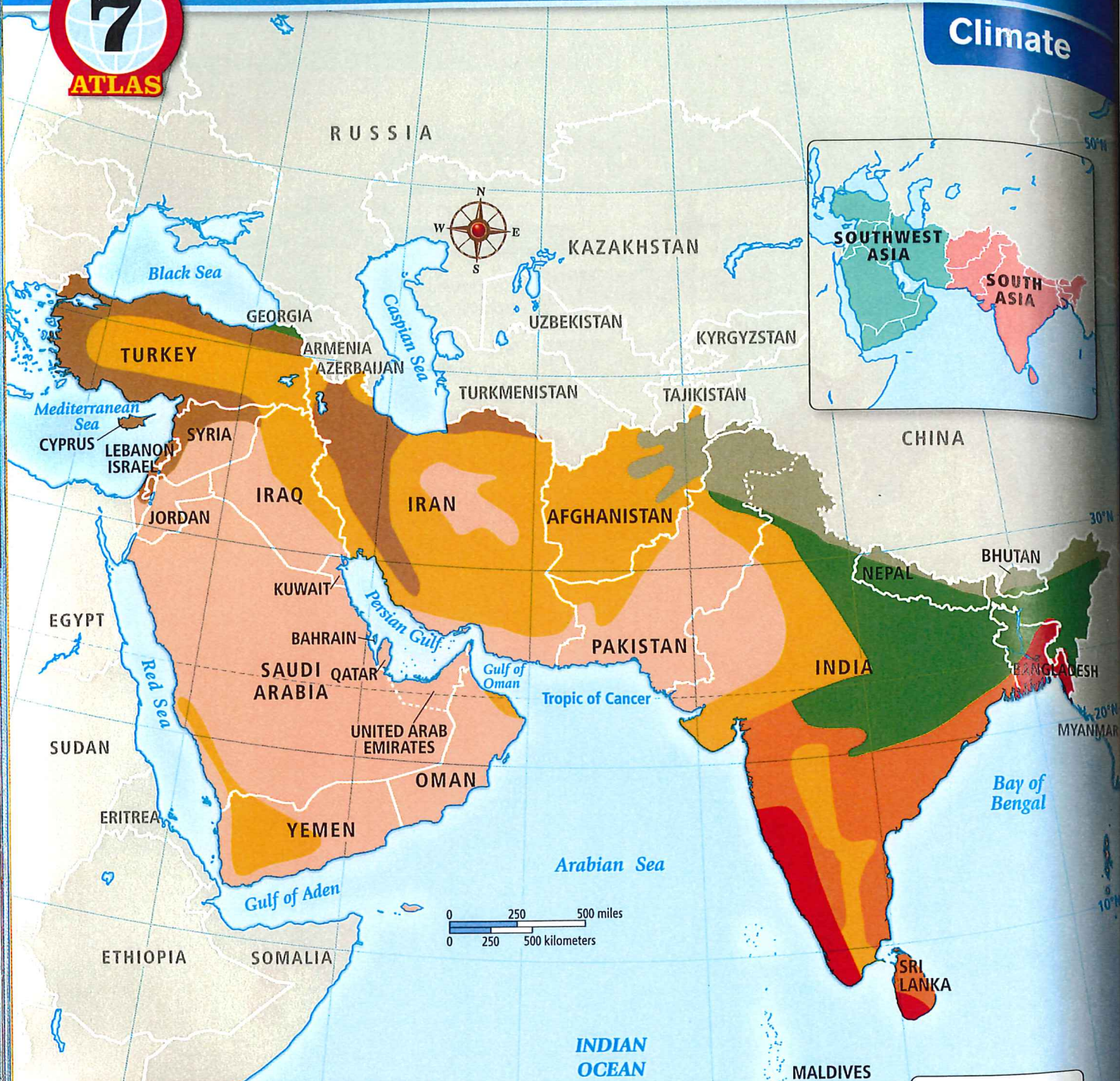130–259
25–129
1–24
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THINK LIKE A GEOGRAPHER

1. **Region** Is Delhi or Tehran in a more densely populated region?

2. **Human-Environment Interaction** The land adjacent to the north end of the Bay of Bengal is the most densely populated region in South Asia. Why do you think this might be so?

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RUSSIA

KAZAKHSTAN

SOUTHWEST
ASIA

SOUTH
ASIA

Black Sea

GEORGIA

Caspian Sea

UZBEKISTAN

KYRGYZSTAN

TURKEY

ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN

TURKMENISTAN

TAJIKISTAN

CHINA

Mediterranean
Sea

CYPRUS

SYRIA

LEBANON
ISRAEL

IRAQ

IRAN

AFGHANISTAN

NEPAL

BHUTAN

30°N

JORDAN

KUWAIT

Persian Gulf

EGYPT

BAHRAIN

SAUDI
ARABIA

QATAR

Gulf of
Oman

PAKISTAN

INDIA

BANGLADESH

Tropic of Cancer

MYANMAR

20°N

UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES

Red Sea

SUDAN

OMAN

Bay of
Bengal

ERITREA

YEMEN

Arabian Sea

Gulf of Aden

0   250   500 miles

0   250   500 kilometers

ETHIOPIA
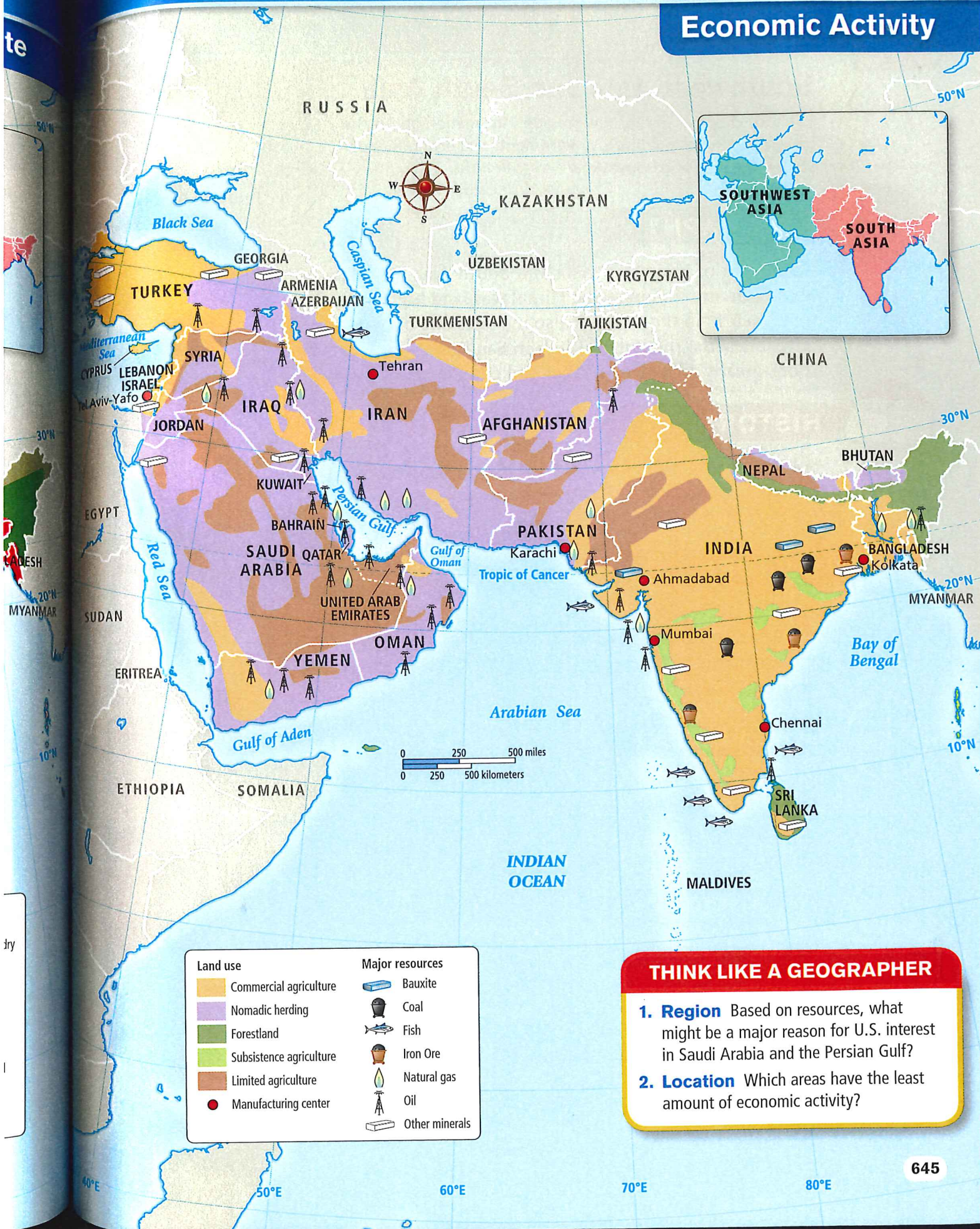
SOMALIA

SRI
LANKA

10°N

INDIAN
OCEAN

MALDIVES

50°N

THINK LIKE A GEOGRAPHER

1. **Region** Compare the climate zones in Southwest and South Asia. Which region has more arid and desert areas and which has more humid and tropical areas?

2. **Human-Environment Interaction** In which climate zone of Southwest Asia might you expect to find most of the region's population?

Tropical
Tropical wet
Tropical wet and dry

Dry
Desert
Semiarid

Mid-Latitude
Mediterranean
Humid subtropical

Highland

50°E   60°E   70°E   80°E

Economic Activity

RUSSIA

KAZAKHSTAN

Black Sea

GEORGIA

Caspian Sea

UZBEKISTAN

KYRGYZSTAN

TURKEY

ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN

TURKMENISTAN

TAJIKISTAN

CHINA

Mediterranean Sea

SYRIA

CYPRUS

LEBANON
ISRAEL

Tel Aviv-Yafo

IRAQ

Tehran

IRAN

AFGHANISTAN

JORDAN

BHUTAN

NEPAL

EGYPT

KUWAIT

Persian Gulf

BAHRAIN

PAKISTAN

Karachi

INDIA

BANGLADESH
Kolkata

SAUDI
ARABIA

QATAR

Gulf of Oman

Tropic of Cancer

Ahmadabad

MYANMAR

UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES

Red Sea

Mumbai

Bay of Bengal

SUDAN

OMAN

Gulf of Oman

ERITREA

YEMEN

Arabian Sea

Chennai

ETHIOPIA

SOMALIA

Gulf of Aden

0   250   500 miles
0   250   500 kilometers

SRI
LANKA

INDIAN OCEAN

MALDIVES

Inset: SOUTHWEST ASIA   SOUTH ASIA

50°N   30°N   20°N   10°N

40°E   50°E   60°E   70°E   80°E

Land use

- Commercial agriculture
- Nomadic herding
- Forestland
- Subsistence agriculture
- Limited agriculture
- ● Manufacturing center

Major resources

- Bauxite
- Coal
- Fish
- Iron Ore
- Natural gas
- Oil
- Other minerals

THINK LIKE A GEOGRAPHER

1. **Region** Based on resources, what might be a major reason for U.S. interest in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf?

2. **Location** Which areas have the least amount of economic activity?

Regional Overview

Southwest Asia and South Asia

The four chapters in this unit provide information about the geography, history, culture, government, and economics of Southwest Asia and South Asia.

GEOGRAPHY

The region of Southwest Asia and South Asia includes the highest mountain range, the Himalayas, and highest mountain, Everest, in the world. It also includes one of the world's largest deserts, the Rub al-Khali in Saudi Arabia. The monsoons greatly affect the weather and climate of South Asia.

HISTORY

Southwest Asia is sometimes called the cradle of civilization. A number of ancient civilizations arose in the region, including the Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Hebrew.

CULTURE

Three of the world's great religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have their roots in Southwest Asia. Two other world religions—Hinduism and Buddhism—have their roots in South Asia.

GOVERNMENT

Israel and Turkey in Southwest Asia and India in South Asia are all strong and independent democracies. However, many countries in both Southwest and South Asia are ruled by undemocratic regimes.

ECONOMICS

About one-half of the world's oil reserves are found in Southwest Asia. In South Asia, people rely heavily on farming and fishing to provide food. In both Southwest and South Asia there is a growing emphasis on education as the key to compete in the global marketplace.

Flower Market
An Indian farmer sells marigolds for use at Hindu temples to honor deities.

Country Almanac

Unit Writing Project

Lobbying Plan
As you read this unit, choose an important cause that you would like to lobby for—that is, convince local, state, or federal government officials to support. Pretend you are a lobbyist and create a written plan for your cause.

Think About:
- which leaders to contact
- a detailed plan of action that you would like them to support

Southwest Asia and South Asia

The Almanac provides information about the geography, economy, and culture of the countries of Southwest Asia and South Asia.

Afghanistan

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Kabul
Total Area: 250,001 sq. mi.
Population: 29,863,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; medicine; clothing
Exports: rugs, dried fruit

CULTURE
Language: Dari; Pashto
Religion: Sunni Muslim 89%; Shiite Muslim 9%

Bahrain

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Manama
Total Area: 257 sq. mi.
Population: 727,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; food; petroleum
Exports: aluminum; clothing; petroleum

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Sunni Muslim 41%; Shiite Muslim 41%; Christian 11%; Hindu 6%

Bangladesh

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Dhaka
Total Area: 55,599 sq. mi.
Population: 141,822,000

ECONOMY
Imports: textiles; cotton; rice and wheat
Exports: clothing; frozen fish; knitwear

CULTURE
Language: Bengali
Religion: Muslim 86%; Hindu 12%

Bhutan

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Thimphu
Total Area: 18,147 sq. mi.
Population: 2,163,000

ECONOMY
Imports: computers; cars; food; petroleum
Exports: electricity; cement

CULTURE
Language: Dzongkha
Religion: Buddhist 74%; Hindu 21%

Cyprus

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Nicosia
Total Area: 3,571 sq. mi.
Population: 835,000

ECONOMY
Imports: mineral fuels; consumer goods
Exports: pharmaceuticals; clothing

CULTURE
Language: Greek; Turkish
Religion: Greek Orthodox 95%; Catholic 2%; Muslim 1%

India

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: New Delhi
Total Area: 1,269,346 sq. mi.
Population: 1,103,371,000

ECONOMY
Imports: petroleum; gold and silver
Exports: jewelry; chemicals; food; cotton

CULTURE
Language: Hindi, English
Religion: Hindu 74%; Sunni Muslim 9%; Christian 6%; Shiite Muslim 3%

Iran

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Tehran
Total Area: 636,296 sq. mi.
Population: 69,515,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; cars; chemicals; food
Exports: petroleum; carpets; nuts

CULTURE
Language: Farsi
Religion: Shiite Muslim 90%; Sunni Muslim 6%; Zoroastrian 3%

lls

Iraq

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Baghdad
Total Area: 168,754 sq. mi.
Population: 28,807,000

ECONOMY
Imports: consumer goods
Exports: petroleum; food

CULTURE
Language: Arabic; Kurdish
Religion: Shiite Muslim 62%; Sunni Muslim 34%; Christian 3%

Israel

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Jerusalem
Total Area: 8,019 sq. mi.
Population: 6,725,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; diamonds; chemicals
Exports: diamonds; chemicals; electronics

CULTURE
Language: Hebrew; Arabic
Religion: Jewish 76%; Muslim 16%; Christian 2%

Jordan

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Amman
Total Area: 35,637 sq. mi.
Population: 5,703,000

ECONOMY
Imports: food; machinery; petroleum
Exports: clothing; chemicals; potash

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Sunni Muslim 94%; Christian 4%

Kuwait

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Kuwait
Total Area: 6,880 sq. mi.
Population: 2,687,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; food; chemicals
Exports: petroleum; ethylene

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Muslim 85%

Lebanon

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Beirut
Total Area: 4,015 sq. mi.
Population: 3,577,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; food; chemicals
Exports: jewelry; machinery; chemicals

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Christian 38%; Shiite Muslim 34%; Sunni Muslim 21%; Druze 7%

Maldives

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Male
Total Area: 116 sq. mi.
Population: 329,000

ECONOMY
Imports: food; oil; constuction goods
Exports: clothing; tropical fish; jet fuel

CULTURE
Language: Divehi
Religion: Sunni Muslim 100%

Nepal

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Kathmandu
Total Area: 54,363 sq. mi.
Population: 27,133,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; fabrics; fuels
Exports: clothing; carpets; shawls

CULTURE
Language: Nepali
Religion: Hindu 81%; Buddhist 11%; Muslim 4%; Kirat 4%

Oman

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Muscat
Total Area: 82,031 sq. mi.
Population: 2,567,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; cars; food; chemicals
Exports: petroleum; natural gas

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Ibadiyah Muslim 75%; Hindu 6%; Christian 5%; Buddhist 1%

Pakistan

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Islamabad
Total Area: 310,403 sq. mi.
Population: 157,935,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; petroleum; chemicals
Exports: textiles; leather; rice; carpets

CULTURE
Language: Urdu
Religion: Sunni Muslim 79%; Shiite Muslim 17%; Christian 3%; Hindu 1%

Qatar

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Doha
Total Area: 4,416 sq. mi.
Population: 813,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; cars; food; chemicals
Exports: natural gas; petroleum; iron; steel

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Muslim 83%; Christian 10%; Hindu 3%

Saudi Arabia

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Riyadh
Total Area: 756,985 sq. mi.
Population: 24,573,000

ECONOMY
Imports: cars; machinery; food; chemicals
Exports: petroleum; chemicals

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Sunni Muslim 84%; Shiite Muslim 10%; Christian 4%

Sri Lanka

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Colombo
Total Area: 25,332 sq. mi.
Population: 20,743,000

ECONOMY
Imports: textiles; petroleum; food
Exports: clothing; tea; precious stones

CULTURE
Language: Sinhala, Tamil
Religion: Buddhist 77%; Muslim 9%; Hindu 8%; Christian 7%

Syria

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Damascus
Total Area: 71,498 sq. mi.
Population: 19,043,000

ECONOMY
Imports: food; chemicals; machinery; iron
Exports: petroleum; cotton; vegetables

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Sunni Muslim 74%; Shiite Muslim 12%; Christian 6%; Druze 3%

Turkey

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Ankara
Total Area: 301,384 sq. mi.
Population: 73,193,000

ECONOMY
Imports: chemicals; machinery; petroleum
Exports: textiles; cars; machinery; iron

CULTURE
Language: Turkish
Religion: Sunni Muslim 67%; Shiite Muslim 30%; Christian 1%

United Arab Emirates
the Burj Al Arab Hotel in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: Abu Dhabi
Total Area: 32,000 sq. mi.
Population: 4,496,000

ECONOMY
Imports: machinery; food; textiles
Exports: petroleum; natural gas; gold

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Sunni Muslim 80%; Shiite Muslim 16%

Yemen

GEOGRAPHY
Capital: San'a
Total Area: 203,850 sq. mi.
Population: 20,975,000

ECONOMY
Imports: food; machinery; petroleum
Exports: petroleum; fish; fruits

CULTURE
Language: Arabic
Religion: Sunni Muslim 60%; Shiite Muslim 40%