

Overview

Summary

West Asia: People and Places

By Eden Force Eskin

This book explores the people and places of West Asia today by examining six themes: Traditions, Population, Sports, Economy, Arts, and Government.



TRADITIONS

The Ganges, India's Sacred River explores the role of the Ganges in Indian life.

Jerusalem: Holy to Three Religions examines sites sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in West Asia.

West Asia's Treasured Places describes several historical and cultural sites in the area's rich heritage.

POPULATION

Garana's Story describes a family of refugees from war-torn Afghanistan.

SPORTS

Checkmate! traces the origins of two popular board games.

ECONOMY

Small Loans, Big Dreams recounts how modest investments can yield large rewards in Bangladesh.

Getting Out the Oil shows how Kazakhstan is developing and expanding its oil industry.

ARTS

The World of Music probes how music from West Asia has influenced world music.

The Epic of Manas explores an ancient epic poem that helped unite Kyrgyzstan.

GOVERNMENT

The World's Largest Democracy examines how India's government developed.

Background

West Asia includes regions also called the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. Hindi, Arabic, and Bengali are widely spoken in the region. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism all began here. Today, this region of ancient civilizations is the scene of several conflicts. Nevertheless its peoples continue to maintain their rich cultural heritages while working towards economic growth and political stability.

Learning Objectives

Social Studies/Geography

- Analyze how arts, traditions, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture
- Identify ways regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence daily lives
- Show how groups and institutions work to meet individual and group needs
- Examine global issues such as the environment, migration, and economic development
- Specify ways in which a democratic government operates

Process Skills

- Skill Focus**
 - Create a journal entry
- Supporting Skills**
 - Observe
 - Communicate
 - Infer
 - Collect data
 - Interpret data
 - Summarize

Reading Skills

- Recognize cause-and-effect relationships
- Draw conclusions
- Identify main idea and details
- Sequence events
- Compare and contrast
- Use context clues
- Identify problems and solutions
- Use visual representations

Focus on Content Area Reading

Before Reading

Activate Prior Knowledge

Refer students to the opening section on pages 4–5, and have them read its title question. Write *culture* on the board, and ask students what things they think *culture* includes. Invite them to write defining terms around it, to create a web. Then have them read the opening section and add to the web. Also have them identify and add more themes of culture presented in the book: Traditions, Population, Arts, Sports, Economy, and Government. Ask volunteers to contribute a West Asian example of each theme, using their prior knowledge.

Preview

Give the class a few minutes to preview the book by having them thumb through it. Have students study the West Asia map on pages 6–7. Have them note the vast area the region covers and its location relative

to other parts of the world. Ask them how many of the country names they have heard before. Help students to recognize that *West Asia: People and Places* contains articles that can give them insights into life in a part of the world that is in the news today.

Set Purpose

Help students to identify practical reasons for studying West Asia. Ask:

Why is it important to learn about the peoples and cultures of West Asia?

Use this discussion to help students recognize the interdependence of the modern world.

Vocabulary Strategy: Analyze Concept Words

Activity Master, page 36

Using the same format as the Activity Master, have students develop and expand their knowledge of the following terms in their book: *reincarnation* (page 11); *heritage* (page 23);

natural resource (page 44); and *federal system* (page 57). Before students attempt to define any of these terms, encourage them to give as many characteristics and examples of the term as possible, using material from *West Asia: World Cultures* as well as other sources, such as the Internet and the students' own prior knowledge. After students have written their definition of each term, have them check it against the definition in the Glossary.

Strategy Tip: Use current events

Bring in news clippings from newspapers or news magazines that deal with West Asia. Distribute them to pairs or small groups of students and ask them to identify the location and various themes of culture that each treats.

Meeting Individual Needs

For specific strategies on meeting individual needs, see pages 80–85.

Correlation to National Standards

Writing/Communication Skills

- Write a journal entry
- Write a letter
- Write a news story
- Write lines of epic poetry
- Give an oral presentation

Reading/Language Arts

- Read to become informed about the needs of society
- Apply a range of strategies to comprehend texts
- Use and adjust written and spoken language for learning
- Use the writing process
- Conduct research

Social Studies

- Culture
- Time, Continuity, & Change
- People, Places, & Environments
- Power, Authority, & Governance
- Production, Distribution, & Consumption
- Science, Technology, & Society
- Global Connections

Geography

- The World in Spatial Terms
- Places and Regions
- Human Systems
- Environment and Society
- The Uses of Geography

Focus on Content Area Reading (continued)

The Ganges, India's Sacred River (pages 8–13)

Preview

Refer students to the article title and ask them what *sacred* means. Help them to relate it to the term *religion*—sacred books and sacred places, for example. Explain that in this article they will explore religious traditions in the world's second-most populous country—India. (Note that China is the world's most populous country.)

Read Strategically: Identify Main Idea and Details Activity Master, page 37

Have students use the Activity Master on page 37 as a reading guide. Ask them to read each main idea given before they begin reading the text and then to look for details to support each main idea. Have students list two or more details for each main idea.

Respond

Ask students to imagine that they have attended the Kumbh Mela festival or a funeral along the Ganges River. Then have each student write a letter to a friend describing the event. The letter should contain details and descriptions that will help the reader. Have volunteers read their letters aloud.

Jerusalem: Holy to Three Religions (pages 14–21)

Preview

Outline Map, page 114

Have students identify the city named in the article title and ask them to locate it on the map on page 6. Then have them locate and label it on the outline map of West Asia on page 114. Have students do the same with the city named in the title on page 21—Mecca. Ask:

What do these two places have in common?

Tell students to look for the answer as they read the article.

Read Strategically: Identify Main Idea and Details

Ask students to write the three text subheads in this article on a sheet of paper, leaving plenty of space below each one for notes. As they read each section, have them note facts about it. As they finish each section, ask them to write a sentence stating the main idea and details that support it.

Respond

Have students use their notes to discuss this question:

Why are Jerusalem and Mecca holy cities to different world religions? (See pages 17–21.) (summarize)

Invite students to explain why they would like to visit each of these cities.

West Asia's Treasured Places (pages 22–27)

Preview

Have students read the title and then thumb through the article to identify six West Asian “treasured places.” Explore the concept of *heritage* with the class. Ask:

Why do many people treasure their heritage?

Read Strategically: Use Visual Representations

Outline Map, page 114

Distribute copies of the West Asia Outline Map. Ask students to locate and label Mecca, using the map on page 21 of their book. Have them jot down facts about the city near its location.

Respond

Have students conduct library or Internet research to find additional heritage sites. (e.g., whc.unesco.org), where students will find a list of World Heritage List sites with descriptions and links.

On the basis of their research, have students, individually or in groups, pick a heritage site and create a poster or off-line Web site that highlights the characteristics of the site they have chosen. Coordinate your students' research to ensure that different sites are chosen. Have students share their research with the class.

Focus on Content Area Reading (continued)

Garana's Story

(pages 28–33)

Preview

Ask students to recall books or plays like *Number the Stars* about people who had to flee their homes to reach a place of safety.

Tell students that in this article, they will meet a young person like themselves—Garana—who also lived through a difficult time. Have them locate the two countries named in the introductory paragraph on the map on page 6 to help them trace Garana's journey.

Read Strategically: Recognize Cause-and-Effect Relationships

Graphic Organizer, page 107

Have students use the Cause-and-Effect Graphic Organizer as a reading guide. Ask them to look for things that Garana does and why. Then have them classify their findings into causes and effects.

Respond

Invite students to write a news story about Garana's experiences. Tell them to answer the five questions for a new story: *Who? What? When? Where? and Why?*

Checkmate!

(pages 34–37)

Preview

Ask students to name board games they enjoy playing and to explain why they like to play them. Also invite them to talk about the amount of thinking that play involves. How much is strategy and how much is luck? Have them read the introductory paragraph of the article. Ask them if they are surprised to learn that board games go back hundreds or thousands of years.

Read Strategically: Compare and Contrast

Graphic Organizer, page 108

Have students use the Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer to guide their reading. Ask them to label the circle on the left *Chess* and the one on the right *Pachisi*. As they read, have students fill in facts about each—for example, number of players, pieces, boards, and rules. Have them include facts common to each in the area where the circles overlap.

Respond

Ask students to use their completed Venn diagrams to discuss the following questions:

How are the games the same?

How are they different?

(See pages 34 and 37.)

(compare and contrast)

Small Loans, Big Dreams

(pages 38–41)

Preview

Tell students to imagine that they want to set up a business making and selling a product. What product will they offer? What will they need in order to get the business going? Urge students to think about the steps involved—for example, getting funding, buying equipment and raw materials. Then have students find Bangladesh on a map of the world. Explain that in this article they will investigate how poor women there started their own businesses.

Read Strategically: Sequence Events

Graphic Organizer, page 105

Have students use the Flow Chart Graphic Organizer to guide their reading of the article. Ask them to create a flow chart by noting the stages in setting up a business from getting the idea for her product to turning it into a profitable business.

Respond

Initiate a class discussion to assess reading comprehension. Ask:

What is the basic goal of the Grameen Bank? (See page 40.)
(draw conclusions)

Focus on Content Area Reading (continued)

Getting Out the Oil

(pages 42–47)

Preview

Invite students to think about life without gas or oil. Encourage them to suggest ways life would be different. Have the students read the introductory paragraph to the article to learn that much of the world's oil comes from West Asia. To reinforce this fact, turn to the political map on page 6, and have students locate the five oil-producing countries mentioned on page 43.

Read Strategically: Identify Problems and Solutions

Activity Master, page 38

Explain that although oil can be an important source of income for the countries that possess it, countries also face challenges in creating and running an oil industry. Have students use the Activity Master to help them identify examples of problems and solutions in oil production as they read.

Respond

Have pairs or small groups of students use an almanac, encyclopedia, or the Internet to identify other countries with major oil supplies in West Asia and throughout the world. Have pairs or groups compare their researched country to Kazakhstan. Which produces greater amounts of oil? What different challenges does each face in oil production?

The World of Music

(pages 48–51)

Preview

Ask students to name a song or performer from another country. Create a list on the board of performers and their nationalities. Introduce the idea of growing interdependence of countries around the world and suggest that interdependence applies to music as well.

Read Strategically: Sequence Events

Graphic Organizer, page 106

Have students use the Time Line Graphic Organizer as a guide to tracing Ravi Shankar's career and contributions to world music. Urge students to do the math to translate ages given for him into calendar years.

Respond

Use the following questions to discuss Shankar's impact on music:

How long has Shankar's career lasted? (See pages 49–50.)

(summarize)

What other musicians has he influenced? (See page 50.)

(main idea and details)

The Epic of Manas

(pages 52–53)

Preview

Have students read the introductory paragraph to the article. Invite them to search their memories for examples of stories they know about heroes and heroines and their feats of daring—from books, television, or movies. Ask:

Why do people enjoy stories of heroism?

Vocabulary Strategy: Compare Definitions

Graphic Organizer, page 110

Have students use the Vocabulary Study Graphic Organizer to compare the meaning from context of *oral tradition* and *epic* with their more formal definitions in the glossary or dictionary. Have students explain how the *Epic of Manas* meets these definitions.

Respond

Ask students to choose a hero or heroine whom they admire—perhaps from history or from adventure stories or from real life. Invite them to reread the passages from *The Epic of Manas* on page 53, and then write a page of their own epic poems.

The World's Largest Democracy (pages 54–59)

Preview

Refer the class to the article title. Note that *democracy* comes from two Greek words that mean *the people rule*. A democracy is a government that is run by the people who live under it.

Point out that India is also a *republic*. A republic is a government in which authority also belongs to the people. In a republic, the people elect others to represent them in the government.

Vocabulary: Analyze Concept Words

Activity Master, page 36

Have students use the Activity Master to define the concept of democracy and list its essential characteristics, examples of democracy, and non-examples.

Respond

Have students compare their responses to the Activity Master on page 38 and discuss their essential characteristics, examples and non-examples and whether they are consistent with their definition of democracy.

Focus on Skills

Investigate Cultures Skill: Write a Journal Entry

Activity Master, page 39

Have students select an article and reread it. Tell them to pay special attention to one particular point of view represented in the article. For example, the student could focus on a pilgrim going to the Ganges River. As students read, have them list the highlights of the place or activity described in the article from their chosen point of view. Next, have students organize their observations using the Activity Master. Finally, students may write their journal entry, describing each item, on a separate sheet of paper.

Assessment Options

Questions

Use the following questions during individual conferences, or ask students to write the answers in their notebooks:

- 1 Identify a holy place in West Asia, and explain why it is sacred and to whom.
- 2 Why was the refugee experience such a frightening one?
- 3 Why are World Heritage sites important to West Asia and the world?
- 4 What role does oil play in the economies of West Asia?
- 5 How did India become the world's largest country with a democratic form of government?

Assessment Activity

Have students create travel posters to advertise the major attractions in West Asia.

Posters should:

- ✓ include an illustration that clearly identifies a particular location in West Asia
- ✓ have a title
- ✓ include text that presents facts about the location accurately
- ✓ include text that gives reasons people would enjoy visiting the location

Multiple-Choice Test

Use the multiple-choice test on page 98.

Articles from *National Geographic*

“India: Fifty Years of Independence”: May 1997

“India’s Maha Kumbh Mela Draws Millions”: May 1990

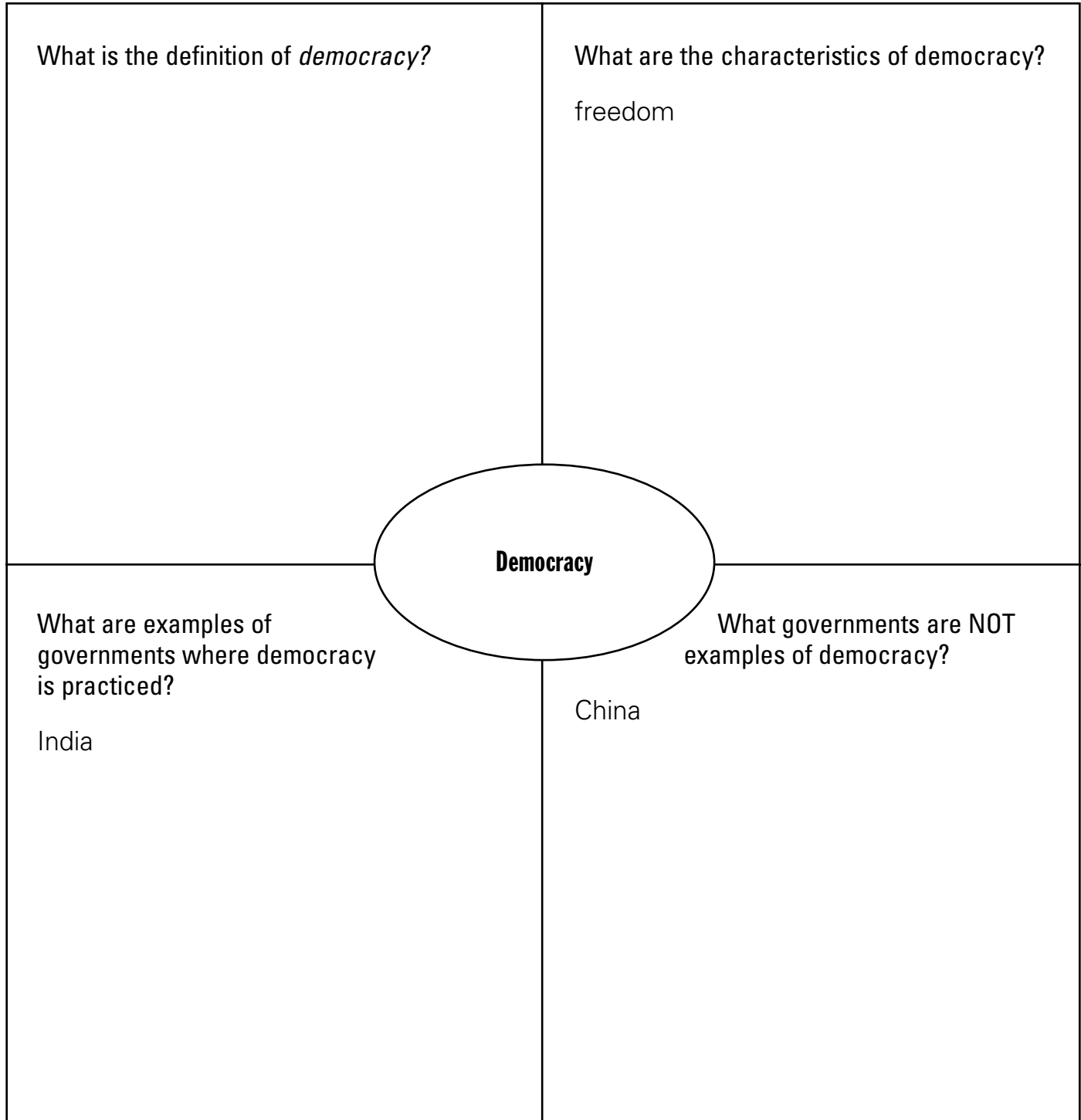
“A New Day in Kabul”: December 2002

“Pilgrimage to Mecca”: November 1978

“The Three Faces of Jerusalem”: April 1996

Vocabulary: Analyze Concept Words

Develop and expand your knowledge of the term *democracy* by filling out this concept chart. Some of the boxes are partly filled in to get you started.



Read Strategically: Identify Main Idea and Details

As you read “The Ganges, India’s Sacred River” (pages 8–11), and the journal entry “Back to India” (page 13) think about main ideas and details. Remember that details are facts and examples that explain or support the main idea. Complete the chart below with details from the text that support each main idea.

Main Idea: Hindus consider the Ganges River sacred.

Details: _____

Main Idea: Hindus observe special traditions when a family member dies.

Details: _____

Main Idea: In the Hindu religion, there are many different gods and beliefs.

Details: _____

Main Idea: A huge Hindu festival occurs every 12 years.

Details: _____

Read Strategically: Identify Problems and Solutions

As you read “Getting Out the Oil,” you will discover problems that face Kazakhstan as the country develops its oil-producing industry. You will also explore solutions that Kazakhstan is developing. After each problem below, write a solution described in the text.

1. Problem: The oil that is taken from the ground has substances that make it unusable for fuel.

Solution: _____

2. Problem: Kazakhstan cannot use all the oil that it produces and refines.

Solution: _____

3. Problem: Kazakhstan needs money to develop its oil industry.

Solution: _____

4. Problem: One day Kazakhstan’s oil will run out, and it cannot be replaced.

Solution: _____

5. Problem: Oil leaks cause damage to the environment.

Solution: _____

What other problem or problems might countries face in producing oil? What solutions would you suggest?

Investigate Cultures Skill: Write a Journal Entry

Choose an article from *West Asia: People and Places* and imagine that you have spent a day in the place it describes. Write a journal entry that records your day. The organizer below will give you ideas. After you have filled it out, write your journal entry on a separate sheet of paper.

Date: _____

Place: _____

Weather: _____

Interesting sites: _____

Interesting people: _____

Clothing worn by people: _____

Memorable conversations: _____

Food: _____

Souvenirs: _____
