A topographic map of Southwest Asia and the Middle East, showing the region's physical features. The map uses a color gradient from green (low elevation) to brown and tan (high elevation). The Taurus and Zagros mountain ranges are visible in the north, and the Arabian Peninsula is shown in the south. The Persian Gulf, Red Sea, and Mediterranean Sea are also depicted. The text "Southwest Asia's Geography" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, bold font with a black outline. Below it, the subtitle "Physical Features of the Middle East" is written in a smaller, black font.

# Southwest Asia's Geography

Physical Features of the Middle East

# Standards

**SS7G5 The student will locate selected features in Southwestern Asia (Middle East).**

a. Locate on a world and regional political-physical map: Euphrates River, Jordan River, Tigris River, Suez Canal, Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and Gaza Strip.

b. Locate on a world and regional political-physical map the nations of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

# Essential Question

- How has the physical features and culture of Southwest Asia laid a foundation for the Middle East of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

# Euphrates & Tigris Rivers

- Both rivers begin in Turkey and flow south through Iraq.
- In southern Iraq, the Euphrates River joins with the Tigris River to form one waterway called the Shaat al-Arab.
  - It then flows along the border between Kuwait and Iran and empties into the Persian Gulf.
- The rivers provide water for both drinking and farming.
- The countries that share these rivers have had problems over how the water should be shared.



# Euphrates River



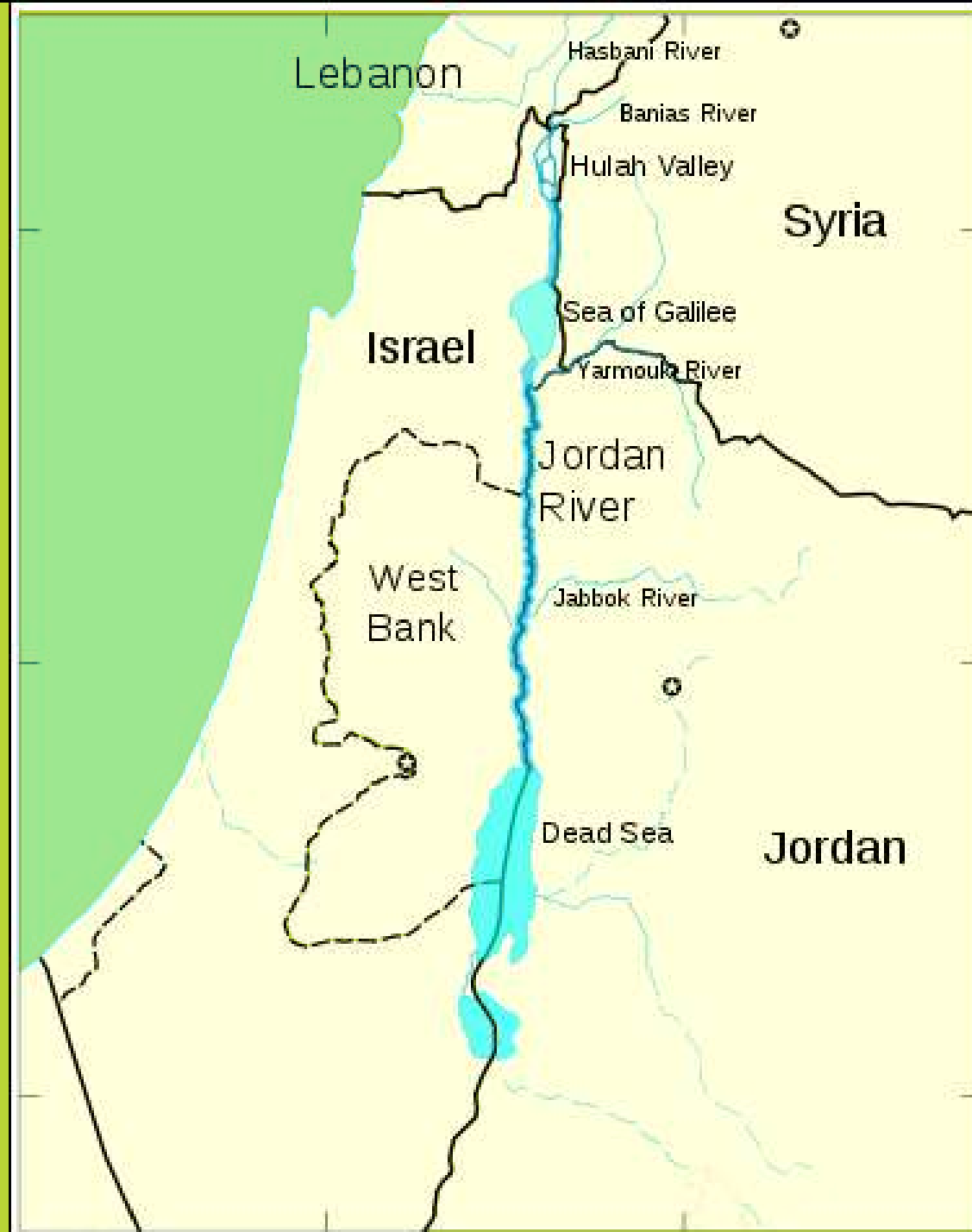
# Tigris River



# Jordan River

- The Jordan River begins at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee & flows south until it reaches the Dead Sea.
- This river is a main source of water for Israel, Jordan, parts of Syria, & many of those living in the West Bank & the Gaza Strip.
- The Jordan River is also important because it is the political boundary between Israel, the West Bank, & Jordan.









# Suez Canal

- This is a 120-mile man-made waterway that is used to transport goods to and from all three continents.
  - The French started building it, but it was completed by the British in 1869.
- It connects the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea.
  - At the northern end of the Red Sea, ships can enter the canal and can get to the Mediterranean Sea without having to sail all around the continent of Africa.







# Persian Gulf

- This is located between the country of Iran and the Arabian Peninsula.
- It is one of the main ways oil is shipped from the rich fields of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other countries that line its shores.
  - All of the countries that produce oil in that region depend on the Persian Gulf as a shipping route.











# Strait of Hormuz

- It is located at one end of the Persian Gulf.
- It connects the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea.
- It is very important because any ships coming out of or into the Persian Gulf must navigate through this very narrow waterway.





# Arabian Sea

- This is located north of the Indian Ocean.
- It forms part of a key shipping route between Europe and India through the Suez Canal.







# Red Sea

- This is an inlet of the Indian Ocean that lies between Africa and Asia.
- Because of its location between Europe, Persian Gulf, and East Asia, heavy shipping traffic takes place here.
  - During the Roman Empire, it was an important route for trade between Rome and China.
  - During the Middle Ages, it was a key part of the Spice Trade.









# Gaza Strip

- It is located along the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
- The Gaza Strip is a rectangular territory that is about 25 miles long and 4 to 5 miles wide.
  - It's one of the world's most densely populated areas.
- The Gaza Strip is often politically unstable and there have been many outbreaks of violence over the last 60 years.





# GAZA STRIP

-  Built-up area
-  Refugee Camp
-  Crossing Point



# Gaza Skyline, 2007



# Political and Physical Features of Southwest Asia

## POLITICAL FEATURES:

1. Label the following countries (check them off as you label):

- \_\_\_ Afghanistan
- \_\_\_ Iran
- \_\_\_ Iraq
- \_\_\_ Israel
- \_\_\_ Saudi Arabia
- \_\_\_ Turkey

## PHYSICAL FEATURES:

2. On your map, create a Map Key (Legend) that includes a symbol for:

- rivers
- gulf
- sea
- canal
- strait
- Gaza Strip

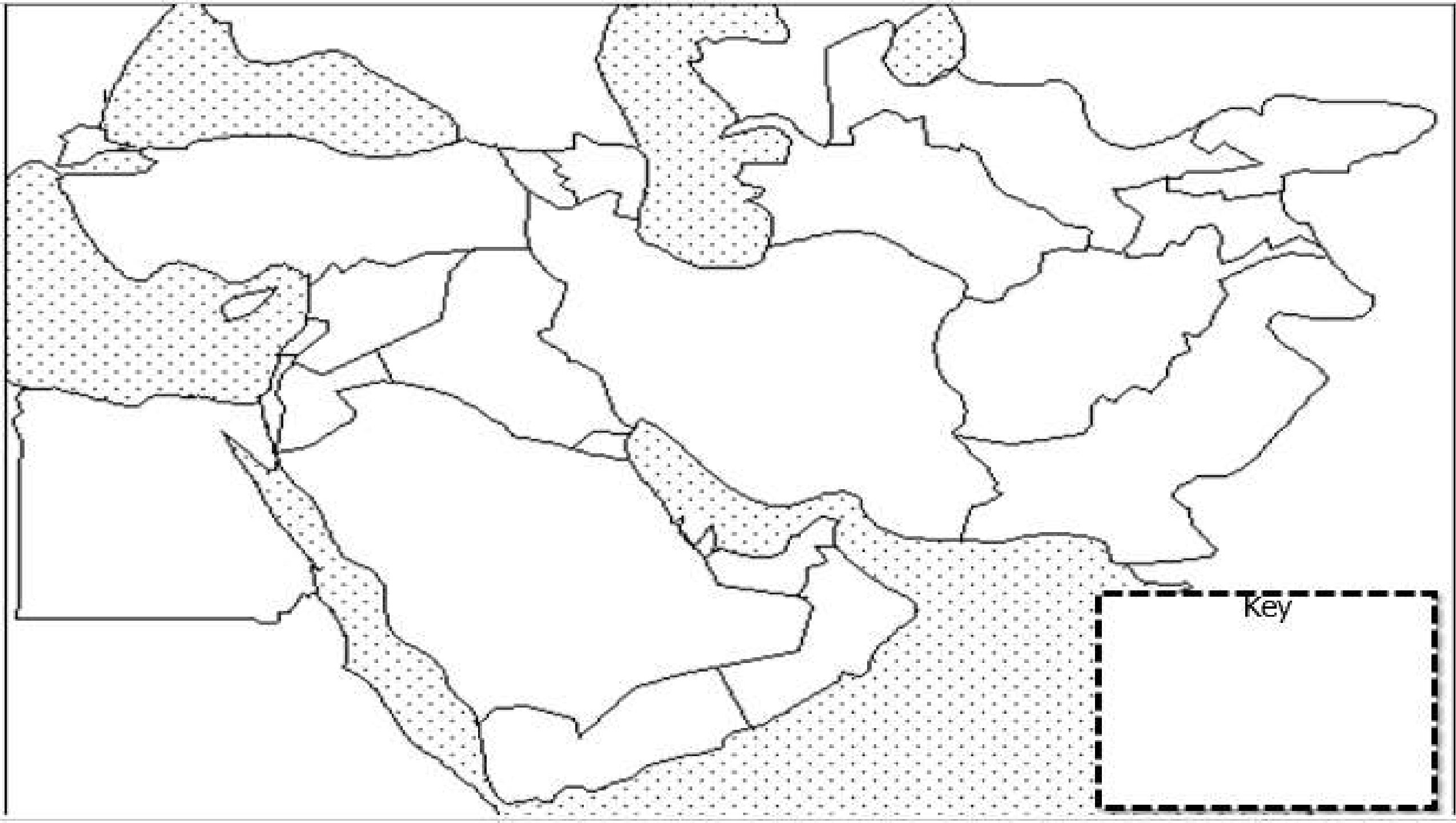
3. Label the following physical features on the map (check them off as you label):

- \_\_\_ Euphrates River
- \_\_\_ Jordan River
- \_\_\_ Tigris River
- \_\_\_ Suez Canal
- \_\_\_ Persian Gulf
- \_\_\_ Strait of Hormuz
- \_\_\_ Arabian Sea
- \_\_\_ Red Sea
- \_\_\_ Gaza Strip

4. Draw the symbol for each feature next to the correct label on the map. Use the same symbols that you created in your Map Key.

Example: draw a red rectangle around the Suez Canal to represent the man-made canal.

5. COLOR ALL SYMBOLS!



# Be the Thing...

**Your Task:** Choose one of Southwest Asia's physical features. Imagine that you are the physical features. Using descriptive details, include at least 5 to 8 interesting facts about "yourself". Draw a colorful illustration of the feature.

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a student to draw a colorful illustration of a physical feature from Southwest Asia and write descriptive details about it.

# Southwest Asia's Geography

## Deep Thoughts...

**Directions:** After completing your map of Southwest Asia's physical features and discussing characteristics of the features in the presentation, think about how these features impact various aspects of life in Southwest Asia.

1. Which physical features make trade easier? How?
2. Which physical features make transportation & travel easier? How?
3. Which physical features are helpful for farming? Why are they important?
4. Are there any physical features that countries might fight over? Why do you think they would do this?
5. How does geography impact the relationships among countries in Southwest Asia?

# Teachers

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