

**Institute for Curriculum Services (ICS) Review on behalf of  
the Community Relations Council of Richmond,  
the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater, and  
the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington  
National Geographic Learning, Cengage Learning,  
*World Cultures and Geography Survey*,  
2017 student Virginia digital edition, and 2017 student national print edition,  
by Andrew J. Milson, Peggy Altoff, et. al.  
for middle grades  
February 2018**

**General Comments:** This middle-grades world geography textbook covers human and physical geography. ICS appreciates the many thoughtful changes and enhancements that have been implemented in the current edition, ensuring improvements for the better in the areas of Jewish history and Judaism in the chapters on Southwest Asia. ICS thanks National Geographic for the depictions of Judaism and Jewish history in Chapters 15 and 16. Note, the teacher resources should reflect all updates that have been made to the student edition in recent years for consistency.

The textbook uses the Christian dating system throughout the book. The Common Era notation is a religiously neutral alternative preferred by scholars, academics, and educators. Use of the Christian dating system, B.C. and A.D. (Before Christ and Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord) is not neutral and is not appropriate for public school textbooks, and B.C.E. (Before Common Era), and C.E. (Common Era) is more appropriate and used by more and more state social studies standards, including Virginia's which uses both systems together.

The publisher's continued efforts to ensure accuracy in its instructional materials, and to keep them informative and up-to-date for Virginia's students and teachers is appreciated.

**Navigation Notes:**

1. For *World Cultures and Geography Survey* for middle grades.
2. Select Educator (Teacher resources available)
3. Go to [www.myngconnect.com](http://www.myngconnect.com)
4. Teacher Account: enter username: [VASTATE.Review7@cengage.com](mailto:VASTATE.Review7@cengage.com)
5. Enter password: **password**
6. To select book, click on the **round blue Profile icon** at the top right of the screen, so that details of classes pop-up.
7. Select the pop-up for the class: *World Cultures and Geography*
8. From the Backpack, select English eEdition.
9. Click escape to get rid of the screen that tells to rotate the device.
10. Select Table of Contents at top left.
11. Select chapter
12. For student only view, instead of Educator, select **Student**
13. Student Account: enter username: **Vastate.student7**
14. Enter password: **password**

**Review Legend:**

~~Strikethrough~~ = Recommended deletion

Underline = Recommended addition

**Comments** = Explanation and rationale provided to support recommendations

**Suggested Edits:**

p. 101, Chapter 9, 2.7 World Conflict, World War II and the Cold War, Par. 4, lines 2-4,  
**Change:** “The Holocaust - ~~Hitler’s organized murder of~~ was the systematic mass slaughter by the Nazis of six million Jews.”

**Comments:** The Nazi’s goal was the genocide of the Jews. Six million Jews, the figure widely accepted by scholars is correctly noted later in this text. These six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust were two-thirds of European Jewry.

This definition of the Holocaust aligns with the definition provided in the student text in the Glossary, R66, Glossary, H, ‘Holocaust.’ See also 3.6 World War II and the Cold War, p.278, World War II, par.3, lines 3-8, and Economics & Government Handbook, R49, ‘dictatorship,’ lines 7-8.

p. 410, Unit 8 opener, Explore Southwest Asia and North Africa with National Geographic, Step Into History, **Change:** “Jerusalem is home to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic holy sites. The Western Wall, Judaism’s holiest site, is near an Islamic holy place, the Dome of the Rock. The city also contains many sites of importance to Christianity, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.”

**Comments:** The text should first introduce Jerusalem as holy to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This brief summary can concisely mention the three holy sites in Jerusalem and still fit in this space

The Jewish, Christian and Islamic sites mentioned in this description of Jerusalem, all three religions should be listed in their chronological order. Since key sites are listed for both Islam and Christianity, this summary should also list Judaism’s holiest site. The student text on p. 424 accurately explains that the Dome of the Rock was built on the site of the First and Second Temples, which were situated on “Judaism’s holiest site.”

p. 429, Ch. 15, 2.4 The Ottoman Empire, col .1, par. 2, **Change:** “Because it covered such a vast area, the Ottoman Empire was composed of many different ethnic groups, including Turks, Greeks, Slavs, Arabs, and Armenians, and Jews. The Ottomans were Muslim and they spread Islam throughout the empire. They were known for their religious tolerance. Existing religious groups maintained their own practices and communities within the empire.”

**Comments:** The Ottoman Empire welcomed Iberian Jews fleeing the Spanish expulsion in 1492. The number of Jewish exiles who arrived in Constantinople from Spain (some 150,000) dwarfed that city’s population of 70,000 at the time. The Ottoman city of Thessalonica had a Jewish majority, and, indeed, Jews lived all over the Ottoman Empire. By the next (sixteenth) century, the Jewish community within the Ottoman Empire grew to become the largest in the world.

p. 453, Ch. 16, 2.3 Tensions in Southwest Asia, Israelis and Palestinians Today, par. 2, **Change:** “Tensions over the collapse of the peace process led to a second intifada in 2000. In response to the ~~violence~~ Palestinian suicide bombings that killed hundreds of Israelis, in 2002, Israel began building a security barrier between Israel and the West Bank. Permits are required to pass through the checkpoints along the barrier, which divides many workers from their workplaces and people from basic services. However, since the building of the barrier, violence terrorism against Israeli civilians has decreased by 90 percent.”

**Comments:** The wording here is vague and does not make clear what prompted the building of the security barrier. Use of the term “violence” will not help students understand the terror endured by Israelis (Jews and Arabs alike) who experienced constant suicide bombings by Palestinian terrorists in Israeli restaurants, pizza parlors, and other civilian areas.

Most of the suicide bombers came from the West Bank, which was the impetus for building the barrier. Israel had already built a security barrier around Gaza, which worked—no suicide bomber entered Israel from the Gaza Strip. See:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-of-israel-s-security-fence>

The final sentence is strengthened by noting that the barrier has significantly reduced Palestinian terrorism in Israel, dramatically decreasing the number of Israelis killed (statistics are available at the above link and here:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/terrorism/palestinian/pages/saving%20lives-%20israel-s%20anti-terrorist%20fence%20-%20answ.aspx#9>).

World Religions Handbook, p. R53, Islam, image caption to right of Historical Origins, beneath photo of ceramic tile, **Add:** “A 17<sup>th</sup>-century Turkish ceramic tile from a mosque noting the direction of the Ka’bah in Mecca.”

**Comments:** The descriptive title on the tile shown says in Arabic, “Noble Ka’bah (*Ka’bah Sharifah*).” The tile likely is intended to be hung on a wall to indicate the direction of the Ka’bah in Mecca, and help with the direction of prayer.

World Religions Handbook, p. R53, Islam, Central Beliefs, par. 2, **Delete:** “Muslims do this by practicing the Five Pillars of Islam. These are professing faith, praying five times a day, giving to charity, fasting, and making a journey to Mecca ~~to reenact Abraham’s dedication.~~”

**Comments:** The publisher previously suggested revising the passage to read, “These are professing faith, praying five times a day, giving to charity, fasting, and making a journey to Mecca.” The inclusion of a reference to Abraham at the end of the sentence, as an elaboration about the pilgrimage or journey to Mecca, may be confusing to students. Abraham was not in Arabia according to Jewish tradition, and he is described in other parts of the text as living in Mesopotamia and Canaan. Since the two traditions (Jewish and Muslim) hold different beliefs about Abraham, omitting this clause does not change the essence of the sentence in this very brief summary. Indeed, it provides clarity. In addition, it is not standard to include a reference to Abraham when enumerating the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) as one of the five pillars of Islam.

World Religions Handbook, p. R54, Judaism, Historical Origins, **Change:** “God told Abraham to move to Canaan in present-day Israel and Lebanon. God made an agreement with Abraham to bless his descendants. They ~~became known as~~ were called Hebrews in the first three generations, later Israelites, then Jews. The Hebrew Bible contains books of laws on moral and religious conduct, history, and prophecy. Another important work is the Talmud, a collection of ~~scholarly writings~~ discussions on Jewish law, traditions, and stories.”

**Comments:** All three names for the Jewish people should be listed: Hebrews, Israelites, and Jews, so students are clear that these are the same people. Carrying over the definitions of terms from the earlier texts will help students with continuity and clarity, and will enable them to better recall the information.

The text should clarify that the Hebrew Bible contains laws on moral conduct generally and religious laws, as well as including Jewish history and prophecy.

Students might think from this that the Talmud is a standard collection of scholarly writings, similar to modern-day scholarship. In fact, the Talmud, together with the Hebrew Bible, forms the foundation of Jewish practice, ethics, religious law, and philosophy. The Talmud is also the source for many stories and narratives from the Jewish tradition. Since the text’s space here is rather tight, inclusion of these short additions will add a lot of information about the Talmud’s wide-ranging range content.

World Religions Handbook, p. R54, Judaism, Spread of Judaism, **Change:** “For ~~centuries a thousand years,~~ Judaism was practiced primarily in what is present-day Israel. Several times in history, empires conquered the region and drove many Jews from the area. ~~The last major event occurred in A.D.~~ In 135 C.E. when Rome punished Jewish rebels attempting to regain independence, razed Jerusalem, and instituted harsh anti-Jewish decrees. Judaism then became a portable religion, with new communities in a Jewish diaspora. As Jews spread, ~~out~~ migrated around the world, Judaism ~~spread~~ came with them.”

**Comments:** There were later major events in Judaism, such as the Holocaust, so the phrase “last major event” should be replaced with details about the Roman destruction in this early period of Jewish history.

ICS recommends explaining briefly how the events of 135 C.E. were a turning point in Jewish history and pivotal to the spread of Judaism. Judaism became a more portable religion after the destruction of the Second Temple and drove Jews from Jerusalem. Rabbinic Judaism developed after those events in a fundamental shift from Temple-centric ritual.

ICS recommends replacing the Christian dating system notation used in the text, B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord), with the religiously neutral alternative preferred by scholars, academics, and educators: B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era).

In talking about population movements, the term “migrated” is more fitting than “spread”, which can have a negative connotation.

p. R66, Glossary, H, **Change:** “**Holocaust** the systematic mass slaughter by the Nazis of six million Jews ~~and others~~ during World War II.”

**Comments:** Both the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Israel's Yad Vashem include the term "systematic" in their definitions of the Holocaust. Most commonly used definitions focus on the systematic murder of six million Jews, who were the primary victims. This definition is also consistent with that used elsewhere in the text. While there were many others murdered by the Nazis, the term "Holocaust" is defined specifically as genocide against the Jews.

p. R67-68, Glossary, J, **Add:** "Judaism n. a monotheistic religion founded in ancient Israel and practiced around the world today."

**Comments:** Please add Judaism to the Glossary, which includes all of the other world religions described in the World Religion Overview. Previously, the publisher stated they would add Judaism to the Glossary. An appropriate definition of Judaism would be "monotheistic religion founded in ancient Israel and practiced around the world today." Please also include Judaism in the Spanish version of the Glossary.

p. R108, Index, Israel, **Change:** "sState of, 426."

**Comments:** The "State of Israel" is a proper name, so the 'S' in State should be capitalized. Previously, the publisher stated they would revise the index text to read, "State of Israel."

Student Tools, Connect to NG, World Almanac, Israel, **Delete:** Delete link to pop-up travel offers.

**Comments:** This link does not go to information on Israel, nor does it still link to the *National Geographic Atlas of the World, Eighth Edition 2004*. Instead it links to offers to purchase or get more information on National Geographic travel offers on the site <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/>