

SW ASIA Geography CLOZE Notes I

Middle East

- The Middle East is also known as the “crossroads of the world” because of its location in the center of three continents - Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- Deserts are the most common physical feature here and make up 66% of the area.
- Water is scarce in the region, with countries often competing over access to the rivers and seas.

Euphrates River

- The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers both start in the mountains of Turkey and run parallel to each other in some places.
- The Euphrates River runs through Syria before joining with the Tigris River in southern Iraq.
- It then flows along the border between Kuwait and Iran and empties into the Persian Gulf.
- The Euphrates is the birthplace of the ancient civilizations of Sumer, Babylon, & Assyria.
- It is a source of water for Iraq, Syria, and Turkey today.

Tigris River

- The Tigris River flows through Turkey to Iraq.
- Along with the Euphrates, the Tigris was a central part of ancient Middle Eastern civilizations.
- Today, the rivers still provide water for both drinking and farming.
- The countries that share these rivers have had problems over how the water should be shared.

Jordan River

- The Jordan River starts in the mountains of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, and flows south until it reaches the Dead Sea.
- It is only 20 feet wide at some parts and only 17 feet deep at its deepest point.
- This river is a main source of water for Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, parts of Syria, & many of those living in the West Bank & the Gaza Strip.
- The Jordan River is also important because it is the political boundary between Israel, the West Bank, & Jordan.

SW ASIA Geography CLOZE Notes 2

Suez Canal

- The Suez Canal connects the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea.
- It is a 120-mile man-made waterway that is used to transport goods to and from Asia, Africa, & Europe.
- The Suez Canal is an important shortcut because it allows trade between all three continents.
- At the northern end of the Red Sea, ships can enter the canal and can get to the Mediterranean Sea without having to sail all around the continent of Africa.

Persian Gulf

- The Persian Gulf is a shallow body of water between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula.
- This area holds one of the largest and most important oil fields in the world.
- It is one of the main ways oil is shipped from the rich fields of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other countries that line its shores.
- All of the countries that produce oil in that region depend on the Persian Gulf as a shipping route.

Strait of Hormuz

- The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow waterway that connects the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea.
- It is a critically important shipping channel because much of the world's oil supply passes through this strait.
- Any ships coming out of or into the Persian Gulf must navigate through this very narrow waterway.

Arabian Sea

- The Arabian Sea is the most northwestern part of the Indian Ocean.
- It is bordered by India to the east, Pakistan and Iran to the north, and the Arabian Peninsula to the west.
- For centuries, it has formed a key shipping route between Europe and the western ports of India.

Red Sea

- The Red Sea is an arm of the Indian Ocean that lies between northeast Africa and Asia.
- It is linked to the Mediterranean Sea by the Suez Canal.
- Because of the Red Sea's location between Europe and East Asia, heavy shipping traffic takes place here.
- During the Middle Ages, it was a key part of the Spice Trade.

SW ASIA Geography CLOZE Notes 3

LAND DISPUTES

Palestine

- The area that covers Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank was once known as Palestine.
- After WWII and the Holocaust, the Zionist movement gained a lot of momentum throughout the world.
- Zionists wanted to reunite the world's Jews and give them a homeland in Palestine.
- The United Nations decided to divide Palestine into separate nations – a Jewish state and an Arab state.

Gaza Strip

- In 1947, the United Nations created the state of Israel for the Jews and two territories for the Arabs—the area around the town of Gaza and the territory of the West Bank.
- The Gaza Strip is often politically unstable and there have been many outbreaks of violence over the last 60 years.
- Disputes over this territory continue between Israel and surrounding countries.
- The Gaza Strip is located along the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and is bordered on the south by Egypt, and on the north and east by Israel.
- The Gaza Strip is a rectangular territory that is about 25 miles long and 4 to 5 miles wide.
- It's one of the world's most densely populated areas.

West Bank

- The territory of the West Bank is also located within Israel.
- The United Nations created the area for Arabs, but in the 1960s, Israelis began to invade and occupy the West Bank.
- More and more Jewish settlers have moved into the area, which has led to more tension with Arabs and to frequent violent conflicts.
- Political instability between Jews and Arabs plagues this area today.