

North Africa/ Southwest Asia Essentials

- ◆ Most people call North Africa/ Southwest Asia the “Middle East”
- ◆ Although they are parts of two different continents, North Africa and Southwest Asia have a lot in common. That is why they are a region.
- ◆ North Africa is separated from the rest of Africa by a humongous desert called the Sahara Desert.
- ◆ Deserts are cultural barriers so North Africa did not share the same culture as Africa, South of the Sahara.
 - ◆ North Africa does lie next to the Mediterranean Sea.
 - ◆ Seas promote cultural contact and diffusion.
 - ◆ Seas made trade easier back in the day.
- ◆ People in North Africa and Southwest Asia traded with each other and learned about each other’s culture.
 - ◆ They copied from each other what they liked.

NA/SWA Essentials

- Important physical features:
Sahara Desert, Mediterranean Sea, Nile River (Egypt), Tigris and Euphrates (Iraq) Rivers, Persian Gulf
- Dominant climates is desert and steppe

NA/SWA Essentials

- North Africa and Southwest Asia have these things in common:
- The dominant ethnicity is Arab
- The major resource is petroleum
- Their major environmental concern is access to freshwater
- Many countries have experienced a high level of conflict
- Their dominant religion is Islam

NA/SWA Essentials

- A Human/ Environment interaction is when people and the environment have an effect on each other.
- A great example of H/E interaction are the nomadic people of the Sahara and the Sahel.
- A very famous group of these people are the Tuareg.
- They are famous for how they adapted their lifestyle so they can live in the desert.
- They have become famous as guides for others through the desert.

NA/SWA Essentials

- The cultural hearths or ancient civilizations or places where cultures started and then spread (or diffused) out in NA/SWA are:
 - Ancient Egypt
 - Mesopotamia

Cultural Hearths will have: writing systems, strong government, specialization of jobs, permanent structures, successful agriculture, and a high level of trade

NA/SWA Essentials

- OPEC stands for Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
- It began in 1960 and continues today.
- It includes Iraq, Kuwait, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Libya, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and others.
- These countries used to compete with each other to sell petroleum to the rest of the world but that caused them to lose money.
- Now, they cooperate on the how much oil they produce and how much they sell it for.
- This has made them very wealthy.

NA/SWA Essentials

- Jerusalem, a city in Israel, has importance for Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. As a result, there has been a lot of conflict over who controls this city.
- The Persian Gulf has large percentage of the world's petroleum reserve. As a result, the countries that border the Persian gulf are very wealthy.
- Drought is when a place does not receive the usual amount of rain. There are frequently droughts in NA/SWA. As a result, humans and animals have to constantly adapt to a lack of available water.

NA/SWA Essentials

- Israel became a country for Jews after World War 2 and the Holocaust.
- The people who lived where this country was supposed to be (the Palestinians) did not want this to happen and fought the Israelis.
- The Israelis are excellent at war and so everytime the Palestinians fought, they lost even more.
- The Arab Spring happened in 2010 when people from a lot of countries in NA/SWA demanded their governments be more democratic.
- They have not been very successful in getting more democracy but they have changed their governments.
- In Syria, a war between the government and people who want a different leader continues and has cost more than 100, 000 lives.