

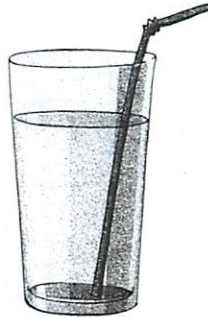
Chapter 14

SS7G6 *The student will discuss environmental issues across Southwest Asia (Middle East).*

a. *Explain how water pollution and the unequal distribution of water impacts irrigation and drinking water.*

Fresh Water—a Shrinking Supply

Fresh water is a precious resource in the Middle East. About five percent of the world's population lives there, but less than one percent of the world's fresh water is available to its residents. Throughout the Middle East, water shortages, unequal water distribution, and pollution further decrease the amount of water available for drinking and irrigation.



Unhappy Iraqis, Thirsty Israelites

Water needs in the Middle East continually cause conflicts between countries. Who owns the water? Who should be allowed to divert water for irrigation? There are no enforceable laws to govern the use of international water. The following examples give you an idea of the various water problems facing the Middle East.



Word Definition

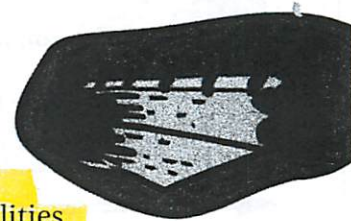
aquifer: an underground layer of rock and sand

that contains water

ground water: water below the surface that supplies wells and springs

Turkey: In the highlands of Turkey, snow melts and forms the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Turkey is better off than its neighbors because of these rivers, but pollution from industries and agriculture is a growing problem. Pollution also comes from oil spills in the Black Sea.

Turkey, Syria, Iraq: Turkey built dams along the Euphrates to use the water for hydroelectric power and irrigation. This reduced the amount of water reaching Syria. In turn, Syria built a dam and reduced the river's flow into Iraq. In 1975, Syria and Iraq came close to war over water issues! Iraq also faces polluted waters from industry and war damage to water treatment facilities and petroleum drilling equipment.

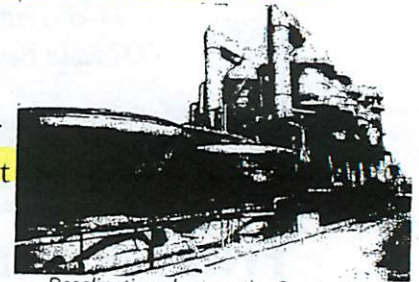


Israel: Consumption is up, and rainfall is down, leading Israel to draw water from its aquifers. Now, more water is being taken out of the aquifers than is replenished by rain, and salt water is entering the aquifers. Israel has also been involved in military battles over water rights to the Jordan River.

Iran: Iran is depleting the water in its aquifers for irrigation and drinking water. The important pistachio crop is being hurt by water shortages in the south.

Afghanistan: Open sewers, failed septic systems, fertilizers, and pesticides are contaminating Afghanistan's shrinking water supply.

Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia faces severe problems in its desert climate, including water scarcity and poor quality of ground water from saltwater intrusion. One solution is *desalination*, which is the process of taking salt out of seawater and using it for drinking water. About 30 desalination plants in Saudi Arabia provide most of the country's drinking water.



Desalination plant on the Caspian Sea



Quick Quiz

Match the country with the correct water issue.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Afghanistan | A. Less water to irrigate pistachio trees |
| _____ 2. Iraq | B. Battles over water rights to the Jordan River |
| _____ 3. Turkey | C. Harsh climate has led to desalination of seawater |
| _____ 4. Israel | D. Oil spills from ships pollute the Black Sea |
| _____ 5. Saudi Arabia | E. War has damaged water treatment facilities |
| _____ 6. Iran | F. Open sewers, failed septic systems |



Chapter 15

SS7G7 The student will explain the impact of location, climate, physical characteristics, distribution of natural resources and population distribution on Southwest Asia (Middle East).

- Explain how the distribution of oil has affected the development of Southwest Asia (Middle East).
- Describe how the deserts and rivers of Southwest Asia (Middle East) have affected the population in terms of where people live, the type of work they do, and how they travel.

Life in the Middle East

What is it like to live in the Middle East? The climate varies, but is mostly arid with hot, dry summers and cool winters. If you live along the Caspian Sea coast of northern Iran, you might have 80 inches of rain a year. However, in the deserts of Iran, rain might not fall for several years. Throughout Saudi