

# The Middle East

## Geopolitical project

**Grading** 130 points  
**Distributed** Tuesday, December 1  
**Due** Friday, December 11

YOUR COUNTRY:

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**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. Blank maps are in back of the packet.

You’ll make **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. **20<sup>th</sup> Century Middle East.** Choose any decade between 1900 and 1970.

**Part 3: Presentation**

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

1. **Packet submission.** You can simply complete the research packet and give an informal presentation of what makes your nation tick. Keep in mind that you’re banking the entire 100 points on the integrity of your research.

*For the following choices, the standard "open project" rules apply – you can complete parts of the research packet and have it comprise a percentage of your project grade.*

2. **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?

3. **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.
4. **The Middle East and the West, 2009.** 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.
5. **Student proposal.** This may expand on your earlier microproject, or open a new area of inquiry. Historical events that tie to modern geography are especially rich topics of study.

## 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

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

# GOVERNMENT

**Official website**

<b>Type of government</b>	<b>Head of state</b>
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<b>Local divisions</b> <i>provinces, states, municipalities, etc.</i>	<b>Head of state's date, place of birth</b>
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<b>Head of government</b>
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<b>Head of government's date, place of birth</b>
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<b>Defense budget</b>	<b>Number of troops</b>
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<b>Five largest cities</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>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?</b>
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<b>Describe court system here</b>
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4.  5.
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## 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

<b>Length of railroad</b>	<b>Number of airports</b>	<b>Chief port(s)</b>
<b>Number of automobiles</b>	<b>Number of commercial air flights</b>	<b>Number of commercial passengers</b>

## COMMUNICATION

<b>TV sets per capita</b>	<b>Radios per capita</b>	<b>Telephones per capita</b>
<b>Internet users</b>	<b>Newspaper circulation</b>	<b>Cell phones in use</b>

## HEALTH

<b>Life expectancy (male)</b>	<b>Life expectancy (female)</b>	<b>AIDS rate</b>	
<b>Birth rate</b>	<b>Death rate</b>	<b>Number of people living with AIDS/HIV</b>	<b>Number of annual AIDS-related deaths</b>
<b>Major infectious diseases/illnesses</b> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		<b>Infant mortality rate</b>	
		<b>Percentage living below poverty line</b>	

**OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST**






