Chapter 16: The Eastern Mediterranean

Unit 7
Section 1: Physical Geography
Landforms

- This region includes the following countries:
  - Syria
  - Jordan
  - Lebanon
  - Israel
  - Palestinian territories

- The Eastern Mediterranean is also known as the Levant
  - Comes from French, meaning “rising” due to the sun rising in the east
Landforms

• Some of the major landforms of the region include:
  – Anti-Lebanon Mountains
  – Syrian Desert
  – Jordan Rift Valley
  – Negev Desert

• Golan Heights
  – Consists of a rocky plateau that is officially part of Syria, but most of it has been occupied by Israel
Landforms

• Anti-Lebanon Mountain Range
  – Border between Syria and Lebanon
  – Very few people live there
    • Why?
  – People that do live there: nomadic herders
  – Highest point is Mount Hermon (9,232 ft)
    • Tourist attraction
Landforms

• Syrian Desert
  – Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq
  – Gravel, not sand
  – Some nomadic tribes pass through the area, but mainly used as a roadway

• Jordan Rift Valley
  – Valley formed by the separation of tectonic plates
  – Deep at 1,312 ft below sea level
    • Lowest point on Earth’s land surface
Water Systems

• Euphrates River
  – Starts in Turkey
  – Most important river in Syria; provides the entire country with water (for over 7,000 years!)
  – Lake al-Assad was formed after the river was dammed in the 1970s.

• Jordan River
  – Flows through all of the countries in the region
  – Flows south into the Sea of Galilee and eventually empties into the Dead Sea
  – Used for irrigation and farming
Water Systems

• Sea of Galilee
  – Western Israel

• Dead Sea
  – Lowest body of water on Earth
    (1,300 ft below sea level)

• Gulf of Aqaba
  – South of Israel and Jordan
  – Connects the region with the Red Sea and Indian Ocean
Climate, Biomes, Resources

• Coastal region have a Mediterranean climate
  – Hot dry summers, cool, rainy, winters
  – Good for growing different types of crops
  – Supports many different animal species

• Moving inland, climate becomes humid subtropical and transforms into semi-arid steppe and arid desert
Climate, Biomes, and Resources

- Deforestation has caused many issues
  - Cedar trees used to be plentiful, but now are only found in the western part of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains.

- Minerals:
  - Bromine
  - Magnesium
  - Gypsum
  - Marble
  - Chrome
  - Iron ore

- Oil and natural gas
Section 2: Human Geography
History and Government

• 3 major religions all exist in this one region:
  – Judaism
  – Christianity
  – Islam

• Kingdom of Israel
  – Jerusalem was capital and religious center
  – Hebrew Bible: Torah, book of the prophets, and sacred writings
History and Government

• Jesus, who was a Jewish teacher moved through Israel and created Christianity
  – Christian scriptures included: Old Testament (Hebrew Bible), New Testament (life of Jesus)
• Islam
  – 610 AD, revelations of God were given to Muhammad
  – He preached that people should turn away from sin and worship God
  – Followers claimed that he was the last in a line of prophets—Abraham and Jesus were also prophets
Independence and Conflict

• Islamic empires dominated the region
• By late 1800s, Western Europeans conquered much of the area
  – Very little in resources...until oil was discovered
• Lebanon and Syria gained independence from France in 1943 and 1946
• Jordan gained independence from England in 1946
Independence and Conflict

• After WWII, Jews and Arabs fought over Palestine
  – Jews wanted an internationally recognized homeland in a part of Palestine
  – Palestinians wanted all of Palestine
  – UN plan was to divide Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state
Society and Culture Today

- Israel official languages: Hebrew and Arabic
- All other areas: Arabic
- Most countries require schooling until at least age 15
  - Literacy rate is decent in many places
    - Especially for boys
- Women:
  - Israel, women enjoy nearly equal rights
  - In many other areas of the Middle East, women’s rights are limited
Economics

• Exports:
  – Oil and natural gas

• Import:
  – Many agricultural products due to climate

• Geography can make trade and transport difficult
  – Water transportation is vital due to the many major bodies of water
Section 3: Human-Environment Interaction
Managing Resources

- Desertification
- Overgrazing
- Overfishing
- Irrigation and water supplies
  - Water pollution
    - Fertilizers and pesticides
- Agriculture
- Environmental damage