The Geography of the Middle East
Essential Questions: Geography of the Middle East
Provide several examples from the PowerPoint to answer each question.

1. Why is the Middle East such a strategic location?
2. How do water resources in the Middle East promote both conflict and cooperation in the region?
3. How do the major geographic features of the Middle East dictate settlement patterns and population density?
4. How have humans changed their environment in order to suit their needs?
5. To what extent does the United States rely on the Middle East for its oil consumption? How do rising oil prices influence America as well as the rest of the world? (use “Over a Barrel” to help you!)
• Answer the 5 essential questions using 5 SPECIFIC details/examples from the PowerPoint and/or the article to support your answer.
Middle East?  OR  Near East?
OR Southwest Asia?  OR....?
Crossroads of Continents: connects Europe, Africa and Asia
• **Water** is the most precious resource for this region of deserts and steppe areas.
  
  – Many areas (ie. Nile River Valley) dependent on seasonal floods.

  – The alluvial soil around the river and the delta regions are especially good for farming

  – Some countries control other countries’ water supply — This leads to conflict
Desalination Plants
Major Geographic Regions of the Middle East

- Northern Tier (Turkey, Iran)
- Arabian Peninsula
- Nile Valley
- Fertile Crescent
- Maghreb (Northern Africa)
The **Arabian Peninsula** is primarily steppe and desert climate.
The Arabian Peninsula is mostly desert

- The Rub 'al-Khali, or "Empty Quarter" is a large desert in Saudi Arabia. It is the largest area of continuous sand in the world.

- The climate is extremely arid. Few places receive more than 7 in of rain a year, and no permanent streams exist. Summer temperatures reach as high as 130 F in some areas.
Rub al-Khali:

“The Empty Quarter”
Wadis – Instant Springs
Wadis are dry stream beds that fill with water only after rainfall in a desert or steppe region.
Desert Oases: Water at a Premium!
OASES

- Oasis is a place where water comes to the surface in desert area.
- "oasis" is believed to come from an ancient Egyptian word, "wah," meaning "fertile place in the desert."
- About 75 percent of the Sahara's population live in oases
Breeding Areas of Desert Locusts

Desert Locusts

Breeding Areas
- Orange: Development in spring (March-July)
- Yellow: Development during the monsoon period (July-October)
- Darker Yellow: Development in early winter (October-November)

Arrows indicate principal migration routes:
- From north-west Africa
- From India
Swarms of Desert Locusts!

Israel Hit By Worst Locust Plague Since the 1950s!

Locusts Swarm the Pyramids Complex at Giza!
The Mighty Nile River:
“Longest River in the World”

The Landsat image (left) shows the Nile flowing into its delta. An outline of the continental United States (right) shows the length of the Nile’s course. The actual length of the Nile with all its twists and turns is more than 4,100 miles.
The Nile and its tributaries flow though nine countries.
The Nile River flows South to North, where accumulation of sediment forms a delta.
The Nile River

• **Length:** From White Nile Source to Mouth- 4184 miles, longest river in the world

• **Name:** The Nile gets its name from the Greek word "Nelios", meaning River Valley.

• **Sources:** The White Nile: Lake Victoria, Uganda.
  The Blue Nile: Lake Tana, Ethiopia.
Egypt: The “Gift of the Nile”

95% of the Egyptian people live on 5% of the land!
Everyday Activities on the Nile

- Tourism
- Farming
- Fishing
Aswan High Dam, Egypt

Hydroelectric Power Plant
ASWAN DAM

on the Nile River

- The Dam was created in 1971
- The Dam wall is 365 feet high
- Created artificial lake—Lake Nasser, which covers 300 miles
Positive effects of Dam

- Prevents flooding
- Controls irrigation
- Can plant 3 crops instead of only 1 a year
- Creates Hydroelectric power—supplies Egypt with 40% of its electricity
- Amount of farmland has increased by 2.9 million acres
Negative Effects of Dam

• New layer of fertile soil no longer deposited by annual flood, must use fertilizers
  – Very expensive
  – Run off pollutes river, pollution kills fish
• New soil not added to Delta, which causes erosion
• Water flow has decreased.
  – Stagnant water allows disease to increase.
  – Salt content has increased, which can ruin crops
  – Some experts think weight of Lake Nasser may be producing earthquakes
Sinai Peninsula located between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula
Suez Canal

Completed by the British in 1869
The Suez Canal is a 101-mile waterway connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. It is used to transport goods to and from all three continents.
Fertile Crescent
The Fertile Crescent

- Greeks called this region Mesopotamia, which means "between the rivers."
- Many different civilizations developed in this small region because it is HIGHLY strategic and coveted
  - Sumerians, who were replaced in turn by the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
  - Today this land is known as Iraq
The Tigris & Euphrates River System

Mesopotamia: “Land Between the Two Rivers”

Marsh Arabs, So. Iraq
Dust Storms Along the Tigris-Euphrates Flood Plains
The Jordan River System: Israel & Jordan--A Fight Over Water Rights?
Dead Sea: Lowest Point on Earth

1,360' below sea level

Highest Salt Content (35%)
Dead Sea

- Lowest point on Earth- 1,360 feet below sea level
- Saltiest water in the world
- You float in its waters!
- Average of 330 days of full sunshine a year
Dead Sea Floater
Mountain Ranges in Mid-East

Elburz Mts., Iran

Zagros Mts., Iran

Lebanese Mts.

Taurus Mts., Turkey
The Middle East vs. the U. S.

Latitude Lines
Middle East: Climate Regions
Middle East: Population Density
Cairo, Egypt:
Most Populated City in the Middle East

17,000,000 + People!
The Middle East: Natural Vegetation
The Natural Resources of the Middle East

[Map showing natural resources in the Middle East, including nomadic herding, commercial farming, subsistence farming, commercial fishing, coal, petroleum, natural gas, phosphates, hydroelectric power, iron, copper, and lead and tin.]
World Oil Reserves

Proved oil reserves at end 2002
(Thousands of million barrels)

- Asia Pacific: 38.7
- North America: 49.9
- Africa: 77.4
- Europe & Eurasia: 97.5
- S. & Cent. America: 98.6

Middle East: 685.6
Saudi Oil Fields & Refineries
Kuwait: An Island Floating on a Sea of Oil

Kuwait City
The U. S. imports about 30% of its oil from the Middle East.