

The Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Iran

Section 1



MAIN IDEAS

1. Major physical features of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Iran are desert plains and mountains.
2. The region has a dry climate and little vegetation.
3. Most of the world is dependent on oil, a resource that is exported from this region.

Key Terms and Places

Arabian Peninsula region of the world that has the largest sand desert in the world

Persian Gulf body of water surrounded by the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, and Iraq

Tigris River river that flows across a low, flat plain in Iraq and joins the Euphrates River

Euphrates River river that flows across a low, flat plain in Iraq and joins the Tigris River

oasis a wet, fertile area in a desert that forms where underground water bubbles to the surface

wadis dry streambeds

fossil water water that is not being replaced by rainfall

Section Summary

PHYSICAL FEATURES

The region of the **Arabian Peninsula**, Iraq, and Iran has huge deserts. Not all deserts are sand. Some are bare rock or gravel. The region forms a semicircle, with the **Persian Gulf** at the center.

The region's main landforms are rivers, plains, plateaus, and mountains. The two major rivers are the **Tigris** and **Euphrates** in Iraq. They make a narrow area good for crops. This area was called Mesopotamia in ancient times.

The Arabian Peninsula has flat, open plains in the east. In the south, desert plains are covered with sand. Deserts in the north are covered with volcanic rock. The peninsula rises slowly towards the Red Sea. This makes a high landscape of mountains and flat plateaus. The highest point is in the mountains in Yemen. Plateaus and mountains also cover most of Iran.

Underline the words that tell you what deserts can be made of.

List the four main landforms of this region.

Section 1, continued

CLIMATE AND VEGETATION

This region has a desert climate. It can get very hot in the day and very cold at night. The Rub' al-Khali desert in Saudi Arabia is the world's largest sand desert. Its name means "Empty Quarter," because it has so little life.

Some areas with plateaus and mountains get rain or snow in winter. Some mountain peaks get more than 50 inches of rain a year. Trees grow in these areas. They also grow in **oases** in the desert. At an oasis, underground water bubbles up. Some plants also grow in parts of the desert. Their roots either go very deep or spread out very far to get as much water as they can.

Is the desert always hot? Explain your answer.

Underline the sentence that explains how desert plants get water.

RESOURCES

Water is one of this region's two most valuable resources. But water is scarce. Some places in the desert have springs that give water. Wells also provide water. Some wells are dug into dry streambeds called **wadis**. Other wells go very deep underground. These often get **fossil water**. This is water that is not replaced by rain, so these wells will run dry over time.

Oil is the region's other important resource. This resource is plentiful. Oil has brought wealth to the countries that have oil fields. But oil cannot be replaced once it is taken. Too much drilling for oil may cause problems in the future.

Circle two important resources in this region.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Designing Design an illustrated poster using the term *Persian Gulf*. For each letter, write a word containing that letter that tells something about the region.