The Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Iran

Section 1

MAIN IDEAS

1. Major physical features of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Iran are desert plains and mountains.
2. The region has a dry climate and little vegetation.
3. Most of the world is dependent on oil, a resource that is exported from this region.

Key Terms and Places

Arabian Peninsula  region of the world that has the largest sand desert in the world
Persian Gulf  body of water surrounded by the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, and Iraq
Tigris River  river that flows across a low, flat plain in Iraq and joins the Euphrates River
Euphrates River  river that flows across a low, flat plain in Iraq and joins the Tigris River
oasis  a wet, fertile area in a desert that forms where underground water bubbles to the surface
wadis  dry streambeds
fossil water  water that is not being replaced by rainfall

Section Summary

PHYSICAL FEATURES

The region of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Iran has huge deserts. Not all deserts are sand. Some are bare rock or gravel. The region forms a semicircle, with the Persian Gulf at the center.

The region’s main landforms are rivers, plains, plateaus, and mountains. The two major rivers are the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq. They make a narrow area good for crops. This area was called Mesopotamia in ancient times.

The Arabian Peninsula has flat, open plains in the east. In the south, desert plains are covered with sand. Deserts in the north are covered with volcanic rock. The peninsula rises slowly towards the Red Sea. This makes a high landscape of mountains and

Underline the words that tell you what deserts can be made of.

List the four main landforms of this region.

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flat plateaus. The highest point is in the mountains in Yemen. Plateaus and mountains also cover most of Iran.

**CLIMATE AND VEGETATION**
This region has a desert climate. It can get very hot in the day and very cold at night. The Rub’ al-Khali desert in Saudi Arabia is the world’s largest sand desert. Its name means “Empty Quarter,” because it has so little life.

Some areas with plateaus and mountains get rain or snow in winter. Some mountain peaks get more than 50 inches of rain a year. Trees grow in these areas. They also grow in *oases* in the desert. At an oasis, underground water bubbles up. Some plants also grow in parts of the desert. Their roots either go very deep or spread out very far to get as much water as they can.

**RESOURCES**
Water is one of this region’s two most valuable resources. But water is scarce. Some places in the desert have springs that give water. Wells also provide water. Some wells are dug into dry streambeds called *wadis*. Other wells go very deep underground. These often get *fossil water*. This is water that is not replaced by rain, so these wells will run dry over time.

Oil is the region’s other important resource. This resource is plentiful. Oil has brought wealth to the countries that have oil fields. But oil cannot be replaced once it is taken. Too much drilling for oil may cause problems in the future.

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**
**Critical Thinking: Designing** Design an illustrated poster using the term *Persian Gulf*. For each letter, write a word containing that letter that tells something about the region.
DIRECTIONS  Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word in the word pair that best completes the sentence.

1. The countries of the ___________________________ form a semicircle.
   (Persian Gulf/Arabian Peninsula)

2. The ______________________ begins in a humid region and flows through a dry area. (Tigris River/fossil water)

3. The _____________________ joins with the Tigris River before reaching the Persian Gulf. (oasis/Euphrates River)

4. The _____________________ is in the center of this region.
   (Persian Gulf/Arabian Peninsula)

5. One water resource for this region is the wells that are dug into ________________________, or dry streambeds. (fossil water/wadis)

DIRECTIONS  Use all of the terms from the word bank to write a summary of what you learned in the section.

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