**MIDDLE EAST 1 - The Geography of the Middle East**

* + The focus of this unit is how physical and cultural geography shape the environment, nations, and people of the Middle East
* The **Middle East** is also called **Southwest Asia**, because it is the southwest region of the Asian continent
	+ This is important to know because different resources may call this region by either name
	+ Middle East = Southwest Asia = Middle East
* **Location of the Middle Eas**t
* While the location of this region is not directly addressed in any of our standards or elements, it plays a direct and important role in the history and development of the region *(as important, possibly more so, than the lack of water and abundance of oil in the region)*
* Southwest Asia, *(The Middle East)*, is the landmass that connects the three major continents found primarily in the Eastern Hemisphere: Europe, Asia, & Africa
* Europe lies to the North and West of the Middle East
	+ The Southwest Asian nation of Turkey borders the European nations of Georgia and Armenia to the East,
	+ It shares a portion of the Mediterranean Sea’s coastline with Southern Europe to the west, touching Greece at it’s northern point. This the thin strip of land between Turkey and Greece has been important in connecting Asia and the Silk Roads to Western Europe.
	+ The city of Istanbul, which was at one time called Byzantine & another time called Constantinople, lies almost halfway along this connecting land strip and was an important and historic stop along these international trade routes
* The continent of Asia, of course, continues out to the North and East from Southwest Asia (Middle East), eventually reaching out through India to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean through China
* The continent of Africa lies to the South and West of the Middle East
	+ The Southwestern Asian nation of Israel borders the Northeastern African nation of Egypt, both areas again share portions of the Mediterranean coastline
* The unique location of the Middle East region has had major implications on the history and development of the area.
	+ Far from being isolated, its connections to all three continents has led to its being affected in many different ways and areas through the trade and travel that passed through along its way around the globe ~ religion, culture, art, government, technology.
* These outside influences have significantly driven the shape of both the history and present of the Middle Eastern Region and will continue to impact them as the people their head into the future.