

LEVELED BOOK • U

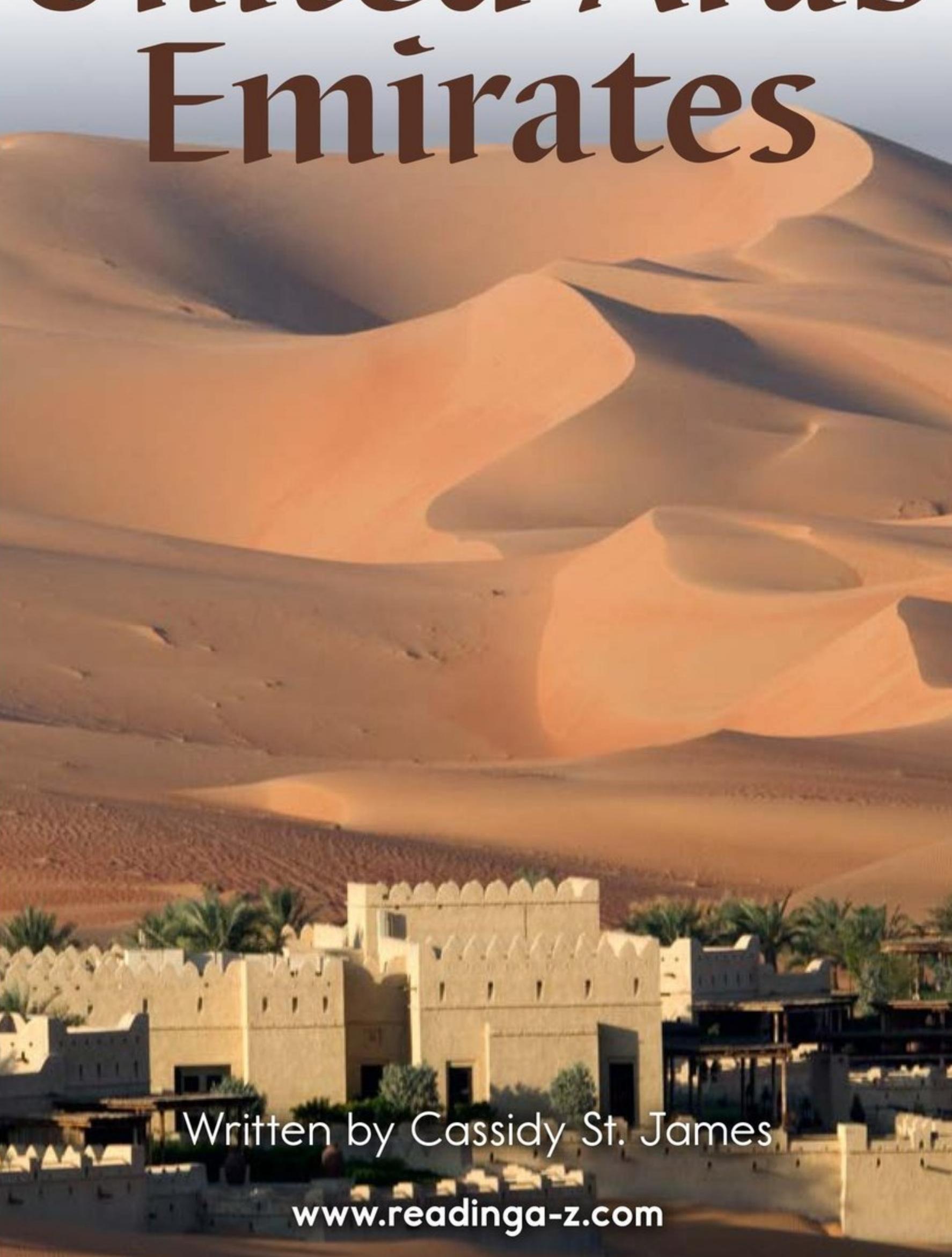
United Arab Emirates

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Focus Question

How has the United Arab Emirates changed from when it was first settled to today?

Words to Know

culture
dialects
federation
fertile
gulf
independence

industries
Islam
mosques
peninsula
symbol
tourists

Front cover: A gleaming United Arab Emirates skyline with a mosque in foreground

Title page: Abu Dhabi desert

Page 3: A family selects a cool treat from Dubai's first ice cream van.

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Correlation

LEVEL U	
Fountas & Pinnell	Q
Reading Recovery	40
DRA	40



Table of Contents

Where Is It?	4
People	6
Land	8
History	10
Landmarks	12
Conclusion	14
Glossary	16



Where Is It?

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) covers about 83,600 square kilometers (32,278 sq. mi.) of the **Arabian Peninsula**, which is in the Middle East. The Middle East is the area where Europe, Africa, and Asia meet. Saudi Arabia and Oman border the UAE. A small part of the UAE's coast lies directly on the Indian Ocean. The rest runs along the **Persian Gulf**, which is called the Arabian Gulf by the people in the region. In all, the UAE has 1,318 kilometers (819 mi.) of coastline.

The UAE is made up of seven Arab states: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah (SHAR-juh), Ajman (ej-MAHN), Umm al Quwain (OOM AHL ky-WAYN), Ras al Khaimah (RAHS AHL KY-muh), and Al Fujairah (AHL foo-JY-ruh). Each state has its own capital city, which shares the name of the state. The country's capital city is Abu Dhabi, which lies on an island in the gulf.

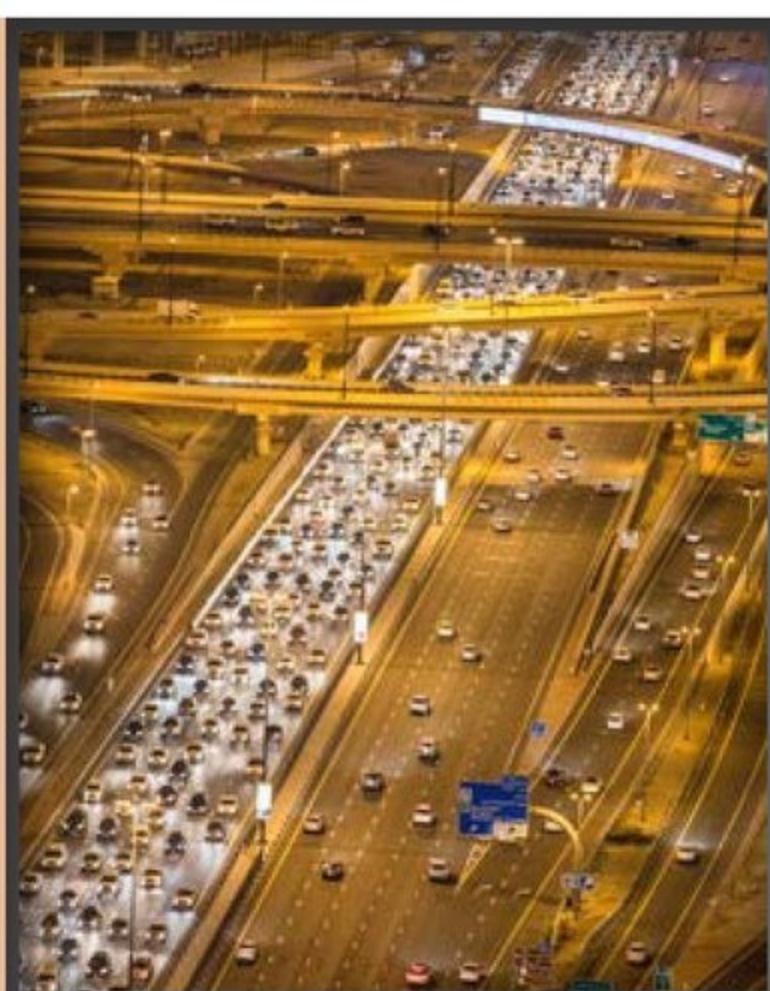
Abu Dhabi is the UAE's second-largest city. Its history dates back to 3,000 BCE. Abu Dhabi blends its ancient **culture** with modern buildings. Beautiful white-domed **mosques** and shining skyscrapers decorate the city.

Northeast of Abu Dhabi is the country's largest city, Dubai—a center for banking, trade, and **tourists**. It is home to the world's tallest building, the largest dancing fountain, and one of the largest human-made islands.

Do You Know?

Dubai is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. In 1968, there were just 13 cars in the entire city. Today, planners are building double-decker roads for the city's 1.4 million vehicles.

A modern roadway in Dubai



People

While millions of people live in the UAE, most are not citizens. People from other countries make up a large part of the UAE's population. Most of these people came from other Arab countries or from South Asia to work in the country's successful oil and construction industries.

UAE citizens, called Emirati, come from Arab tribes that settled in the area long ago. Though these tribes have often fought, many share certain traditions. For example, they prefer traditional Arab clothing. The lightweight clothing honors their culture and provides comfort in the high heat.

For men, traditional clothing is a long, white, cotton, ankle-length robe, a head covering, and a light scarf (either white or red checkered).

A UAE family poses for a portrait. Children wear traditional clothing at more formal occasions.





Worshipers pray in a mosque in Dubai.

Women have two kinds of traditional clothing. At home, they may wear a dress with loose pants. Outside, they wear a dark robe and cover their head, and sometimes also their face, with a scarf. For both men and women, head coverings are a sign of respect for their religion.

People of the UAE share the religion of **Islam**. Muslims make up seventy-five percent of the population. Arabic is the official language, but most people also speak local **dialects**. Because many people move to the UAE from other countries, other languages are common, especially English.

Most people live in cities and towns along the UAE coast. Due to the success of the oil industry, the country has grown rich. Builders have put up apartment buildings, schools, hospitals, and roads for the people who work for these companies.

Landforms of the United Arab Emirates



Land

On the coast, the UAE is hot. In the east, the Hajar Mountains rise 2,000 meters (6,500 ft.). The country gets very little rainfall. However, the little it gets—10–15 centimeters (4–6 in.) per year—falls in the mountains. But the mountains are just a small part of the UAE.

The rest of the UAE is almost entirely made up of desert, which is even hotter. Desert temperatures may reach 49 degrees Celsius (120°F). Winds from the north sometimes carry dust and sand. Some of the world's largest sand dunes are found in the UAE's deserts.



Most of the desert is dry and tough, but an oasis allows some relief. An oasis is a **fertile** spot in a desert where water

is usually found and plants and animals may live. The largest oasis, Al Ain, lies in the middle of the city of Al Ain about 160 kilometers (100 mi.) east of Abu Dhabi.

In the desert, plant life is limited to thin grasses and bushes. But in an oasis, date palms, alfalfa, mangoes, and other crops grow. These spots also support desert animals, including the Arabian oryx, Gordon's wildcat, sand fox, and sand and mountain gazelles. However, hunting has put some animals in danger. People had to help out to save the Arabian oryx, which is now protected.



History

People have lived on the Arabian Peninsula for thousands of years. Groups settled in the area and began to follow the religion of Islam around 600 CE. In the 1500s, the gulf became a route for ships between Europe and the Far East. The ships carried goods that countries traded.

In the 1700s, the Arab states that make up what is today the UAE began to form. These groups fought for control of the gulf. Sometimes they attacked British trade ships. Britain fought back, took control of the area, and made peace with the sheikhs, or leaders. In 1820 the sheikhs agreed to stop fighting at sea.



In the mid-1900s one sheikh allowed British oil companies to look at the land. In 1958, one of these companies found oil in Abu Dhabi. The area quickly became wealthy.

Each year on December 2, fireworks displays add excitement to National Day—the day the UAE celebrates its independence from Great Britain.



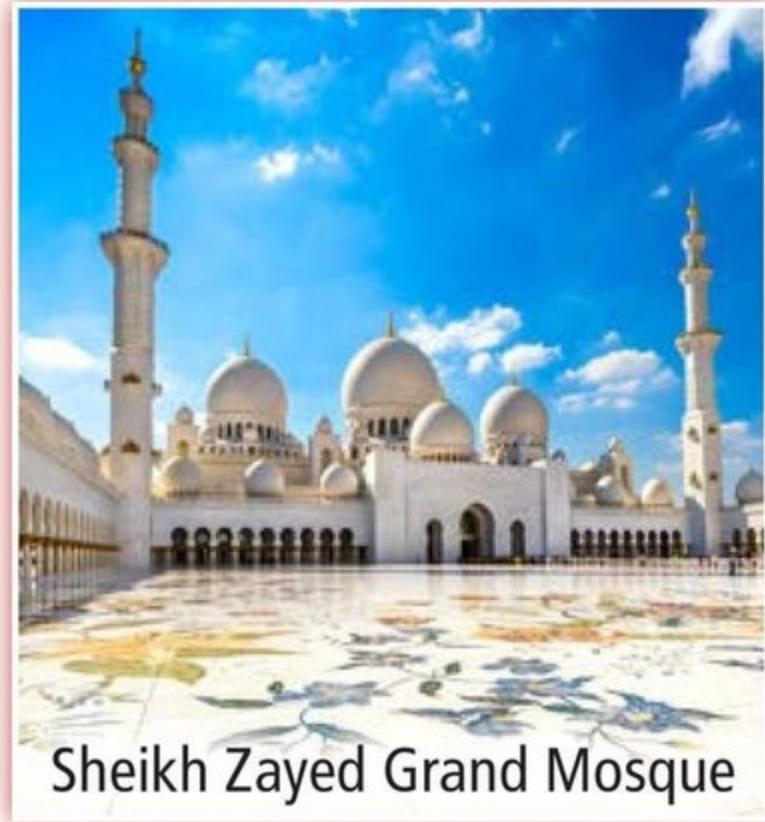
In the years to follow, oil was also found in other states. Oil companies quickly began drilling and soon discovered that the area held more oil and natural gas than most other places in the world.

In 1968, Britain left and the states decided to form a **federation**. Six Arab states formed the UAE in 1971. The final seventh state joined in 1972. The Trucial States had gained **independence** from Britain.

When war broke out in 1980 with the neighboring countries of Iran and Iraq, fighting put ships loaded with oil in danger in the gulf. The UAE, along with several other middle eastern countries, joined the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981 to keep the area safe.

Landmarks

Palaces and flashy tourist attractions make up the things to see in the United Arab Emirates. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is one of the most beautiful UAE landmarks. Sheikh Zayed helped make money for the UAE while celebrating its culture. The mosque is a **symbol** of Islam, which teaches respect, love, and peace.



Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Emirates Palace, though not home to royalty, is a landmark of Arab culture. In a city marked by fancy hotels, the palace stands out. It stands on 85 hectares (210 acres) of beautifully cared-for garden space. The palace holds 348 rooms and 14 world-class restaurants for its guests.



At 830 meters (2,723 ft.) tall, the Burj Khalifa skyscraper in Dubai sets the record as the tallest building in the world. Unlike the Grand Mosque or Emirates Palace, Burj Khalifa is entirely modern. It stands for all that is possible for the future of Dubai.

The Burj Khalifa tower took six years to build. It opened in 2010.

Another record-breaking landmark in Dubai is Palm Jumeirah—one of the world's largest human-made islands. From above, it looks like a palm tree. First billed as the eighth wonder of the world, this tourist spot includes four thousand houses.

Parks and ski areas are common tourist spots in most places, but the fact that they exist at all in this desert country makes them a landmark. Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi is a huge indoor park. Visitors enjoy rides and drive small cars. Ski Dubai is the first indoor ski area in the Middle East. Skiers enjoy slopes covered with man-made snow.



Conclusion

A small nation in the desert of the Arabian peninsula, the UAE is a booming country. Since the discovery of oil, the country has become rich. More people want to move there to work in this exciting industry. With so many people arriving, the culture has changed as well. Modern citizens are proud of their country's success while still holding onto their Arabic past. The UAE will certainly continue to grow.



An old Dubai Mosque sits among modern skyscrapers. Together, they show the respect for tradition and excitement for the future.

United Arab Emirates



Population: 5,927,482

Land: 83,600 sq km (32,278 sq. mi.)

Capital City: Abu Dhabi

Primary Language: Arabic

Primary Religion: Islam

Name of Currency: UAE dirham



Source: CIA World Factbook (2016)

Glossary

culture (<i>n.</i>)	the ideas and customs of a certain group of people (p. 5)
dialects (<i>n.</i>)	forms of language that are used in specific areas or by specific groups of people (p. 7)
federation (<i>n.</i>)	a large, political group made up of smaller groups united by a common goal (p. 11)
fertile (<i>adj.</i>)	producing or able to produce a lot of plants or crops (p. 9)
gulf (<i>n.</i>)	a part of an ocean or sea that is almost completely surrounded by land (p. 4)
independence (<i>n.</i>)	freedom from the control, influence, support, or help of others (p. 11)
industries (<i>n.</i>)	groups of businesses that sell or create the same product or services (p. 6)
Islam (<i>n.</i>)	the monotheistic faith of Muslims, based on the teachings of the prophet Muhammad (p. 7)
mosques (<i>n.</i>)	places of worship in the Islamic faith (p. 5)
peninsula (<i>n.</i>)	a long piece of land almost completely surrounded by water (p. 4)
symbol (<i>n.</i>)	an object, picture, or sign that stands for something else (p. 12)
tourists (<i>n.</i>)	people who travel to places for enjoyment or to learn more about them (p. 5)

United Arab Emirates

A Reading A-Z Level U Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,262

Connections

Writing

Choose one of the seven Arab states that is part of the United Arab Emirates. Research more about that state and write an essay that includes its capital city, any famous landmarks, and other interesting facts.

Social Studies

Make a timeline of at least five significant events in the history of the United Arab Emirates. Then, write a paragraph analyzing the significance of each event.



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