



CULTUREGUIDE

# JORDAN

SERIES 2  
SECONDARY (7-12)



DAVID M.  
**KENNEDY CENTER**  
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

# JORDAN CULTUREGUIDE

This unit is published by the Intercultural Outreach Program of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University as part of an effort to foster open cultural exchange within the educational community and to promote increased global understanding by providing meaningful cultural education tools.

## Curriculum Development

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# WHY STUDY CULTURES?

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For most of us, cultures are misunderstood; they are nebulous, vague, and hidden. Like the famous iceberg analogy, we know that most of what a culture is cannot be seen. But what does that mean? And why, then, should we study cultures if we do not know what we're studying in the first place?

In the late twentieth century, Brigham Young University did not embrace a new discipline, but rather a new area of study—the study of cultures. Typically, anthropology is the social science that studies cultures. Why should they have all the fun? The study of cultures unites other academic disciplines (as needed), drawing upon literature, political science, sociology, and even the more applied areas of nursing, social work, law, and business. The study of cultures has grown into nothing short of a revolt against disciplines, “a mode of inquiry” that looks at things in new ways.<sup>1</sup>

In 1982, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies established Intercultural Outreach<sup>2</sup> as a formal program to help build bridges of intercultural understanding. Since then, more than 10,000 gratis cultural presentations have been given to local area public schools, taking students to new places using language, multimedia, and imagination. *CultureGuides* derive from the same expertise that has been honed in classrooms—with the exciting exception that these intercultural learning tools are not geographically bound. Thanks to the Internet, accessible multimedia technology, and our trusty eMACs, a limitless audience can learn about different cultures.

Globalization, the driving paradigm of the post–Cold War world, means that now, more than ever, culture matters. Culture is the invisible context that may keep us from understanding important people, places, and ideas; it exists whether or not we think about it. Intercultural education can help us, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also in very practical ways to combat racism, to expand business, and to communicate effectively.

*CultureGuides* share the same aim as Edward T. Hall, the eminent cultural scholar, to try to “make culture real.”<sup>3</sup> Even though our “student guides” are not present in every classroom, we hope that *CultureGuides* will make classrooms of the mind and cultural laboratories wherever you may reside.

<sup>1</sup> Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon. *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Totem Books, New York: 1998.

<sup>2</sup> The program was originally called International Outreach when it was established in 1982, but it was renamed Intercultural Outreach in 2006 to better reflect its aims.

<sup>3</sup> *The Edge: The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1(3) Posted 10/11/98, <http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98sorrellshall.htm>.

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# GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

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## WATER SHORTAGE IN JORDAN

Located in the arid desert of the Middle East, Jordan has access to less natural fresh water than any other country in the world. Jordan's only source of fresh water is the Gulf of *Aqaba* [ä-kä-bah], which lies at the very southern tip of the country. This aspect of Jordan's geography greatly affects the agriculture, lifestyle, natural resources, and public and foreign policy in Jordan.



### Starting Points

1. Look at the picture of the man floating and reading the paper (see **Geography & Climate Visual 1**). How is this possible? What type of water is the person floating in? Where can you find bodies of water like this? The Dead Sea is one of the few large bodies of water that Jordan has direct access to. It has such a high salt content that people can float in it with minimal effort.
2. When you think of the Middle East, what do you think of? What type of scenery do you imagine? Do you picture a desert with a few palm trees? Jordan does have a lot of desert, but it also has beaches and fertile plains.
3. Jordanians have very little access to fresh water, and this affects many aspects of their lives. Think about all the ways you can access water in your daily life, such as through the faucet, the toilet, the shower, the water fountain.



### Information Climate

Because of its geographic location, the climate in Jordan is arid and dry, and much of the country is desert. However, in areas in the southern region along the Gulf of Aqaba, as well as along the western border, there are rich, fertile plains used for agriculture (see **Geography & Climate Visual 2**). Despite the presence of these plains, only 3.32 percent of Jordanian land is suitable for farming.

### Water Access

Jordan also has the poorest water access in the world with only twenty-six kilometers (sixteen miles) of coastline available to the entire country and no major usable freshwater sources (see **Map of Jordan**). The three main bodies of water in Jordan are the Gulf of Aqaba, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea.

The Gulf of Aqaba is a large gulf of the Red Sea located at the very southern tip of the country (see **Geography & Climate Visual 3**). Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel all have coastlines along the Gulf of Aqaba. This geographical meeting of Egypt, Jordan, and Israel is located at the Straits of Tiran and is a very important political location. The Gulf of Aqaba is very important to the Jordanian economy and lifestyle because it is the primary commercial port for the entire country. The Gulf of

Aqaba is also a popular tourist destination because of the beautiful coral reefs and family-friendly beaches.

The Jordan River is too polluted for human use even though it is a source of fresh water, but it is an important historical, religious, and tourist site. The part of the Jordan River that is in Jordan is religiously important to Christians and Jews because the Bible mentions this area as the location where Joshua and the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land. Because of this religious significance, the river is still often used as a metaphor for freedom and for paradise after death.

Geographically, the Jordan River is a portion of the border between Jordan and Israel (see **Geography & Climate Visual 4**). On the west side of the river is the territory referred to as the West Bank. The West Bank, along with the Golan Heights in Syria and the Gaza Strip, are called the Occupied Territories. The West Bank was once a part of the state of Jordan under the Amman administration but was taken by Israel in the 1967 war. The West Bank is a location of political activism and continued violence among the different populations there.

The Dead Sea is a site of recreation and tourism. Although it is a saltwater body (and therefore provides no fresh water), it is the lowest point on earth, making it a tourist attraction. In addition, there are world-famous beauty and health products made from the mud and salty water of the Dead Sea.

### **Implications of Limited Water Access**

Since the Dead Sea contains saltwater and the Jordan River is too polluted for use, Jordan is left with only a few minor rivers and the Gulf of Aqaba for water access. Such limited water access creates great limitations, particularly on Jordanian agriculture, natural resources, lifestyle, environment, and public and foreign policy.

#### *Agriculture*

Jordan has only about 750 square kilometers (290 square miles) of irrigated land. This is largely a result of the lack of fresh water access and, in some places, insufficient infrastructure for countrywide irrigation. Only 3.32 percent of the overall land is arable, and this lack of water limits Jordan's agricultural market. The most successful agricultural products are wheat, barley, tomatoes, olives, and melons. Most agricultural products are grown on small family-owned farms. The prominent natural resources in Jordan are mostly materials from rocks, such as phosphates, potash, and shale oil.

#### *Lifestyle*

Water access also affects the lifestyle of Jordanians. In rural or poor communities, the rainwater collected during the rainy season is often the only freshwater source available. Families have large storage containers on their roofs where they collect the rainwater from November to April (the rainy season) to be used all year long. When their supply runs out, they must buy water from private owners for a relatively high price. In urban areas, water is usually more accessible because it is delivered to the cities once a week, compared with rural areas where water is delivered about every twelve days. Because of the scarcity of water, Jordanians use less water than U.S. citizens: the average Jordanian uses about 32 gallons of water a day, while the

average U.S. citizen uses around 160 gallons. Despite Jordan's lack of fresh water, 97 percent of Jordanians have access to an improved water source, and 93 percent have access to improved sanitation.

### *Politics*

Water is a precious commodity for Jordanians, and Jordan's continual need for water is a constant source of political tension between Jordan and its neighbors: Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Egypt. The Jordan River, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Yarmouk River are all subjects of debate for these countries.

### *Environment*

Some of the long-term results of water shortage in Jordan are environmental damage, deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, and desertification, all legitimate environmental concerns across the country (see **Geography & Climate Visual 5**). Another concern is widespread pollution of the limited water supply. A clear example is the Jordan River. The Jordan River was once a major water resource. In 1964, Israel built a canal that diverted water from Lake Tiberias away from the Jordan River. That same year, Jordan built a canal, jointly operated with Syria, which diverted the water away from the Yarmouk River (a major tributary of the Jordan River) for agricultural irrigation. These two canals caused the water levels in the Jordan River to dwindle, and the water that remains in the river is polluted by sewage, salt water, and agricultural runoff. These combined damages are enormous. It is estimated that 70 percent of the water in the river (starting at the sources of the Yarmouk River and the Sea of Galilee) is too polluted for safe human use because the ecosystem of the river has been completely destroyed.



## **Activities**

1. Divide into two teams and debate whether Jordan should continue diverting the Yarmouk River to create sufficient freshwater resources. One team should support current Jordanian policies. The other should oppose them, focusing on the environmental destruction the dams are causing.
2. Write a short, persuasive essay supporting either side of the debate discussed in activity 1.
3. Design a postcard from one of the areas of Jordan discussed in this section: the Gulf of Aqaba, the Jordan River, or the Dead Sea. Then write a message on the postcard as if you were visiting the location it depicts.
4. In small groups, research the nature-focused tourist activities available around the Gulf of Aqaba (*e.g.*, world-renowned snorkeling). Pick a particular activity and write a short advertisement encouraging tourists to come to Jordan to participate in this activity.
5. In small groups, do further research on one of the environmental hazards affecting Jordan, and prepare a short five- to eight-minute presentation for the class. Topics could include deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, desertification, water pollution, or other issues.



## Discussion Questions

1. Think about your daily schedule and the small tasks that you might take for granted. If you lived in Jordan, how might the limited availability of water change your daily schedule? How do you think your schedule would differ from a Jordanian teen's schedule?
2. If you were to visit Jordan, what aspects of the country's climate, geography, and natural scenery would seem interesting to you? How do Jordan's climate, geography, and natural scenery differ from your own country's?
3. If you were the king or queen of Jordan, and a conflict arose with a neighboring country, how do you think water access might affect the way you deal with that country?
4. What are the potential long-term effects of the environmental problems occurring in Jordan right now? In your opinion, what measures should be taken to help lessen these harmful effects? Do you believe the higher standard of living now enjoyed by Jordanians is worth the environmental damages?
5. If you had the ability to create an organization that might help with some of the geographical, environmental, or climatic concerns in Jordan, what issues would you work to solve? Why would you choose these issues?
6. The king of Jordan, King Abdullah II, has worked to make tourism a major part of the Jordanian economy. Do you think this is a sustainable industry in Jordan? Why? Do you think other economic sectors should be built up because of the rapid environmental changes that are destroying some of these tourist locations? Why? Should environmental policy change? Why?

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# HISTORY

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## CONFLICT AND KINGS

Jordan is historically connected to Western countries through its former status as a British Mandate and through its active participation in the United Nations. Jordan's history continues to define Jordanian foreign policy, and their lack of natural resources leads the country to foreign dependence. As a result, Jordan is one of the most important countries to the foreign policy of the U.S. in the Middle East.



### Starting Points

1. Compare the maps of modern Jordan and post-World War II Jordan (see **History Visual 1 and Map of Jordan**). What are the differences geographically? Think about what you have learned about the United States and how its geography has changed over the years. The geographical changes Jordan has experienced have shaped Jordanian attitudes.
2. Look at **History Visual 2**. What type of occupation do you think this man has? What is unique about his appearance? This is a picture of a man dressed much like the Hashemite warriors that came to rule the country of Jordan.
3. Think about the historical conflicts the United States has had. For instance, think about the conflict between the British and the American colonies that led to the Revolutionary War, or the struggle of the African-American community for rights and freedoms. Throughout Jordan's history there has been significant internal conflict, which has consequently affected Jordan's foreign policy. Because internal conflicts can influence foreign policy, internal conflicts in Jordan are of interest to the United States and its foreign policy in the Middle East.



### Information

#### Brief History

The official name of Jordan is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. However, Transjordan (as it was formerly called) was under the rule of the Ottoman Turks until the breakup of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. In 1916, Sharif Hussein bin Ali initiated the Arab Revolt to fight against the Ottoman Turks for their independence and to establish a single unified Arab state located between Aleppo, Syria, Aden, and Yemen. This war lasted from 1916 to 1918 and resulted in Arab forces controlling Transjordan, parts of the Arabian peninsula, and southern Syria. In 1919, the League of Nations divided Transjordan into the French Mandate of Syria and the British Mandates of Jordan and Palestine. In 1921, the British gave semi-autonomous control of Jordan to Emir Abdullah.

The Hashemite family was the traditional ruling family of the holy city of Mecca, located in present-day Saudi Arabia. They ruled Mecca beginning in the tenth century C.E. and retained their power during the rule of the Ottoman Turks. After the fall of

the Ottoman Empire, the Saud family (a rival clan of the Hashemites) sought control over Saudi Arabia. The Sauds won control and created Saudi Arabia, while the Hashemites spread out from the region to become the rulers in Transjordan and Iraq. Hussein bin Ali, the patriarchal leader of the Hashemites, sent his son Abdullah to Transjordan at the invitation of the British, and Abdullah soon became the ruler and king of Transjordan.

### **King Abdullah**

Previously, King Abdullah shared control with the British over the British Mandate of Jordan (see **History Visual 3**). He later negotiated with the British for independence. In 1946, the UN approved an end to British Mandated rule in Transjordan, and Abdullah was proclaimed the first king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Abdullah was a very different king compared to other Middle Eastern leaders. He argued for peace with Israel, but the Arab League strongly opposed a peace treaty. Abdullah also dreamed of creating a Greater Syria that would include Jordan, Syria, and Iraq under the Hashemite dynasty. Because Abdullah had such large dreams of peace and unity, his peers often mistrusted him. However, his ideas have lasted many generations after his reign.

On 20 July 1951, after rumors of a peace treaty between Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan, King Abdullah was assassinated in Jerusalem while praying at the mosque located at the Dome of the Rock. Abdullah was in Jerusalem to give a eulogy at the funeral of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Raïd Bey el-Solh, who had also been assassinated. Abdullah's grandson Hussein was praying next to his grandfather at the time of the assassination and was also shot. Hussein was saved from the bullet by a medal his grandfather insisted he wear on his chest.

### **King Hussein**

After the death of King Abdullah, the Crown Prince Talal ruled Jordan for only a short time. Talal started developing a new constitution, but not long after, he abdicated the throne for health reasons. Therefore, a council was appointed until Hussein effectively became king of Jordan on 2 May 1953 at the age of eighteen (see **History Visual 4**).

King Hussein was a different ruler than both his father Talal and his grandfather King Abdullah. Because Hussein had been educated in Jordan, Egypt, and Great Britain, he had a unique perspective that made his reign extremely controversial. To this day, many historians continue to take differing sides on many of his policies, including how he dealt with events such as Black September.

### **Black September**

Black September, a series of armed conflicts that lasted from September 1970 to July 1971, has marred the history of Jordan. This was a period of time when the militant Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) attempted to overthrow King Hussein's reign, and the violence resulted in large civilian casualties. Most of the PLO and thousands of Palestinians were expelled to Lebanon.

The events of Black September started when a large, displaced population of Palestinians living in Jordan conflicted with the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). This

group of Palestinians had come to Jordan because their homeland had been occupied by Israel. The refugees were given citizenship rights in Jordan, and in the late 1960s, they began to mount a resistant militant movement against Israel. Due to this mounting resistance, people speculated that King Hussein had worked out a secret treaty with Israel, which arranged for the IDF to secretly invade the town of Karameh, considered the headquarters of some of the *fedayeen* [fed-ah-yeen], or armed Palestinian militia. Although there was no proof that King Hussein made this secret agreement, it still created conflict.

The intention of the IDF invasion of Karameh was to neutralize the Palestinian resistance forces, but the IDF failed and tried to secretly withdraw from Karameh. Against Hussein's orders, the Jordanian military general Mash'hor Haditha attacked the IDF. The IDF suffered twenty-eight casualties and lost several tanks. This event created a public relations nightmare for King Hussein. In the end, the PLO garnered greater prestige in the Arab community and gained more recruits for their resistance movement. Yasser Arafat, PLO chairman, claimed it as a victory of honor. The event became known as the Battle of Karameh.

In November 1968, the PLO instituted their own martial law in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Hussein negotiated with the PLO, an action that represented a large change in direction from his previous attempt at eliminating them. The PLO violated this agreement with King Hussein, and between mid-1968 and the end of 1969, there were more than five hundred violent engagements between PLO militia and Jordanian forces. It seemed that Jordan was operating as a country within a country. In fact, many considered the PLO similar to a mafia, extorting money from civilians, running different communities and turfs, and attacking Israel from Jordanian soil.

On 1 September 1970, there were a series of airplane hijackings aimed at killing King Hussein. On the 16 September, King Hussein declared martial law, and tanks and troops were placed throughout Jordan. King Hussein sent troops to invade civilian Palestinian refugee camps in four cities in Jordan: Irbid, Salt, Sweileh, and Zarqa. PLO headquarters were bulldozed in Amman, the capital city. Violent urban warfare broke out in small, crowded refugee camps everywhere. Many accused King Hussein of violent and random killings of so-called "Palestinian fighters" without evidence. The inexperienced and destitute Palestinians suffered at the hands of the king and received no help from the fedayeen who had promised to protect them. Others backed King Hussein, explaining that he had little choice.

With martial law increasing violence, Syria threatened to invade Jordan in order to aid the Palestinians. King Hussein appealed to the United States for help, who then appealed to Israel. Israeli forces flew their fighter planes low to the ground, encouraging the PLO to stay out. The U.S. president at the time, Richard Nixon, also sent navy support to back up U.S. interests.

On 27 September 1970, King Hussein and Yasser Arafat met in Cairo, Egypt, to discuss plans to stop the attacks. At the meeting, Hussein recognized the fedayeen's right to operate in Jordan but insisted that they had to stay away from military actions, particularly along the borders. Not long after the meetings, Egypt's leader and PLO supporter, Gamal Abdel Nasser, died of a massive heart attack and the PLO

was without Arab protection or backing. King Hussein went back on his agreement and continued martial law in Jordan.

The casualties of Black September and the surrounding conflicts are estimated in the tens of thousands. It is clear that both sides used intentional killings as a fear tactic. Many Palestinian militants were sent to Lebanon, and those that stayed were viewed with increased disdain.

Tensions between Jordan and the United States increased when King Hussein refused to side against Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War. However, when King Hussein signed a peace treaty with the United States and—most importantly—with Israel, Jordan was re-established as an ally of the West.

Although widely criticized worldwide for his political actions, King Hussein was popular among many Jordanians for his infrastructural and domestic developments. At the beginning of his reign, only 10 percent of the population had access to sewage networks. That had increased to 99 percent by the time King Hussein died. The literacy rate in Jordan rose from 33 to 86 percent and continues to rise today. There was also a dramatic decrease in the infant mortality rate. All of these were seen as signs of progress.

King Hussein died of cancer in 1999. At the time of his death, he was one of the longest-serving leaders in international politics. Before he died, Hussein took the title of Crown Prince and heir from his brother Hassan and gave it to his son Abdullah II. This meant that Abdullah II would reign next as the king of Jordan.

### **King Abdullah II**

Despite Hussein's deathbed change of heir, there was a stable shift of power from Hussein to his son Abdullah II (see **History Visual 5**). Abdullah II was not originally named the crown prince, so he never expected to rule or have any real responsibility in Jordanian government, and he had never prepared to be king. Despite this, he is generally well loved by his people.

Abdullah II was largely educated in the United States, and this upbringing has affected his politics. It is partially due to the influence of Western philosophy that King Abdullah II is seen as a dynamic, young-at-heart king. He has focused on economic development in Jordan. An example of this is his olive-tree-planting campaign. A large portion of Jordanians do not have access to arable land to grow either sellable goods or goods needed to sustain their families. King Abdullah has campaigned to remedy this by planting a large number of olive trees on open, private, and public land. These trees are then cared for by the community, and the community is allowed to harvest the olives, bark, or anything else that is marketable. So far the project has been successful in helping give Jordanians a chance to improve their economic status.

King Abdullah has also worked to increase foreign investment, to develop the private and public sectors, and to initiate social reform. However, despite all his pushes for economic and social reform, he has been criticized for his opinions and policies on human rights because of violations within his country. The international community continues to scrutinize his policies today.

## The Geographic Borders of Jordan Today

Jordan has experienced a series of border changes, resulting in the geographic boundaries it has today. In 1950, Transjordan annexed a portion of the West Bank of the Jordan River, formerly possessed by Palestine. In 1965, Jordan traded a large piece of desert inland from the border with Saudi Arabia in return for a small piece of coastline on the Gulf of Aqaba. This water access was critical to Jordanian economic success. In May 1967, Jordan fought the Six-Day War with Israel; Jordan lost control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In 1988, Jordan officially renounced its claim on the West Bank and ceded the territory to Israel. Through a series of UN Security Council Resolutions, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan came to have the geographic boundaries it has today.

## Activities



1. As a class, have a debate about King Hussein's leadership policies. Divide into two teams, with one team arguing for the benefits and advantages of King Hussein's leadership in Jordan and the other team arguing for the drawbacks and problems. Support your arguments with examples.
2. Create a list of words, names, and events that have to do with the brief history of Jordan that was just covered. Focus especially on listing Arabic words, names, and political terms. Using your classmates, parents, or the Internet, research the definitions or explanations for terms you do not know and write them down. Defining these terms can help you understand the news and media better.
3. Pretend you are a news reporter covering one of the events that happened within a conflict in Jordanian history (*e.g.*, the murder of King Abdullah or the Battle of Karameh). Write a brief one- to two-minute news report on the event. Remember that a news report is intended not only to share information with the public but also to draw emotion. Be convincing.
4. Separate into small groups and prepare a decorative timeline of events. You may organize it a number of ways. For example, you may pick the reign of one king and follow the events that happened during his rule. Organize your timeline as you see fit, and be sure to include as many pertinent details as possible. Keep it interesting by using names and pictures where possible.
5. Poetry and literature from the times of violence in Jordan are particularly moving. Whether written by suffering Palestinians in refugee camps (with no water or safety) or by Jordanians living near the borders with Israel and Syria, everyone had much to say about living in such turmoil. Imagining you are a Jordanian and think about what your life would be like in the violent days of Black September or in the tumultuous days of change during the rule of King Abdullah II. Write a poem or short story in response to your violent surroundings. Try to be true to your imagined character and to what you know of the conflict.
6. Pretend you are someone very important in the Jordanian government. Write a letter either to a news source or to the Royal Family about an event such as the assassination of King Abdullah, the death of King Hussein, or the announced change of King Abdullah II as future ruler.



## Discussion Questions

1. How do you think Abdullah II must have felt when he found out that he would be the next king? Remember that he would not have had much time for any sort of preparation. If you were in his position, what changes and preparations would you make to ensure that you were as ready as possible? Would these be personal changes, or would you attempt to make changes within your family, in the people's perception of you, and so forth?
2. King Abdullah's dreams and goals for a more united Middle East were unique during the time of his reign. In fact, as you learned in the lesson, many of his colleagues were unsure about Abdullah because of these goals. Do you think Abdullah's goals and dreams were passed on to any of his successors? How so? Were any of his goals ever realized? Which ones?
3. The awful events and battles of Black September affected many people; innocent civilians on every side were killed. What do you think could have been done to prevent these atrocities? What do we need to do to make sure they do not happen again?
4. The underlying issue in many of the violent conflicts that Jordan has faced is disrespect and even hatred between different national and ethnic groups within the population. What can be done to help remove this intolerance? How can modern Jordanians hoping for peace and equality work to stem the anger and change people's attitudes? In your answer, consider U.S. history and how U.S. citizens have dealt—and continue to deal—with issues of anger, intolerance, and inequality.
5. Discuss the importance of the Israeli–Jordanian Peace Treaty. It is unique in the Middle East for an Arab state to have such a treaty with Israel. What could be the long-term importance of this treaty? For instance, how could it influence other Arab states to be less hostile towards Israel? Or could Jordan end up being isolated by Arab states because it has supported Israel?
6. Do you see Jordan's future as one full of economic and social progress? Why or why not? All the kings from Abdullah I to Abdullah II have promoted growth, development, and change. Do you think Jordan is continuing down this road? Why or why not?

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# POLITICS & ECONOMICS

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## JORDAN AND FOREIGN POLICY

Jordan is located in the center of the Middle East, both geographically and politically. Jordan has a relatively moderate political system and because of its connections to the West and its location in the Middle East, is often the connector and negotiator between the West and other countries in the Middle East. Jordan's role as negotiator shapes the lives of Jordanians as they find themselves involved in their neighbors' conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian issue, civil wars in Lebanon, and terrorist activities in Egypt.



### Starting Points

1. Look at a map of the Middle East (**see Politics & Economics Visual 1**) and locate Jordan. What do you notice about the location of Jordan relative to both the Middle East and the entire world? Jordan is located in the center of the Middle East and, relatively speaking, the world. Geographic location strongly affects Jordanian foreign policy because Jordan has ties to Western countries and is located in the center of the Middle East. Jordan also has a more moderate political system than its Arab neighbors.
2. Think about the political freedoms that you enjoy in the United States. What are some of these liberties? For instance, you have freedom to vote for and join any political party. What do you know about freedom in countries in the Middle East? Jordan has a comparatively stable government with relative political freedom, which translates into increased involvement in area conflicts.
3. Have you been in a situation where you were caught between two friends who did not agree with each other? How did you balance the demands of both of your friends without favoring one friend over the other? Jordan is an ally of the United States and Israel. Many of Jordan's neighbors do not agree with the policies of the United States and Israel, and Jordan is often caught between the demands of these countries and the demands of Jordan's Arab neighbors.



### Information

#### Political System of Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, created by a constitution instituted on 8 January 1952. Political parties were legalized in 1992, giving Jordan a multiparty system. The king holds all executive powers, including the power to enact laws and treaties, choose judges, approve amendments to the Constitution, declare war, and act as commander and chief of the armed forces. He also appoints his own cabinet and prime minister. However, the king's decisions may be overridden by a two-thirds vote by both houses of the National Assembly. The National Assembly has two main bodies: the Chamber of Deputies and the Assembly

of Senators. The members of the Chamber of Deputies are voted into position, while the members of the Assembly of Senators are appointed by the king. Because of this concentration of power in the hands of the king, Jordan has experienced stages of martial law, the legalization of political parties, free and parliamentary elections, and an increased focus on economic reform.

### **Jordanian Support for U.S. Foreign Policy**

Jordan's foreign policy has differed significantly from that of its Arab neighbors because of its strong relationship with the United States (see **Politics & Economics Visual 2**) and its willingness to be Israel's ally—the two common enemies of most other Middle Eastern countries. This relationship between the United States and Jordan was temporarily damaged during the Gulf War when Jordan established neutrality and did not cut relations with Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. However, Jordan restored positive relations with the West after the Gulf War through its involvement in the Middle East peace process and the enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq.

The United States had been working for a number of years to involve itself in the Middle East peace process. Through a series of agreements, including the Madrid, Oslo, and Camp David Accords, the United States has been actively seeking agreement between the Palestinian authorities and Israel. Jordan has been a strong agent for peace in these agreements, providing the United States with the Middle Eastern support and perspective they need. Jordan has most recently helped the United States develop the "road map" for peace (a plan to bring an end to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict), which the United States has been actively pursuing.

The death of King Hussein marked a change in Jordanian foreign policy, including increased support for United States actions in Iraq and a focus on security and stability concerns in Iraq. Jordan signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq to help establish training of Iraqi police cadets. This is just one example of the pragmatic and non-confrontational characteristics of Jordan's foreign policy.

On 25 July 1994, Jordan became the first Middle Eastern state besides Egypt to sign a monumental non-belligerency act with Israel, followed by a historic peace treaty on 26 October of the same year (see **Politics & Economics Visual 3**). Egypt quickly followed with mirrored support for peace with Israel. Since this time, there have been trilateral work and agreements between Jordan, the United States, and Israel in the areas of water conservation and sharing, trade and finance, banking issues, and inter-governmental organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the UN, and the World Trade Organization.

### **Benefits of Jordan's Relationship with the U.S.**

Although freedom means something different to everyone, Jordan has more freedoms in comparison to surrounding countries. However, these freedoms are not the same as Western freedoms. In particular, religious freedom in Jordan is very different. Only a few religions are officially recognized and allowed to be practiced. Freedom of speech and press is allowed as long as it does not involve criticisms of the king or current government. Freedom to protest is a right actively used by many

Jordanians (see **Politics & Economics Visuals 4 and 5**). These are advanced freedoms compared to those of other Middle Eastern states. However, there have still been criticisms of King Abdullah II's autocratic ruling style for limiting the rights of protest and speech and for his stance on human torture and abuse.

The official diplomatic relations established between Jordan and Israel are an advantage for U.S. foreign policy. Since its creation as a Jewish state by the UN in 1948, Israel has been a common enemy of nearly all the surrounding Arab states because the land belonged to the Palestinians. Israel is an important ally of the United States, and because Jordan (along with Egypt) has been willing to support U.S. policy with Israel, the U.S. now has an Arab ally in the Middle East. Jordan's foreign policy affects the daily lives of Jordanians as they find their government and resources often involved in regional conflicts because of the U.S.–Jordanian tie.

Because Jordan is on friendly terms with its Arab neighbors and is willing to support U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding Israel, Jordanians often find themselves in the center of political negotiations.



## Activities

1. Pretend you are in a position of power in Jordan, and the king has asked you to come up with some ideas of how to further develop Jordan's economy. Few people have access to arable land for agriculture, or the money to start their own company. What are some ways the government can help Jordanians to sustain themselves? Work in small groups and come up with three ideas. These could include economic policies such as giving out loans to people who are in need so they can start their own business. There are many possible answers.
2. Spend a little time researching the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Write a short essay about Jordan's participation with the United States in establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. What are some pros and cons of Jordan's participation in this conflict? What would be some effects on the relationship between Jordan and its neighbors because of Jordan's friendship with the United States and diplomatic relations with Israel?
3. Write a letter to the king of Jordan. Tell King Abdullah II what policies you think Jordan should pursue (*e.g.*, domestic, international, etc.). Be sure to include support and reasoning for your policy advice. This advice could apply to freedoms in the country, ways to adapt the government, or foreign policies with the United States and Arab nations.
4. Design a newspaper that would appeal to Jordanians. Look up five recent events in Jordan, and design your own newspaper coverage of these stories. Do not forget the limitations on freedom of press and speech in Jordan.
5. Make a two-column chart. List in the columns what you know about Jordanian politics and what you want to learn.



## Discussion Questions

1. Why does Jordan play such a pivotal role in Middle Eastern foreign policy? Do you believe that this pivotal role could be played by any other country in the Middle East? Why or why not?
2. Many of the political issues plaguing the Middle East are not being resolved quickly. Jordan is often viewed as the peacemaker of the Middle East because of its role in alleviating political tension. Do you think Jordan could or should do more to settle political conflicts? If yes, what do you think Jordan should do, and how do you think Jordan could be more effective? If not, why not?
3. What do you think of Jordan's policies regarding freedom of speech? What could be some benefits and drawbacks of increasing political freedoms in Jordan? How do you feel that you have benefited from, or perhaps been hurt by, some freedoms in the United States, such as the freedom of speech? Have these freedoms benefitted or hurt the United States as a whole? How do freedoms in the United States compare to freedoms in Jordan?
4. What is your perception of the conflict between Israel and the surrounding Arab states? Do you think Jordan and Egypt have made the right decision by siding with the United States and pursuing peace with Israel? Are other Arab states justified in their anti-Israel stance?
5. How are the roles of King Abdullah and the president of the United States different? How many of these differences do you think are institutional in nature (*i.e.*, built into the Constitution) and how many are due to the expectations of the people?
6. Do you think it is beneficial for U.S. interests in the Middle East that King Abdullah understand U.S. politics and culture? Why? How do you think his knowledge and love of U.S. culture, as well as his upbringing, might help the United States? Do you think this will ultimately be beneficial or detrimental for U.S. government and foreign policy? Why?

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# LIFESTYLE

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## RELIGION AND CULTURE

Religion is a significant characteristic that defines daily life in Jordan. There is a strong connection between religion and everyday customs, hobbies, opinions, and attitudes. Islam and Christianity influence customs and social values in distinct ways and have a significant impact on Jordanian lifestyles.



### Starting Points

1. When you think of the Middle East, what religion do you think of? Do you think there is religious diversity in the Middle East? Jordan, like many Arab states, has a large Muslim population. However, Jordan also has one of the largest Christian populations in the Middle East. Both communities live side by side in peace.
2. Look at the picture given (see **Lifestyle Visual 1**). What do you think life is like for these women? What is their religion? Do you think they have a choice about dressing the way they do? Jordanian Muslims have a wide range of dress standards depending on each person's feelings about what is appropriate to wear.
3. Do you know people of a religion other than your own? How do you differ from these people? Jordanian Muslims and Jordanian Christians differ in many ways, but they also have many things in common.



### Information

#### Religion

Religion is an important factor contributing to the Jordanian lifestyle. The largest religions represented in Jordan are Islam and Christianity, and these religions are very important in determining the characteristics of Jordanian lifestyle.

#### Islam and Culture

##### *Testament of Islam*

Every Muslim must recite the basic creed of Islam known as the *Shahadah* [sha-ha-da]. To do this, one must simply state the following: *Ashadu alla ilaha illa Allah, wa ashadu anna Muhammed ar-rasool Allah*, or "I bear witness that there is no God other than Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammed is His messenger." This testament defines the foundation of all other Islamic practices and beliefs. It is recited at birth and at death, and Muslims learn this creed early on in their childhood.

##### *Prayer*

Sunni Muslims, a particular sect of the Islamic religion, represent the largest religious demographic in Jordan (92 percent of the population). Islam has a few basic tenets that affect the daily life of its followers. The first of these is *salat* [suh-laht], or prayer, in Arabic. Muslims pray five times a day at specific times that follow the pat-

terns of the sun. It is commonplace in the Middle East to see Muslims praying on small prayer rugs nearly anywhere during prayer time (see **Lifestyle Visual 2**). Muslims know when it is prayer time because a person named a *muezzin* [mweh-zin] will sing out the Call to Prayer from the top of the mosque. Many Muslims, particularly men, will go to the mosque to pray when possible. The most important time for men to be at the mosque is for the Friday noon-day prayer. Religiously, all men are required to attend the mosque for this prayer. Mosque attendance for prayer is optional for women due to the responsibilities they have for the family.

#### *Giving to the Poor*

*Zakat* [zack-ah], or giving alms to the poor, is one of the pillars (essential doctrines) of Islam. Often this money is given first to someone close who is in need, such as a family member, friend, neighbor, or member of the same mosque. If no one close by is in need of the assistance, the money is given to the community. In this instance, the mosque often operates like a community center where money can be donated, and the organizations of the mosque distribute the money to those in need. The mosque can be a place for families in need to visit, providing a place to stay for people who have no shelter, or offering babysitting for mothers who need help.

#### *Fasting*

*Sawm* [sawm], or fasting, is abstaining from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan. Muslims may also fast during other days of the year; however, those days are optional, whereas Muslims are required to fast during Ramadan.

#### *Pilgrimage*

The *hajj* [haj] is the pilgrimage to Mecca. If health and money permit, each Muslim must travel to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime. The hajj is an act of worship and involves financial sacrifice. This act of worship also consists of ceremonies with rituals that are symbolic of the prophet Abraham's trials.

#### *The Qur'an*

The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam (see **Lifestyle Visuals 3 and 4**). It is read in Arabic because Muslims believe that God spoke the words of the Qur'an to Muhammad in Arabic, the purest of all languages. Thus all Muslims, whatever their native tongue may be, strive to read the Qur'an in Arabic. Reading the Qur'an is a part of many Muslims' everyday habits. Sometimes verses of the Qur'an are used in Islamic art. The Qur'an permeates all aspects of Jordanian life through Islamic art, Arabic phrases and speech, and daily schedules.

#### *Social Separation by Gender*

Traditionally in Islamic culture, there is social segregation of the sexes. Gender separation exists because it is said to have been a practice of the most revered Islamic prophet, Muhammad. For thousands of years, women have prayed, socialized, and eaten in separate places from men. The concept behind this was a sense of respect for the differences between men and women. Separation occurs because Islam teaches respect for women and the need to revere them as separate, distinct, and divinely unique. In addition, because tribal natives were large groups of people in the past, it

was easier to separate by gender at weddings, daily activities, and so forth. Many Westerners think this separation is repressive—and in some communities it is. Overall, however, the custom of separation was created for the far more noble purpose of distinctness and respect.

In Islamic society, girls are not allowed to associate socially with boys, and no real dating is allowed. Often, families will allow dating only if the partners are chaperoned by a family member. It is not considered honorable for a woman to be with a man outside the home if there is no chaperone.

However, in some part of Islamic societies, chaperoned dating is common, and females often associate with males in schools and public settings. However, association between the sexes is much more reserved and temperate than in the West. Male chaperones are still a common sight in busy public settings. In less conservative families, women have all the same freedoms as men. They are considered perfectly equal, and there is no real sense that women need to be held in more reverence as traditional Muslims believe.

### *Muslim Dress*

Muslim dress is a huge topic of discussion for many outsiders. The most important influence on how Muslims choose to dress is their sense of modesty and respect. The boundaries and limits of modesty in Islam are very different from those in Western societies, and to understand Muslim culture, it is imperative to understand how important modesty is to Muslims.

Muslims have a large range of traditional dress, depending on tradition and climate. Most Jordanian men wear modern, Western-style clothes such as denim jeans and collared shirts or, if they are business professionals, a suit and tie. More blue-collar workers tend to wear comfortable Western-style clothing, but often a *kafia* [kah-fee-uh], or head covering, will still be worn as protection from the hot sun (see **Lifestyle Visual 5**). Very traditional men and those who have devoted their life to the study of Islam (often called clerics) will usually wear the traditional dush-dash garment (robe with pants underneath) and the *kafia* (see **Lifestyle Visuals 6 and 7**). This dress style is said to have been what Muhammad wore and, thus, symbolizes traditionalism and conservatism.

Muslim women have many dress options as well. Being modest for religious purposes means something different to everyone and must be respected based on that individual's beliefs. The most important point is that women in Jordan have the personal choice to dress as they choose. In some countries, such as Afghanistan while under the Taliban regime, women did not have a choice. However, this is not the case in Jordan. Usually, when a girl reaches her mid-teens, she is given the chance to decide how she would like to dress. Of course, every family is different and some families push one way or another, but Islamic belief specifies dress standards as an individual choice.

The head scarf, or *hijab* [hee-jahb], is perhaps the most popular dress item. It is a tight headscarf worn to cover the hair and face in different ways. Under repressive regimes such as the Taliban, women were completely covered, not exposing even their eyes and hands. In Jordan, however, women wear the hijab how they like. Often, Jordanian women will wear long, loose-fitting clothing in the form of cloak-

like dresses that cover them down to the ground. These are referred to as *abaya* [uh-by-uh]. While some women wear an abaya, many Jordanian Muslim women will simply wear looser-fitting Western-style clothes with a hijab.

### *Families in Islam*

To Muslims, families are the key unit of society, so understanding families is important to understanding how Jordanian society works. Honor and respect is of the utmost importance and is always considered in important decisions. Families also spend a lot of time together. Favorite Jordanian pastimes include having picnics, playing games (like chess or backgammon), watching and playing soccer, and talking about politics. Families are the basic social unit. Because they are so important, families will often stay in the same area as their relatives. The result is that in some more rural areas, an entire community may be made up of the same extended family, or clan, who have stayed close together over decades or even centuries.

### **A Few General Attitudes and Opinions**

Generally, Jordanian Muslims are religious and concerned about living in a progressive world that has non-religious or liberal values. Islam teaches conservative values; drinking is absolutely prohibited by Islamic law. Muslims hope to influence their children to support these traditional religious values. Jordanian Muslims are generally happy and friendly to everyone they interact with, regardless of the person's religion or nationality. Jordanian Muslims do their best to preserve their families and their preferred lifestyle.

### **Christianity and Culture in Jordan**

Christians in Jordan represent approximately 6 percent of the population, which is one of the largest Christian populations in the Middle East. Their religion also has a strong effect on Jordanian culture. In some ways, Jordanian Christians and Muslims are very similar. In other ways, there are strong, noticeable differences. One difference between the two religions is that the religious life of a Christian is often less obvious than that of a Muslim due to dress and prayer customs. But religious life is just as important to a Christian as it is to a Muslim.

There are many sects of Christianity within Jordan. Each of these different sects operates independently of one another, as they do in the U.S. Jordanian Christians attend mass or sermons, and, just like anywhere else, there is a range of activity and participation in church. Oftentimes, particularly in years past, a church would be built and Christians would move and live around it. This, along with their desire as a minority demographic to stay together, has created entire communities within Jordan that are purely Christian. Most communities today are now mixed with Muslims and Christians, although there are still areas that are considered traditionally Christian or Muslim.

Christians and Muslims have similar opinions on families. Christians, too, are happy and friendly and work hard to preserve their way of life in the face of a changing world with less religious influences.

### *Social Separation by Gender*

Social separation of the sexes is not nearly as serious to Christians as it is to Muslims, but because Christians and Muslims are often mixed in social settings, separation usually occurs. Christians in Jordan generally believe in appropriate contact between males and females. Dating is still sometimes chaperoned but not always.

### *Non-Religious Specific Cultural Aspects*

There are many commonalities between Muslims and Christians in Jordan. Generally, Muslims and Christians live in harmony and mutual respect, and religion does not pose a threat in public settings. Private beliefs held within homes, families and places of employment may differ, but very rarely do public conflicts arise because of religion. Other non-religious factors also exert a profound influence on the Jordanian way of life. Socioeconomic status, including education, income, and exposure to different peoples, plays a big role in forming personal opinions.



## Activities

1. Pretend you write for a Western lifestyle magazine. You notice that there have been many critiques of how women in the Middle East dress and act. Take one side of the argument and support your argument with some of the information you learned in this lesson. Write an article to be published in this lifestyle magazine to better educate people on the issue.
2. Some people believe it is impossible to live peacefully side-by-side with Muslims. This belief is often supported by a radical perception of what Muslims believe and how they treat people. Write a short paper on how it is possible to live with people of other religions in peace. Use Jordan's multireligious society as support for your argument.
3. Pretend you are a Jordanian Muslim. Design your own traditional Islamic outfit. Choose the patterns and designs you might wear. Choose how traditionally you would dress. Draw a detailed picture of your outfit.
4. Many Arabic songs are religious in nature. Sometimes they cover aspects of hope for peace in a country and a desire for people to get along. Write your own song expressing desire for peace and understanding between religions. Share it with the class.
5. Write a story dealing with one of the social attitudes or opinions held by Muslims, Christians, or both.
6. Listed in the **Additional Resources** is a web site that has basic Arabic recipes. Go to the web site and pick a dish to make for the class.



## Discussion Questions

1. Religion is important in deciding the lifestyle and daily activities of Jordanians. This is very different from the United States, where, for most people, religion has a much smaller impact on daily life. What do you think are some of the benefits of each perspective? What are some drawbacks? What are

some potential problems that might arise from the impact of religion on U.S. and Jordanian ways of life?

2. Did you have some perceptions of Middle Eastern dress before this lesson that were not totally correct? For instance, did you believe that Jordanian women were always forced to be covered up? Why did you have these beliefs? What is the benefit of finding out the truth about why Muslim women dress the way they do?
3. What do you think are some of the benefits of a society where family is important? Do you believe the United States would be better off if there were a larger focus on family? Why or why not?
4. What was your initial understanding of social segregation of the sexes in Muslim countries? After hearing some explanation, do you still hold the same opinion as before? Why or why not?
5. To some extent, socioeconomic status in Jordan is nearly as important as religion. A person's education and income affect his or her opinions. Are the effects of socioeconomic status the same in the United States? Why or why not? In the United States, how does a person's education affect his or her opinions, especially in respect to the Middle East?
6. Muslims in particular place a strong emphasis on giving alms to the poor. What are the potential social benefits to Jordanian society if all Muslims give alms to the poor?

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# FACTS ABOUT JORDAN

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**Official Name:** Al Mamlakah al Urduniyah al Hashimiyah (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan)

**Capital:** Amman

**Government Type:** constitutional monarchy

**Location:** Middle East, northwest of Saudi Arabia

**Area:** 92,300 sq km

**Land Boundaries:** Iraq 181 km, Israel 238 km, Saudi Arabia 744 km, Syria 375 km, West Bank 97 km

**Climate:** mostly arid desert; rainy season in west (November to April)

**Lowest Point:** Dead Sea—408 m

**Highest Point:** Jabal Ram 1,734 m

**Natural Resources:** phosphates, potash, shale oil

**Natural Hazards:** droughts; periodic earthquakes

**Population:** 6,342,948 (July 2009 est.)

**Ethnic Groups:** Arab 98%, Circassian 1%, Armenian 1%

**Religions:** Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 6% (majority Greek Orthodox, but some Greek and Roman Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant denominations), other 2% (several small Shi'a Muslim and Druze populations) (2001 est.)

**Languages:** Arabic

**GDP:** \$33.05 billion (2009 est.)

**GDP Per Capita:** \$5,300 (2009 est.)

**GDP Composition by Sector:** agriculture: 3.7%, industry: 29.9%, services: 66.5% (2009 est.)

**Labor Force:** 1.667 million (2009 est.)

**Unemployment Rate:** 13.5% official rate; unofficial rate is approximately 30% (2009 est.)

**Industries:** clothing, phosphate mining, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, petroleum refining, cement, potash, inorganic chemicals, light manufacturing, tourism

**Agricultural Products:** citrus, tomatoes, olives, cucumbers; stone fruits, strawberries, sheep, poultry, dairy

**Exports:** \$6.989 billion f.o.b. (2009 est.) clothing, phosphates, fertilizers, potash, vegetables, pharmaceuticals

**Imports:** \$12.31 billion f.o.b. (2009 est.) crude oil, machinery, transport equipment, iron, cereals

**Trade Partners:** Saudi Arabia, China, Germany, US, Iraq, India, Syria, Egypt, UAE

**Currency:** Jordanian dinar (JOD)

**Exchange Rate:** 0.709 dinar (JOD) = \$1 U.S. (2009)

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# HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS

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## TIMELINE

- 2000 B.C.E.** Semitic Amorites settle along the Jordan River in what was called the Fertile Crescent
- 300** Estimated time of the Nabataean civilization centered in the city of Petra in the Wadi Musa valley
- 1095 C.E.** The Crusades begin
- 1272** The Crusades end
- 1500s** Ottoman Turks rule most of the Middle East, including Jordan
- 1919** End of World War I and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire; the British Mandate of Transjordan
- 1921** Semi-autonomous control is given by the British to the Hashemite family and King Abdullah I rules
- 1946** British request that the United Nations approve an end to the British Mandate rule of Transjordan; following this approval, Parliament chooses Prince Abdullah I as the first king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 1948** First wave of Palestinian refugees arrive
- 1950** Jordan annexes the West Bank
- 1951** King Abdullah assassinated and King Talal succeeds him
- 1952** Jordanian Constitution promulgated
- 1953** King Talal abdicates the throne due to health problems and King Hussein succeeds him
- 1965** Exchange of land between Saudi Arabia and Jordan
- 1966–1968** Large surge in the numbers of Palestinian refugees moving to Jordan
- 1967** Mutual Defense Pact with Egypt
- 1967** The Six-Day War with Israel; Jordan loses the West Bank and East Jerusalem to Israel; large upsurge in the activity and importance of the fedayeen in Jordan
- 1968** Battle of Karameh
- 1968** Seven-Point Agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Jordan
- 1969** Open fighting erupts between the fedayeen and Jordanian forces
- 1970** King Hussein's Ten-Point Edict greatly restricts the movement and activities of the fedayeen; mass expulsion of many fedayeen
- 1970** Plane hijackings; many hostages taken
- 1970** King Hussein institutes martial law and attacks settlements and refugee camps throughout Jordan
- 1970** Palestinian Liberation Army from Syria threatens to invade Jordan; invasion prevented by Israeli and U.S. support for Jordan
- 1971** Decisive victory for King Hussein; most of the fedayeen expelled
- 1973** Arab-Israeli War

- 1974** Rabat Summit Conference occurs; Jordan and the Arab League recognize the PLO as “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” thereby giving it the control to represent the West Bank Palestinians
- 1988** Jordan renounces all claims to the West Bank
- 1989** Beginning of economic reforms
- 1990** Gulf War begins; Jordan does not send troops
- 1991** Martial Law is ended
- 1992** Political parties legalized
- 1994** Peace Treaty with Israel signed
- 1997** Controversial changes in election laws lead to a boycott by Islamist parties of the Parliamentary elections
- 1999** King Hussein dies; King Abdullah II succeeds
- 2000** Jordan becomes member of the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- 2005** Jordan hotel bombings—three simultaneous attacks on hotels in Amman; Al-Qaeda in Iraq claimed responsibility led by a Jordanian named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi

**HOLIDAYS** (Islamic Holidays operate on a non-Gregorian calendar and so the exact dates of the holidays change each year)

- 1 Jan** New Year’s Day
- 10 Jan** Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice)
- 30 Jan** King Abdullah II’s Birthday
- 31 Jan** Islamic New Year
- 10 Apr** Prophet Muhammad’s Birthday
- 1 May** Labor Day
- 15 May** Independence Day
- 9 Jun** King Abdullah’s Ascension to the Throne
- 10 Jun** Great Arab Revolt
- Summer** Al-Isra’ wal Mi’raj (celebrating two parts of a journey made by the Prophet Muhammad)
- 21 Aug** Prophet Muhammad’s Ascension
- Oct** Ramadan
- 23 Oct** Eid ul-Fitr (the end of Ramadan)
- 12 Nov** King Hussein Day
- Month of Hajj** (pilgrimage to Mecca)
- 25 Dec** Christmas Day
- 31 Dec** Eid al-Adha (holiday in commemoration of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son)

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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### **JORDANIAN EMBASSY TO THE UNITED STATES**

3504 International Drive, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
Phone: (202) 966-2664, Fax: (202) 966-3110  
E-mail: HKJEmbassyDC@jordanembassyus.org  
Web site: <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/>

### **JORDAN TOURISM BOARD**

#### **North America**

6867 Elm Street, Suite 102  
McLean, VA 22101  
Toll-Free: 1-877-SEE-JORDAN (733-5673)  
Phone: (703) 243-7404, Fax: (703) 243-7406  
E-mail: [info@visitjordan.com](mailto:info@visitjordan.com)  
Web site: <http://www.visitjordan.com/>

#### **Amman**

P.O. Box 830688  
Amman, Jordan 11183  
Phone: + 962 6 5678444, Fax: + 962 6 5678295  
E-mail: [info@visitjordan.com](mailto:info@visitjordan.com)  
Web site: <http://www.visitjordan.com/>

### **JORDAN INFORMATION SERVICES**

P.O. Box 259  
Al-Jubaiha, 11941  
Amman, Jordan  
Phone: + 962 6 5300222, Fax: + 962 6 5300277  
Email: [info@nitc.gov.jo/](mailto:info@nitc.gov.jo/)  
Web site: <http://www.nic.gov.jo/En/>

### **BOOKS**

- Greenway, Paul and Anthony Ham. *Lonely Planet: Jordan*, Lonely Planet Productions, 2003.
- Haddadin, Munther J. *Diplomacy on the Jordan: International Conflict and Negotiated Resolution*, Springer, 2002.
- Khouri, Rami, Francesca Casule and Simonetta Giorgi. *The Art and History of Jordan*, Casa Editrice Bonechi, 2003.
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*Religion Relationships in Egypt, Iran, Jordan, and Syria*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.  
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## **FILM**

*Another Road Home*, GeoQuest Entertainment Group, LTD, 2005.  
*Captain Abu Raed*, David Pritchard Productions, 2008.  
*Charlie Rose with King Abdullah II*, Charlie Rose, Inc, 2005.  
*Exploring Jordan and Israel*, Sheryl Brakey, 2003.  
*Lost Worlds of the Middle East—Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel*, Rick Ray, 1998.  
*Music of the Middle East DVD*, Educational Video Network, Inc, 2004.  
*Recycle*, Mahmoud al Massad, 2007.

## **INTERNET SITES**

### **U.S. Embassy in Amman Jordan:**

<http://amman.usembassy.gov/>

### **Arabic Food Recipes for Beginners:**

<http://mideastfood.about.com/od/middleeasternfood101/tp/beginnerrecipes.htm>

### **CIA World Factbook:**

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/JO.html>

### **The Countries and People of Arabia:**

<http://www.hejleh.com/countries/index.html>

### **Embassy of Jordan in Washington, D.C.:**

<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/index.shtml>

### **The Fédération Internationale de Football Association:**

<http://www.fifa.com/en/index.html>

### **Five Pillars of Islam and Application of Faith:**

[http://www.themodernreligion.com/basic/islam\\_pillars.htm](http://www.themodernreligion.com/basic/islam_pillars.htm)

### **The Great Arab Revolt:**

[http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/his\\_arabrevolt.html](http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/his_arabrevolt.html)

### **Islamic Studies—A Well Balanced Web site on Islam:**

<http://www.uga.edu/islam/>

### **The Jordan Daily—Newspaper:**

<http://www.jordandaily.com/>

### **Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (in Arabic):**

<http://www.jrtv.jo/>

### **Jordan Tourism Board:**

<http://visitjordan.com/>

### **Jordan Travel Guide:**

[http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Jordan/Overview;\\$sessionid\\$KQYUQUQAAWY54P2MN5XCFEQ](http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Jordan/Overview;$sessionid$KQYUQUQAAWY54P2MN5XCFEQ)

### **Jordan—Wikipedia Encyclopedia Information:**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan>

**Jordanian Foreign Ministry:**

<http://www.mfa.gov.jo/wps/portal/FMEnglishSite?myld=1>

**Jordanian—Maps, Geography, and Data:**

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[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia\\_near\\_east/countries/jordan/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/jordan/index.html)

**World Travel Guide—Jordan:**

[http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/133/country\\_guide/MiddleEast/Jordan.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/133/country_guide/MiddleEast/Jordan.html)

**MUSIC**

Abdallat, Omar, *Tewhashni*, Rotana, 2006.

Karazon, Diana, *El Omr Mashi*, Music Master International, 2005.

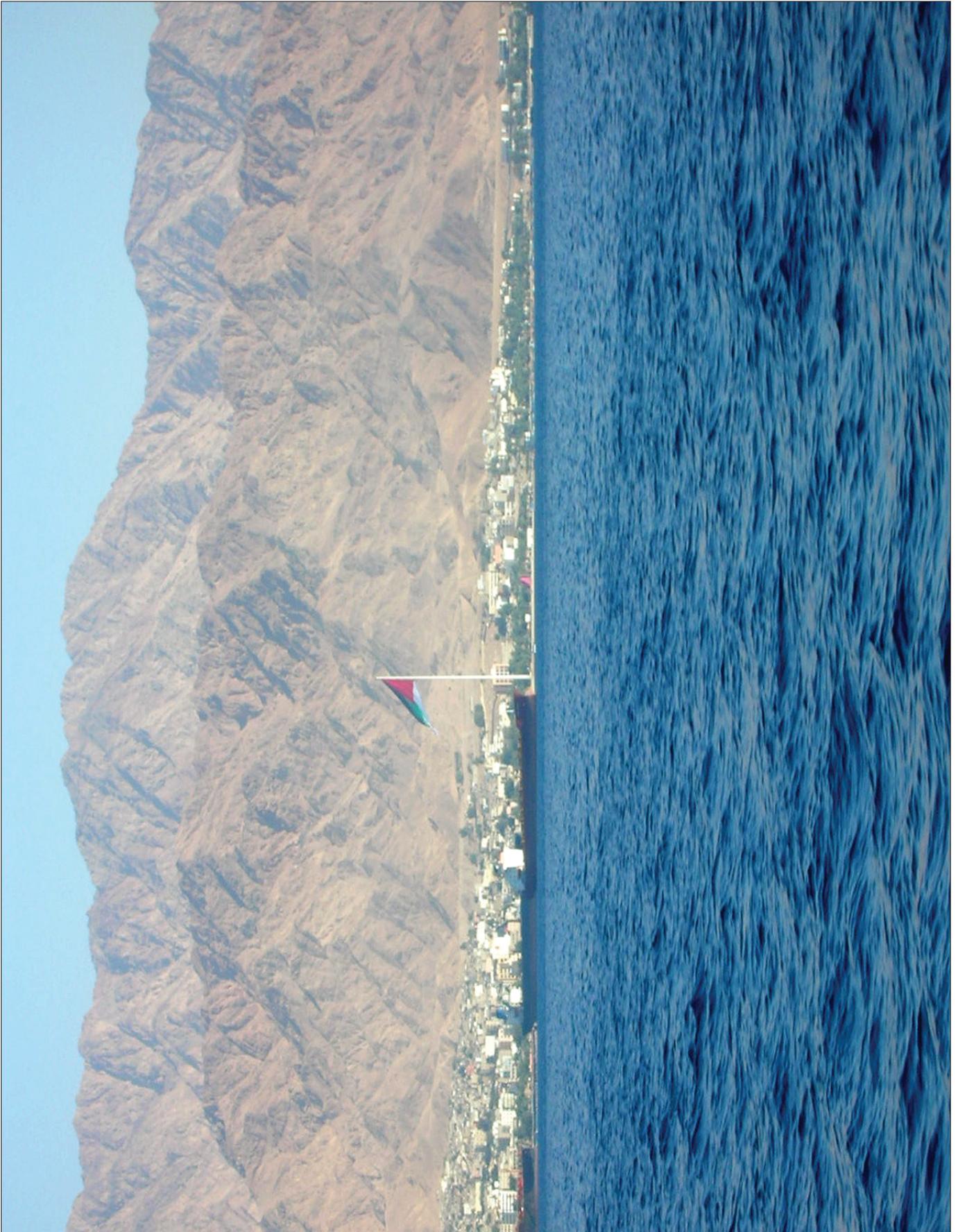
Geography & Climate Visual 1: Dead Sea



**Geography & Climate Visual 2: Fertile Plains**



**Geography & Climate Visual 3: The Gulf of Aqaba**



**Geography & Climate Visual 4: Jordan River on Border with Israel**





History Visual 1: British Mandate of Palestine



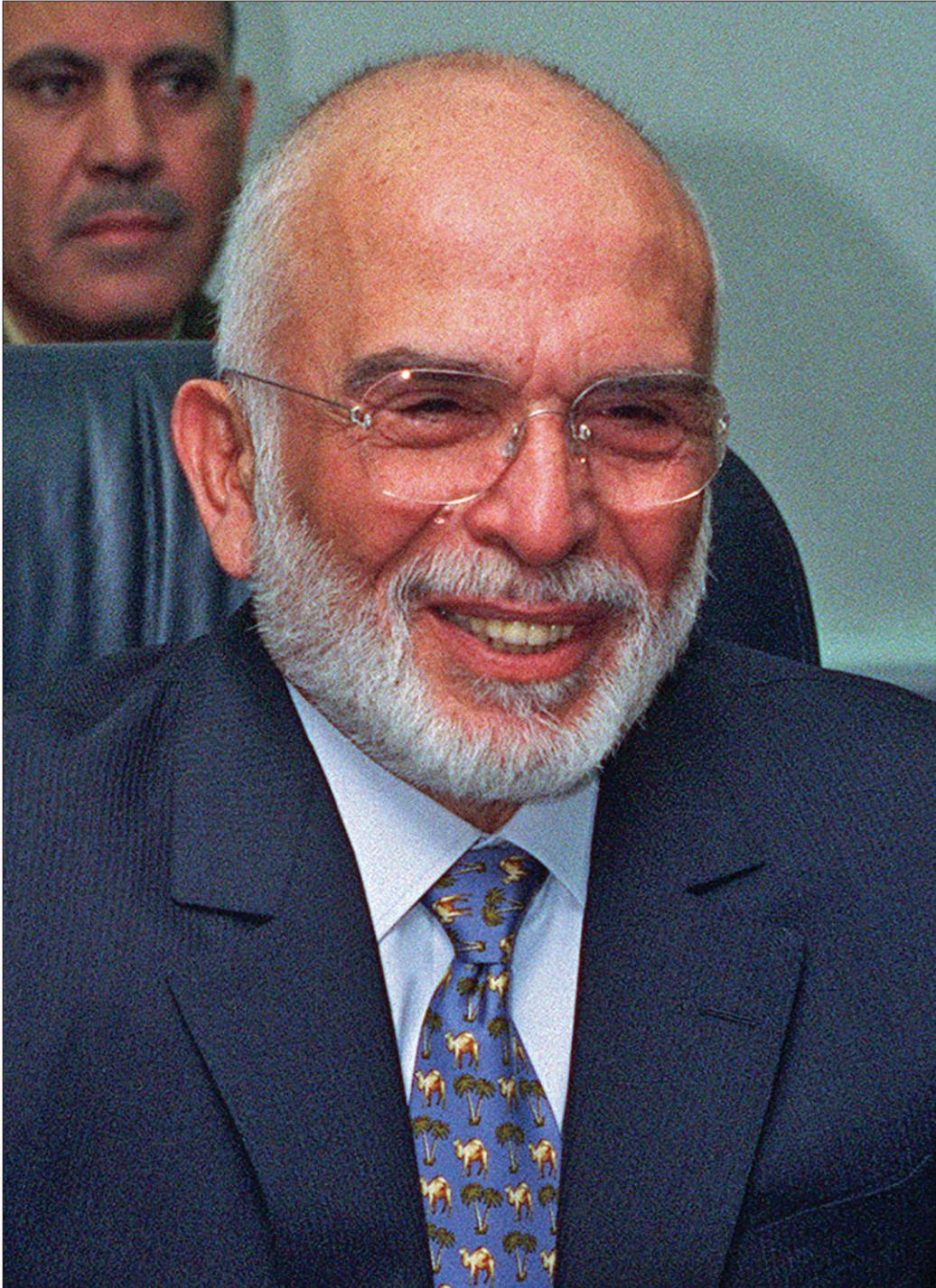
**History Visual 2: Hashemite Warrior**



History Visual 3: King Abdullah (at Right) at His Coronation in 1946



History Visual 4: King Hussein



**History Visual 5: Abdullah II**



Politics & Economics Visual 1: Map of Middle East



Politics & Economics Visual 2: U.S. President George W. Bush and King Abdullah II of Jordan



### Politics & Economics Visual 3: Peace Negotiations



King Hussein I of Jordan, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin



Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat



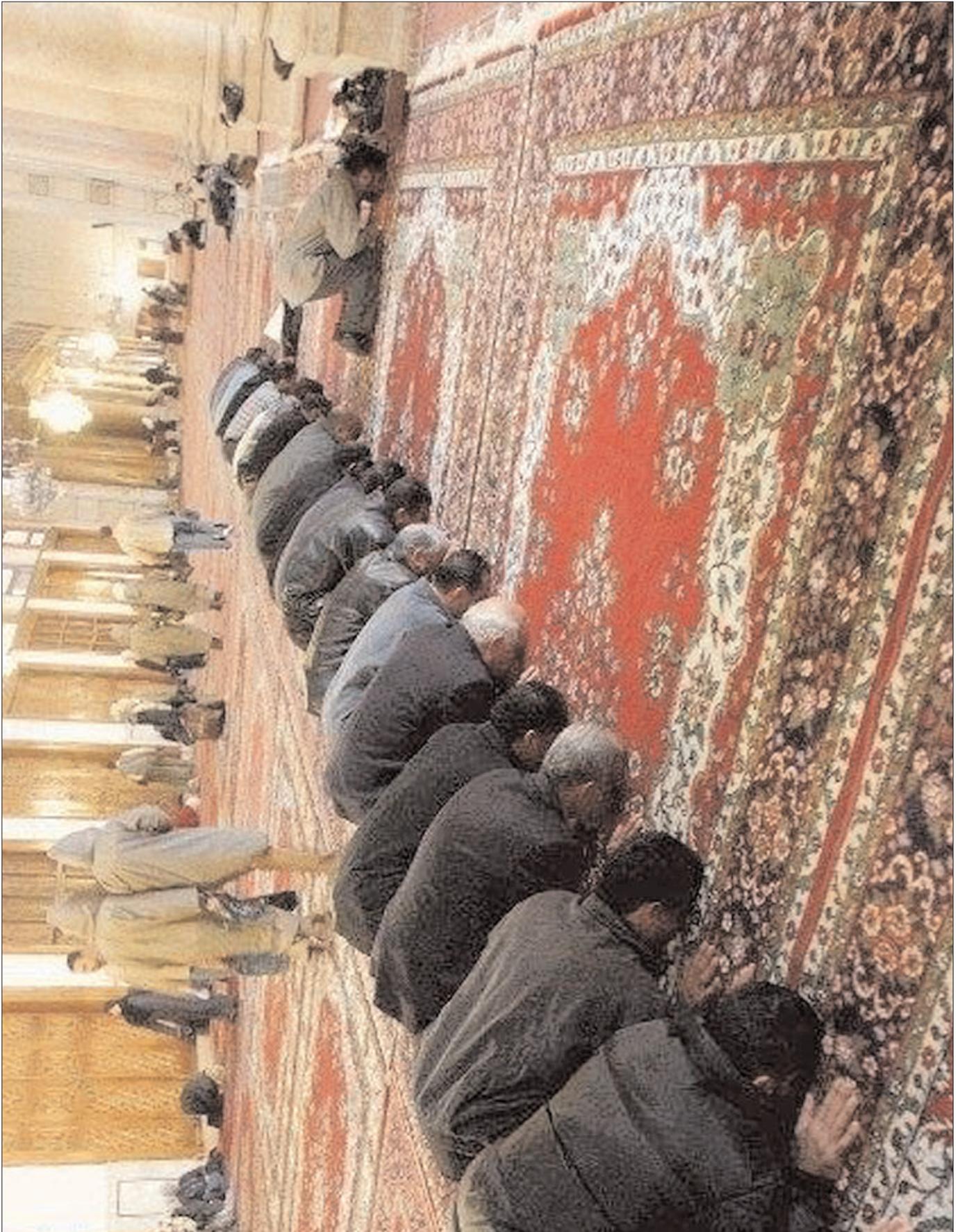
Politics & Economics Visual 5: Jordanian Protest



Lifestyles Visual 1: Muslim Women in Hijab



Lifestyles Visual 2: Muslim Prayer





Lifestyles Visual 4: Qur'an



Photo by Flickr.com user "el7bara"

Lifestyles Visual 5: Kafia Head Garb



Lifestyles Visual 6: Dush-dash and Kafia



**Lifestyles Visual 7: Dush-dash and Kafia**





### **FLAG OF JORDAN**

The flag has a red triangle with a star and three colored bands: black, white, and green. It represents the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. The three horizontal bands stand for the Abassid, Umayyad, and Fatimid Caliphates. The red triangle represents the Hashemite dynasty, and the seven-pointed star represents the unity of the Arab people and the seven verses of the first surah in the Qur'an.

# Map of Jordan

