

Overview

Summary

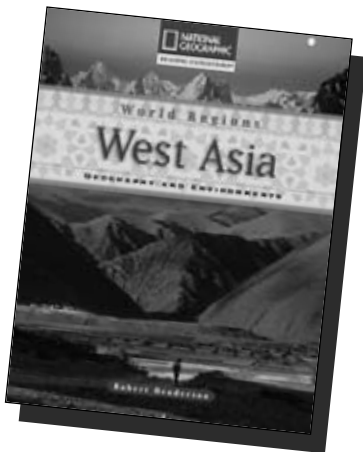
In this book, students will have the opportunity to explore an area in which people and environments are inseparably intertwined. In the monsoon region of West Asia, the Indian subcontinent, students will read how people plan their lives around the months of wind and rain that bring much-needed water for crops. At the high elevations of the Himalaya region, people and wildlife have adapted to the lower levels of oxygen. In the arid but oil-rich region of West Asia known as the Middle East, humans are working to find more efficient ways to bring water to crops and people. Last, students will examine the negative effects of human activities on the Aral Sea, and how people are trying to reverse these effects.

Background

The region called West Asia includes the areas also sometimes called the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, and the Middle East. This region of vast geographic diversity includes the world's highest point, Mount Everest, and the lowest point, the Dead Sea. People have adapted in many ways to the diverse climates across the region—the tropical monsoon rains of India, cold temperatures at high altitudes in the Himalaya, and the arid desert expanses of the Middle East. Rivers such as the Tigris, Euphrates, Jordan, and Ganges are of vital importance to the people of West Asia as sources of fresh water and a means for irrigating farmland. A closer look at the three large inland seas in the region shows how people's actions can change environments.

West Asia: Geography and Environments

By Robert Henderson



Learning Objectives

Social Studies/Geography

- Examine the interactions of humans and their environments
- Interpret representations of Earth, such as maps
- Locate and describe landforms and bodies of water, such as mountains and deserts
- Describe physical processes and identify geographic patterns associated with them
- Explore causes, consequences, and possible solutions to global issues, such as pollution and endangered species

Process Skills

Skill Focus

- Interpret a graph to analyze a region's geographic patterns

Supporting Skills

- Interpret visual data
- Compare and contrast
- Generalize

Reading Skills

- Identify main ideas and details
- Draw conclusions
- Compare and contrast
- Use context clues
- Recognize cause-and-effect relationships
- Use graphics and graphic organizers

Focus on Content Area Reading

Activate Prior Knowledge

Put these words on the board: *rain, mountains, deserts, lakes*. Ask students which of these things affect their lives, and how. Ask:

What do you think of when you hear the word “extreme”? What environments do you think might be “extreme” environments?

Ask students to imagine what it would be like to experience extreme *rain, mountains, deserts, lakes*. Create a chart of their ideas about living in an extremely wet place, dry place, mountainous place, or near a huge body of water. Students can refer back to it later to see how their ideas matched the text



Meeting Individual Needs

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

Chapter 1: Land of the Monsoon

Before Reading

Preview & Set Purpose

Give students a chance to look through the chapter, especially headings, subheadings, and features. Ask:

Look at pages 12 and 13. What do you think you will be reading about under the heads “Welcome Rains” and “Wild Weather”? Do you think these heads refer to the same thing or different things?

To help students set a purpose for reading, ask them to pick out the largest heads in the chapter (“Changing Winds,” “The Ganges Delta,” and “Wild Mountains.”) Note-taking tip: Have students write these three heads in their notebooks. Then ask them to write three facts under each head as they read the chapter.

During Reading



Vocabulary Strategy: Relate Words

Activity Master, page 36

Explain that words can sometimes be easier to learn and remember in related pairs or groups. In the Activity Master, have students choose two words that are related in each group. Then have them write a sentence that relates the words to West Asia.



Read Strategically: Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizer, page 108

Have students use the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the dry monsoon season to the wet monsoon season in south Asia. Remind students that anything the two seasons have in common should be written in the area where the circles overlap. Students may then create another Venn diagram to compare and contrast the Ganges Delta with the Western Ghats.

Correlation to National Standards

Writing/Communication Skills

- Find facts about a topic
- Conduct research
- Use the writing process
- Write comparatively
- Prepare notes before speaking
- Use writing to aid others' understanding of concepts
- Give an oral presentation
- Read aloud and discuss an essay

Reading/Language Arts

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

Social Studies

- Culture
- Time, Continuity, & Change
- People, Places, & Environments
- Production, Distribution, & Consumption
- Science, Technology, & Society
- Global Connections
- Civic Ideals & Practice

Geography

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

Focus on Content Area Reading (continued)

After Reading

Respond

Initiate a class discussion to assess reading comprehension.

Ask:

What is the Indian subcontinent? (See page 10.) **(summarize)**

How has the government in Bangladesh responded to the problems caused by cyclones? (See page 13.)

(problem and solution)

What makes the Western Ghats a “biodiversity hotspot”? (See pages 18–19.) **(summarize)**

Writing: Write a News Story

Tell students to imagine that they are radio or television reporters for a news program. They have been assigned to cover the region of monsoons. Each student should choose a specific topic for a news story, such as:

- how a late season of monsoon rains is affecting farmers in the Ganges Delta;
- how the High Range Wildlife and Environment Preservation Association protects the natural habitats in the Western Ghats;
- another chapter-related topic

Each student can write a short news story, being sure to make the main idea clear and support it with appropriate details.

To prepare for this assignment, have students listen to a news station on the radio or watch a news program on television and take notes on the program.

Ask:

What stories are covered in the program? Do reporters talk mostly about facts or opinions? Do the stories tell more main ideas or details? What else do you notice?

Hold a class discussion about students’ perceptions of these programs before they complete the writing assignment.

Communicating:

Present the News

Have students work in small groups to write news stories about different topics.

Have each group present a news program to the class. Students can choose a title for their program, and one student “anchor” can introduce it.

Listeners can prepare questions to ask the group following the newscast.

Students presenting should:

- ✓ Be prepared with all necessary pieces of the presentation.
- ✓ Make main ideas and supporting details clear.
- ✓ Speak clearly at an appropriate speed and volume.
- ✓ Make eye contact with listeners.

Listeners should

- ✓ Identify the main idea when the presentation is finished.
- ✓ Listen politely.

Chapter 2: Himalaya

Before Reading

Preview & Set Purpose

Give students time to preview the chapter, paying special attention to the photographs in the chapter. Ask students what kind of landforms they expect to read about in this chapter, and what kinds of animals and plants might be found there.

To help students set a purpose for reading, point out the question on page 22, “How do people and wildlife survive the harsh climate of the Himalaya?” Have them predict what they might find out about this question in the chapter.

Vocabulary Strategy:

Determine Word Knowledge

Remind students that they can often draw on previous knowledge to help them when they encounter new words. List the vocabulary words from the chapter on the board. Point out *mountain range* and *erosion* and ask for volunteers to suggest what these words might mean. Then ask if any other words on the list seem familiar. Explain that identifying familiar parts of words can be helpful, such as *tree* in *tree line*. Write students’ responses on the board. Then have students use the chapter, glossary, and/or dictionary to record definitions for each word.

Focus on Content Area Reading (continued)

During Reading

Read Strategically: **Use Concept Webs**

Activity Master, page 37
Explain to students that concept webs are a visual way to organize ideas as they read. In the concept web in the Activity Master, some of the circles have been filled in to get students started. Explain that the circles on the web have been organized according to the chapter heads. Students can add to these circles as they read, or they can draw a larger and more complex web in their notebooks.

Strategy Tip: Take notes

Some students may have difficulty remembering the main points of a selection. For each chapter, suggest that students take notes. For example, for each paragraph, have students write down the main idea and important details that support it.

After Reading

Respond

Initiate a class discussion to assess reading comprehension.

Ask:

What is the tallest peak in the world? (See page 24.) **(retell)**

How does precipitation differ on the southern and northern slopes of the Himalaya? Why?

(See page 26.)

(compare and contrast)

How are yaks useful to people living in the Himalaya?

(See page 30.) **(summarize)**

Why do you think so few people have successfully climbed to the top of Mount Everest?

(See page 32.)

(draw conclusions)

Writing: Write a Commercial

Tell students that they have been hired to write an effective commercial convincing people to visit the Himalaya. Remind students that they are writing to persuade people, and it is acceptable to use opinions as well as very descriptive writing. Students can point out unique or exciting features about the Himalaya to encourage people to travel there. Commercials should include several facts they have learned about the Himalaya.

Communicating: **Speak Persuasively**

Hold a commercial contest. Invite a judge from outside the classroom (the principal, another teacher) to listen to the students perform their commercials. Have the judge choose the three most convincing commercials, and explain why those elected made the judge want to visit the Himalaya. Students should focus on reading clearly and slowly and also speak with emotion, to help make the words more persuasive.

Chapter 3: Arid West Asia

Before Reading

Preview & Set Purpose

Give students time to preview the chapter, paying special attention to headings, maps, photographs, and graphics.

Ask:

What are people doing in the photos on page 40? Do you think this is a difficult activity in an arid place?

To help students set a purpose for reading, ask them to think about the question on page 36, “Why are resources such as water and oil so important to this region?” Extend their ideas by asking, “What problems might too little water cause? What challenges might having a lot of oil create?”

During Reading

Read Strategically: Identify Problems and Solutions

As students read, have them identify and list five solutions people in the region have used to deal with the problem of very little fresh water. Students can identify three kinds of irrigation as well as dam- or reservoir-building and desalinization. Have students write a sentence or two about how each solution helps solve the problem.

After Reading

Respond

Initiate a class discussion to assess reading comprehension.

Focus on Content Area Reading (continued)

Ask:

How can water be recycled?
(See page 39.) (**summarize**)

Writing: **Write a Comparison** Activity Master, page 38

Have students use the Activity Master to prepare for writing a short essay comparing and contrasting arid West Asia with either the Himalaya region or the monsoon region of West Asia. The Activity Master will help them to collect and organize their facts to make writing the essay easier.

Communicating: Read Aloud and Discuss an Essay

When students have completed their comparisons, have the class divide into two groups according to which regions they compared in their essays. Have students who wrote on the same regions read their essays aloud to each other. Ask students to discuss each essay by considering these questions: *Which similarities were highlighted? Which differences were discussed? How was the essay organized? Were the main ideas clear?*

Chapter 4: Inland Seas

Before Reading

Preview & Set Purpose

Give students time to preview the chapter, paying special attention to headings, maps, photographs, and graphics.

Ask:

Look at the map of the Aral Sea on page 51. What does the map seem to show? How do you think a sea could grow smaller? What two other seas are named in heads in this chapter?

To help students set a purpose for reading, have them read the paragraph on page 48. Ask, How do these seas affect people who live in the region? How do you think people affect the seas?

Vocabulary Strategy: **Use Context Clues** Graphic Organizer, page 110

As students read the chapter, have them record the vocabulary words and their definitions from context in the Vocabulary Study Graphic Organizer. Then have students check their definitions by looking the words up in the Glossary on pages 62–63.

During Reading

Read Strategically: Use Graphic Organizers

Have students set up a 3-column chart. Tell students that in this chapter, they will be reading about the three major inland seas of West Asia. How are these seas similar and different? Graphic organizers can help them to organize facts about each as they read. For each of the seas, have students summarize and list facts and details from the reading. Have students compare the three seas when finished.

After Reading

Respond

Initiate a class discussion to assess reading comprehension. Ask:

What is one way in which the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea are similar? (See page 54.)
(**compare**)

What plans do Israel and Jordan have to deal with the Dead Sea drying up?
(See page 59.)
(**problem and solution**)


Writing :

Write a Journal Entry

Have students write a journal entry about a journey to each of the three inland seas of West Asia. Students can use an atlas to find out what cities they would fly to and from to reach each of their destinations. What would they see and do in each place? Have students illustrate with photographs from magazines or Web sites.

Extend and Assess

Focus on Geography

 **Think Geographically:**
Graph Water Availability
Activity Master, page 39

After students have completed the skills lesson on pages 60–61 of their books, have them extend the skill by doing the Activity Master. Explain to students that scientists sometimes make educated guesses, or estimates, about the future to help predict patterns or possible problems.

Assessment Options

Questions

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

- 1 Which region in West Asia has been called a “biodiversity hotspot,” and why is it called that?
- 2 Why are the Himalaya still growing?
- 3 How do people in arid West Asia farm their land in a dry climate?
- 4 Why is the Aral Sea shrinking?
- 5 Talk about one challenge to the environment in West Asia and what people are doing to meet it.

Assessment Activity

Have students create part of a museum exhibit related to one West Asia topic. They can create a captioned poster, diorama, drawing, or other project to show their knowledge. Possible topics for exhibits include: Monsoons and how they affect West Asia;

How people and wildlife adapt to elevation in the Himalaya; Why the Aral Sea is shrinking and how that affects people. Exhibits should: Show an understanding of the topic chosen; Be accurate and neat.

Multiple-Choice Test

Use the multiple-choice test on page 98.

Cross-Curricular Connection

Science

Have students try the following activity to learn more about the science of flooding.

Experiment with how different types of soil absorb water. Have students collect or bring in three different kinds of soil, such as sand, potting soil, and clay. Divide the class into small groups. Distribute samples of each kind of soil to each group. Each group will also need a funnel, three measuring cups, and coffee filters. Students measure out a small amount of dry sand, then put a coffee filter into the funnel and pour the measured amount of sand into the coffee filter. Have them hold the filter over a measuring cup, pour a measured amount of water into the funnel.

Students should record how much water drains through the sand and into the collection cup. Students should repeat the experiment with dry potting soil, dry clay, then with the other samples. When students

have recorded all the data, conduct a class discussion. Why would repeated rains eventually cause flooding?

Home-School Connection

Students can interview older adults about their experiences with extreme weather or environments. Have students relate these experiences to what they have read in *West Asia: Geography and Environments*.

Resources

Web Links

To access lessons that will help students expand their knowledge of Oil and Water in the Middle East Region and Daily Life in the Middle East, enter those topics as search terms on this Web site: www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions

Students can find a collection of articles about the Everest climb’s 50th anniversary on www.nationalgeographic.com/everest/

Articles from *National Geographic*

“Monsoons: Life Breath of Half the World”: July 1984

“Gatekeepers of the Himalaya”: December 1992

“Water: The Middle East’s Critical Resource”: May 1993

“The Rise and Fall of the Caspian Sea”: May 1999

Vocabulary: Relate Words

In each group of words below, choose two to put together in a sentence. Relate the sentence to what you have learned about West Asia.

Group 1: silt (page 38) fertile (page 38) hotspot (page 54)

Sentence: _____

Group 2: conservation (page 54) sustainable development (page 59) poaching (page 59)

Sentence: _____

Group 3: tsunamis (page 19) magnitude (page 17) lava (page 12)

Sentence: _____

Group 4: habitat (page 54) conservation (page 54) delta (page 38)

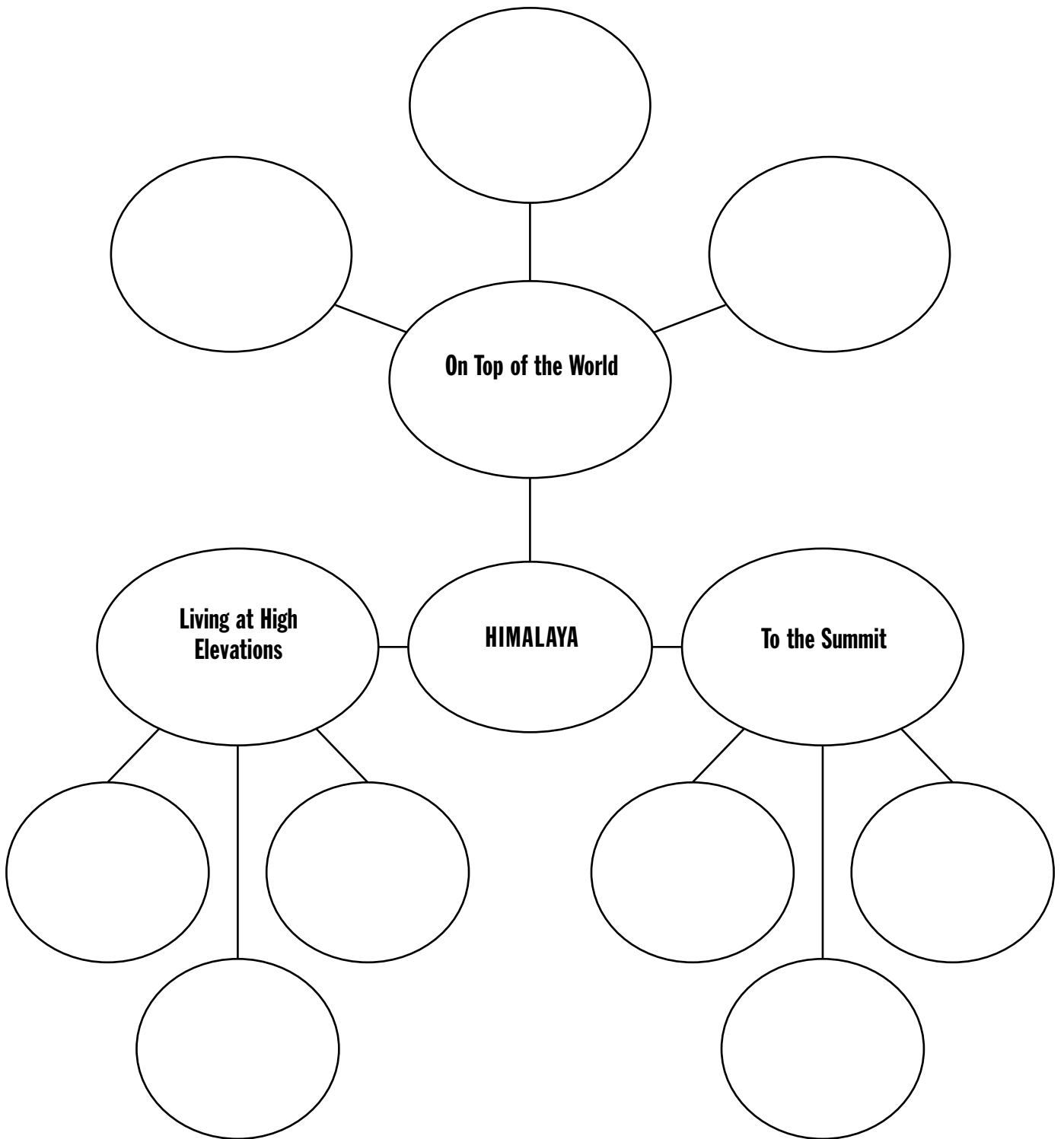
Sentence: _____

Group 5: reservoir (page 24) hydroelectric power (page 24) paddy (page 41)

Sentence: _____

Read Strategically: Use Concept Webs to Organize Ideas

Using concept webs helps with organizing facts and ideas from text. In this web the main circle contains the title of the chapter: HIMALAYA. It connects to three large circles, each containing one of the main heads from the chapter. Use the smaller circles to fill in facts related to each head.



Writing: Write a Comparison

Prepare to write a short essay comparing and contrasting arid West Asia with either the Himalaya or the monsoon region of West Asia by answering all of the questions below. When you are finished, use your answers to write your essay on a separate sheet of paper. One paragraph might talk about what the two places have in common, and another paragraph might talk about differences between the two places. Another way to organize your writing is to make each paragraph about a separate topic, such as climate, farming, or daily life in the two locations.

What other region will you compare and contrast with arid West Asia? _____

What is the climate like in each place, and how does that climate affect peoples' lives?

Name ways that people make a living in each place.

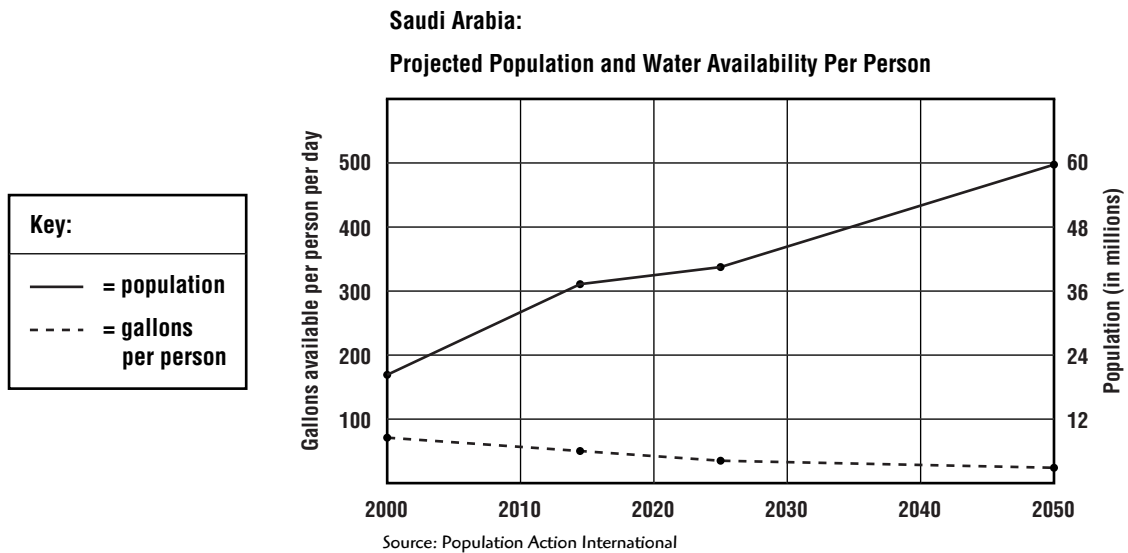
What special methods do people in each place use for farming?

What is one special resource of each place?

What is one challenge that people face in each place, and how have they tried to meet it?

Think Geographically: Graph Water Availability

Scientists can project, or predict, how much water per person in a country there will be by estimating, or making educated guesses about, the future population and available water supply. The graph below shows the projected population of Saudi Arabia and the amount of water available until the year 2050. Use the graph to answer the questions that follow.



1. How is the population of Saudi Arabia projected to change from 2000 to 2050? _____

2. How is the water available per person projected from 2000 to 2050? _____

3. What reasons might there be for the change over time in water availability? _____

4. How do you think countries like Saudi Arabia can solve their water challenges? _____

5. List some possible ways to conserve water. _____
