

# Ethnic Groups

An ethnic group is a group of people who share cultural ideas and beliefs that have been a part of their community for generations.

The characteristics they may have in common could include a language, a religion, a shared history, types of foods, and a set of traditional stories, beliefs, or celebrations.

These things make up a common culture shared by those in a particular ethnic group.



# Religious Groups

- A religious group shares a share a belief system, in a god or gods, with a specific set of rituals and literature.



- People from different ethnic groups may share the same religion; through they may be from very different cultures.

# Arabs

- Southwest Asia is home to many different ethnic groups who share similar religions.
- The Arabs of Southwest Asia believe themselves to be descendants of Abraham in the Bible, through his son Ishmael.
- They make up the majority of those who live throughout the region known as the Middle East, though there are many differences among them.
- Most Arabs practice the religion of Islam and call themselves Muslims.

# Arab

- Arabs comprise most of the population of Southwest Asia.
- However, many Arabs also live in Northern Africa, Canada, Europe, and the US.
- Most Arabs practice Islam and speak Arabic.
- Small numbers of Arabs practice other religions.



- Those who call themselves Muslims are further divided, as some call themselves Sunni Muslims, while others are Shia Muslims.
- Some Arabs are Christians.
- Most Arabs, whether they are Muslim or Christian, speak the Arabic language.



# Persians

- Persians are those who live in the modern country of Iran. The country of Persia became known as Iran after World War I.
- The Persian people are descended from a different group than those who are Arabs and Jews. Their ancestors were Indo-Europeans from Central Europe and Southern Russia.
- Persians, or Iranians, speak Farsi, a language that uses the Arabic alphabet but is actually a different language.
- They practice Islam, but most belong to the Shia group of Muslims.

# Persian

- Persians make up about half of Iran's current population.
- They have their own language called Persian or Farsi.
- Most Persians in Iran today practice Shi'a Islam, but some are Sunni and other religions.
- Persian women have faced many challenges as a result of strict cultural and religious practices.



# Kurds

The Kurds are an ethnic group that are found in the mountainous areas where Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq come together.

Many Kurds hope to have a nation of their own some day, a hope that has caused conflict with the countries in which Kurdish people live.

Most Kurds are Sunni Muslim, though there is a small minority who are Shia Muslims.





# Kurdish

The Kurds see themselves as a distinct ethnic group from others in the area.

They speak their own language, known as Kurdish, and have a separate history, literature, music, and set of traditions.

- Almost one-fifth of the population of Turkey is Kurdish.

Kurdish Muslims are usually less strict about certain Islamic practices.

- For example, there are fewer laws for how Kurdish women should dress than there are for Iranian and Arab women.
- Kurds share many aspects of their culture with Iranians.
- Persecuted by Saddam Husain

