

Middle East – Standards “Walk-Away” – Main Ideas

SS7G5a, SS7G5b - LOCATION

You have to be able to identify these places on a map:

Physical Feature: Euphrates River, Jordan River, Tigris River, Suez Canal, Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and Gaza Strip.

Countries: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

SS7G6a – ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Water is very scarce in the Middle East. It has a very hot and dry climate, which makes this an even bigger issue. The limited fresh water supplies must be shared and this often results in conflict over water rights. The main fresh water sources that are shared include the Jordan River, Euphrates River, and Tigris River. Any water pollution at all further decreases the amount of fresh water available to drink and use for irrigation. People **MUST** have water to live.

SS7G7a – IMPACT OF PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY – NATURAL RESOURCE (OIL)

Oil has brought a tremendous amount of wealth to the region, but it is controlled by government leaders. The world depends on oil, which makes this region very important. Lifestyles have changed because people have an opportunity to work in jobs related to the oil industry.

SS7G7b – IMPACT OF PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY – DESERTS & RIVERS

Most of the region is desert. People want to live near fresh water sources OR near the coast. Overall, the region lacks efficient modern systems of transportation (roads, airports, trains, etc.) Travelling by foot, bike, or camel is common. Major cities are located near water. This is where people find jobs.

SS7G8b – CULTURE – ETHNIC GROUPS

Most of the population in the Middle East is Arab. Most (not all) Arabs are Muslims. Most Muslims are Sunni. Jews are both an ethnic group and a religious group. Jews believe in Judaism. Persians trace their origins to Iran (formerly known as Persia). Most Persians are Shia Muslims. Kurds live in the mountainous regions of Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.

SS7G8c – CULTURE - RELIGION

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are monotheistic religions that developed in the Middle East. They all have ties to Jerusalem. They all have an important figure (Abraham, Jesus, Mohammad) that shaped their beliefs. They all have a sacred text (Torah, Bible, Koran). Jews and Muslims acknowledge Jesus as a prophet. Christians believe Jesus was the messiah and the son of God.

SS7G8d – CULTURE – SUNNI/SHIA SPLIT

After the death of Muhammad, Muslims split into 2 groups (also called “sects” or “factions”). They disagreed about the leadership of their religion. The group known as “Sunnis” believe the most qualified person should lead the religion. The group known as “Shias” believe that their leader should be a descendant of Muhammad. Most Muslims are Sunni.

SS7H2a – HISTORY – BREAKUP OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Ottoman Empire collapsed after WWI. Great Britain and France took over the land (Middle East). They divided up the land based on their interests. They “created” new nations by drawing boundaries on a map that grouped people together that didn’t necessarily belong together. This still causes conflict today.

SS7H2b – HISTORY – ESTABLISHMENT OF MODERN ISRAEL

Jews suffered discrimination (anti-semitism) in Europe and were persecuted during the Holocaust and WWII. After it was over, the movement (Zionism) to unite together in their “promised land” increased. Jews returned to “Palestine” with world-wide support and re-established ISRAEL in 1948.

SS7H2c – HISTORY – LAND, RELIGION & CONFLICT

Jews, Christians, and Muslims claim religious connections to land in the Middle East. They all have “holy sites” located in Jerusalem. This has caused conflict over control of the land for many years.