

Country of the Week: Morocco



FRAME 11

The North African country of Morocco has coasts on the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

GENERAL LEVEL

Morocco, our Country of the Week, is a North African country lying on two important bodies of water. **What are these bodies of water?** (*The Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.*) Morocco is a little bigger than California. It also controls the country of Western Sahara. A mountain range goes through the middle of Morocco. Desert lies to the east and west of these mountains. But Morocco has good farmland and pastures along its coasts. It also has a mild climate. It grows most of its own grain, fruits, and vegetables. This picture shows an outdoor fruit-and-vegetable market in a Moroccan city. Manufacturing is also becoming an important source of jobs. Morocco's biggest city, Casablanca, has 3.5 million people. **From the map, what is Morocco's capital?** (*Rabat.*) **Would you like to visit Morocco? Why?**

The earliest known people in Morocco were the Berbers, who probably came from Europe. Over the centuries, many other peoples conquered what is now Morocco. In the 600s, Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula swept across North Africa. These Arabs were Muslims and they brought Islam to the area. In the late 700s, an Arab leader united the Berbers and Arabs in the area and created the first Moroccan state. Later, Spain and France each took over part of Morocco. Morocco had a king, but the European countries really controlled the government. In the 1900s, Moroccans groups fought for their independence. In 1956, France and Spain both gave up their claims in Morocco. NEXT PICTURE

ADVANCED LEVEL

The country of the week, Morocco, is a developing nation in North Africa. It has a long coastline on two major bodies of water. Although some of the coastline is steep and mountainous, Morocco still has some important ports, including its largest city, Casablanca. **Have you heard of this city before?** A mountain range crosses the middle of the country. The Sahara Desert lies east and south of the mountains, but the country has fertile lowlands along much of its coastland. Morocco is more self-sufficient in food production than many of its neighbors. You see one of Morocco's open-air food markets pictured here. The country's manufacturing sector has also been growing.

Morocco is a little bigger than California and has a population of about 30 million. About 99 percent of Moroccans are of mixed Berber-Arab ancestry. The Berbers were the first known inhabitants in the region. They are believed to have come from Europe. **From the map, how difficult do you think it would have been for Berbers to cross over from Europe to Africa?** A succession of other peoples, including Carthaginians and Romans, conquered the region. The Arabs who swept across North Africa in the seventh century had the most lasting impact. They brought their religion, language, and culture to the area. **What religion did the Arabs import with them?** (*Islam.*) Later, Spain and France gained control of Morocco. In 1956, the country gained independence from the European countries. Morocco has since annexed most of the country of Western Sahara. NEXT PICTURE

BASIC LEVEL

This week's country, Morocco, has coasts on two important bodies of water. **What are these bodies of water?** (*The Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.*) **Can you tell what continent Morocco is on?** (*Africa.*) Morocco also controls Western Sahara. People called Berbers were some of the earliest people to live in Morocco. Many different peoples conquered Morocco over the years. In the 600s, Arabs began to move into the area. Today the people of Morocco are mostly Arab-Berbers.

Morocco has many farms where grain, fruits, and vegetables are grown. Here you see an outdoor market in a Moroccan city where some of these fruits and vegetables are for sale. Moroccans raise sheep, goats, and cattle. The country also has many factories and some big cities. Its biggest city is Casablanca. **From the map, what is Morocco's capital?** (*Rabat.*) NEXT PICTURE

Country of the Week: Morocco (continued)



FRAME 12

Morocco is one of the oldest monarchies in the world.

GENERAL LEVEL

You may have seen the man shown at the left in news photos recently. An earthquake in northern Morocco killed nearly 600 people and destroyed thousands of homes. This man visited the area to look at the damage and to encourage the people. He is King Mohammed the Sixth, Morocco's king. King Mohammed told the government to work faster to get help to the earthquake victims.

Morocco has been a monarchy for 12 centuries.

What is a monarchy? (A country that has a king or queen.) Even when other countries controlled Morocco, it had a king. Morocco has a constitution, which guarantees the rights of the people. The king of Morocco has a lot of power. He appoints the prime minister and the ministers that make up the cabinet. The country also has a group of lawmakers. The people elect two-thirds of these representatives, and local governments and other groups choose the rest. The people of Morocco hold a lot of respect for their king. This is one of the things that unifies the country.

What do you think it would be like to have a king?

Most Moroccans also belong to the same religion. About 99 percent of them are Muslims. The picture here shows one of the country's beautiful mosques.

What is a mosque? (A place of worship for the religion of Islam, or Muslims.) Islamic teachings regulate most people's lives. Islam also links Morocco to all of the other Arab countries. **What else do you know about Morocco?** END OF STORY

ADVANCED LEVEL

The man pictured at the left is the Kingdom of Morocco's ruler and an important unifying symbol for the country. He is King Mohammed the Sixth. Founded 12 centuries ago, Morocco's monarchy is one of the oldest in the world. Morocco is now a constitutional monarchy. **How would you define a "constitutional monarchy"?** (A government headed by a monarch who is subject to certain laws as defined by a constitution, as are its citizens. The constitution guarantees the rights of the citizens.) Morocco's king appoints the country's prime minister and a cabinet of other ministers. The people elect two-thirds of the legislators, and local governments and other organizations choose the rest. King Mohammed is too liberal for some of the country's fundamentalist leaders, but he is also a popular ruler. Recently, an earthquake devastated some villages in northern Morocco. About 600 people died and thousands more were left homeless. King Mohammed was met with cheers when he visited the earthquake area. He ordered the government workers to speed up aid for the earthquake victims.

The Moroccan king also represents the spiritual authority in this country, where 99 percent of the people are Muslims. The picture here shows one of Morocco's beautiful mosques. Theoretically, the laws of the land are based on the Quran, but Morocco does have secular courts. King Mohammed has done a lot to protect Morocco's traditions while at the same time trying to modernize the country. **What else you know about Morocco?** END OF STORY

BASIC LEVEL

Morocco's full name is the Kingdom of Morocco. **Why do you think it's called this?** (Because it has a king.) You see Morocco's king on the left. His name is

King Mohammed the Sixth. The king chooses the country's other leaders, including a prime minister. The people get to elect many of the lawmakers, however. Not long ago, there was an earthquake in northern Morocco. Nearly 600 people were killed. You may have seen pictures of King Mohammed visiting the area where the earthquake hit. He told the government to work harder to help the people who were hurt and lost their homes in the earthquake.

The Arabs who came to Morocco in the 600s brought the religion of Islam to the area. About 99 percent of Moroccans are Muslims. The picture on the right shows a mosque. **What is a mosque?** (A place of worship for Muslims.) **How would you like to visit Morocco?** END OF STORY