

The Middle East

Geopolitical project

Grading 150 points
Distributed Wednesday, November 12
Due Friday, November 21

YOUR COUNTRY: _____

Objective The goal of this project is to immerse you in the physical, cultural, sociological, and historical life of one Middle Eastern nation. Drawing on your experience across the social studies – and capitalizing on the cartographic research skills we've developed so far this year – you will seek to answer the central question of this unit: **How does *how* people live dictate *where* people live**, and vice versa?

Procedures **Part 1: Research**

Gather demographic information about your country, explaining who lives there, how they worship, how much money they make, their ethnic composition, etc.

You'll also research the history of that nation. What chain of events led to the country as it exists today? How do current events continue to shape this country's identity?

Part 2: Cartography

Display your research visually. You may print blank maps and fill them in, but you may not submit maps you simply printed from a website or copied from a book.

You'll make **five maps of your country**:

1. **Physical.** Mountains, rivers, bodies of water – what defines your nation physically?
2. **Political.** Where are the borders, and what's on the other side? What is the capital, and where are the major cities?
3. **Demographic #1** (your choice)
4. **Demographic #2** (your choice)
5. **Demographic #3** (your choice)

You will also make three historical maps of the Middle East in general. There are three blank maps of the Middle East in the back of this packet.

Complete these **three historical maps**:

1. **The ancient Middle East.** Pick any time in ancient history – from the Sumerians to the Caliphate – and depict the entire area at that date. Maps of biblical or military content are welcome.
2. **Imperial Middle East.** Choose one empire, and explore that empire's sphere of influence over the Middle East. Choose from Egyptian, Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman, Byzantine, Sassanid, Caliphate, Seljuk, Mongol, Ottoman, or Saladin's Empire.
3. **20th Century Middle East.** Choose any decade between 1900 and 1970.

Be sure to include dates on all historical maps!

Part 3: Analysis

Reflecting on your research, choose one of the following topics and prepare an analytic argument for your presentation. Choose from the following:

1. **Sociological survey.** What makes members of this culture unique as a group? What makes them different from their nearby neighbors? How does this group identity guide the nation's contribution to the world, especially regarding military policy, politics, language, economics, cuisine, religion, and/or relations with neighboring nations? Check your demographic information. What does it all mean?
2. **Historical survey.** Timeline-style survey of your nation's history. Chart the key events of your nation's history on a series of maps, on a timeline, or both. Explain how those changes have shaped today's state of affairs in your nation, incorporating demographic data as needed.
3. **The Middle East and the West, 2008.** How does the West – specifically the U.S. – interact with the Middle East? Why? Choose one key current event (oil, war, terrorism, Islam, nuclear proliferation, etc.) and define it in a historical context. Then explain in depth geography's role in the emergence of that issue.

Part 4: Presentation

Take parts one through three, and show us what you've learned.

Your baseline assignment is a 5-10 minute presentation, where you explain what you learned and why it's important in today's world. You may use notes.

Acceptable alternatives include Powerpoint presentations, five-to-ten-minute-videos, and research papers (three pages plus).

Other types of presentations will be accepted with prior clearance. Let me know in advance what you're thinking about, and I'll probably approve it. I will also do all I can to get you the technology you need to complete this project to the best of your ability.

Part 5: Submission

Completed research packet:	30 points
Cartography:	40 points
Presentation:	80 points

TOTAL: 150 points

PEOPLE

Population

Age distribution

Population density

Religious groups

Official language(s)

Other languages

Ethnic groups

Population growth rate

Is education compulsory?

Average length of schooling

Fertility rate
(average number of children to a mother)

Literacy rate

Voting restrictions

GEOGRAPHY

Total area (square mi or km)

Land area

Capital

GEOGRAPHY

Location on the map	Topography		
	Neighboring countries		
Highest point (cite elevation)		Lowest point (cite elevation)	
Current environmental issues			
Compare it, in size, to part of America	Coastline	Land boundaries	Geographic coordinates
	Terrain		
Boundary disputes (current or historical)		Refugees/displacement (current or historical)	

GOVERNMENT	
Official website	
Type of government	Head of state
Local divisions <i>provinces, states, municipalities, etc.</i>	Head of state's date, place of birth
	Head of government
	Head of government's date, place of birth
Defense budget	Number of troops
Five largest cities 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Describe the distribution of power. Does the PM shape policy? The President? Is the head of state only a ceremonial leader? Is there a significant role for military leadership?
	Describe court system here

ECONOMY & FINANCE

Define *gross domestic product* here:

GDP

Monetary unit

GDP per capita

GDP growth

Industries

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Chief crops

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Natural resources

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Livestock

Arable land

Crude oil reserves

Electricity output

Breakdown of labor force

Unemployment rate

Urban:

Rural:

Imports (\$)

Exports (\$)

Budget

Tourism income

Main export partners

TRANSPORTATION			
Length of railroad	Number of airports	Chief port(s)	
Number of automobiles	Number of commercial air flights	Number of commercial passengers	
COMMUNICATION			
TV sets per capita	Radios per capita	Telephones per capita	
Internet users	Newspaper circulation	Cell phones in use	
HEALTH			
Life expectancy (male)	Life expectancy (female)	AIDS rate	
Birth rate	Death rate	Number of people living with AIDS/HIV	Number of annual AIDS-related deaths
Major infectious diseases/illnesses 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		Infant mortality rate	
		Percentage living below poverty line	

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST





