Chapter 17: Mediterranean Europe

Section 1: Spain and Portugal

Section 2: Italy

Section 3: Greece
• How is Spain physically, economically, and culturally distinct from other nations of the European continent?
• How are political conditions and economic activities in Portugal different today from what they were in the past?
Geographically, Spain is separated from Europe by the Pyrenees Mountains, and steep cliffs line much of the coastline.

- High plateaus rise from the narrow coastal plains, and only one of Spain’s many rivers is navigable.
- Most of Spain has a Mediterranean climate, but it is also fairly dry.
- Spain’s economy has shifted from agriculture to new industries in recent years.
- With its central location, Madrid became the hub, or central point of activity and influence.
- Local regions retain their strong, independent identities, and they seek greater local control.
• Abundant rainfall favors agriculture, and Portugal exports port wine, olive oil, and cork products.

• In the fifteenth century, Portugal explored new sea routes to Asia around Africa and established many trading colonies.

• Spain and Portugal signed a treaty giving control of Brazil and most of Africa to Portugal, while Spain claimed the rest of Latin America.

• Portuguese and Spanish colonial empires shrank in the early 1800s, and only in 1975 did Portugal grant its African colonies independence.

• Nearly one million people from the former African colonies have immigrated to Portugal seeking greater opportunities.

• Portugal is expanding an economy once based heavily on agriculture.
What physically separates Spain from the rest of Europe?
   a) the Pyrenees Mountains
   b) the Meseta
   c) Siroccos
   d) the Guadalquivir River

Spain and Portugal came into conflict when expanding their colonial empires in
   a) Africa.
   b) East Asia.
   c) South America.
   d) North America.

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• As they plan for their future, how do the people of Italy continue to adapt to their environment and expand their economy?
• How do Italy’s physical characteristics and economic activities divide the country into three large regions?
The Apennine Mountains, a young mountain range that experiences seismic activity, runs the length of Italy.

- Italy has a Mediterranean climate.
- Through overgrazing, much of the soil has eroded.
- Populated areas are very crowded.
- Many Italians from the poor south have migrated to the industrial north to find jobs.
- Italy helped form the European Union, and access to wider markets helped transform the nation’s economy from agricultural to industrial.
Chapter 17, Section 2

The Regions of Italy

Northern Italy

• The Po River valley is the heartland of this region, and is an important agricultural and industrial center.
• Rivers in the Alps provide hydroelectricity, and the Alps are also home to ski resorts.
• Venice suffers from pollution and subsidence, but remains popular with tourists.

Central Italy

• Central Italy consists of Rome and the surrounding regions.
• Rome was chosen as the capital of a unified Italy because of its central location and historic ties to the Roman Empire.
• Florence is a cultural center made famous by artists during the Renaissance.

Southern Italy

• This region, which includes Sardinia and Sicily, is known as the Mezzogiorno.
• Many southern Italians migrate to northern Italy to find jobs or to Naples, which is very poor and has a high unemployment rate.
How do the Apennine Mountains affect population density?

a) They block movement between cities.
b) The rugged terrain is difficult to live on, so lowland cities are crowded.
c) They leave little area for cities, so most people live in isolated villages.
d) High levels of seismic activity discourage people from living in Italy.

The Po River valley is located in which region of Italy?

a) northern Italy
b) southern Italy
c) central Italy
d) Mezzogiorno

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• How do Greece’s physical characteristics influence its economic activities and trade patterns?
• What mystery from Greece’s past are scientists trying to understand?
• Why is Greek culture considered a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures?
• The Aegean Sea occupies a graben, an area of land that dropped down between faults.
• Despite poor soil and little rainfall, agriculture is important to Greece.
• Over one third of the Greek population lives in the crowded city of Athens.
• Greece has one of the world’s largest commercial shipping fleets, and shipbuilding is an important industry.
• Greece has many islands, but fewer than 200 are inhabitable, or able to support permanent residents.
Minoan civilization, named after the legendary king Minos, flourished on Crete about 3,500 years ago.

Around 1500 B.C., Minoan civilization fell into a rapid decline, which some scholars thought might have been the result of an invasion or an earthquake.

One possible explanation is a volcanic eruption on the island of Thera, which battered Crete with a thick blanket of ash, earthquakes, and tsunamis, or giant sea waves.

Other evidence indicates that the eruption on Thera took place more than one hundred years before the collapse of Minoan civilization.
• Greece can be considered a Western country, because much of Western culture has so many roots in ancient Greece.
• Some Western ideas about democratic government are based on Greek ideals.
• As the Roman Empire declined, Greece became an important part of the Byzantine Empire.
• Greece suffered invasion from many groups over the next 1,000 years.
• In 1453, Turks conquered the city of Constantinople, now called Istanbul, and ruled Greece for almost four centuries.
• After a ten-year rebellion, Greece achieved independence from Turkey in 1829.
On which economic activity does Greece rely most heavily?

- a) industry that makes consumer goods
- b) overseas trade
- c) hunting and gathering
- d) forestry

Greece is considered a Western nation because

- a) it lies within the boundary of Western Europe.
- b) Western culture has many roots in ancient Greece.
- c) it had been conquered by the Turks.
- d) Greek culture is very similar to that of other Western countries.
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