

## What You Will Learn...

## Main Ideas

1. Southern Europe's physical features include rugged mountains and narrow coastal plains.
2. The region's climate and resources support such industries as agriculture, fishing, and tourism.

## The Big Idea

The peninsulas of Southern Europe have rocky terrains and sunny, mild climates.

## Key Terms and Places

Mediterranean Sea, p. 400

Pyrenees, p. 401

Apennines, p. 401

Alps, p. 401

Mediterranean climate, p. 402

## TAKING NOTES

Draw two ovals like the ones below. As you read this section, list facts about Southern Europe's landforms in one oval and facts about its climate and resources in the other.

Landforms

Climate and Resources

# Physical Geography

## If YOU lived there...

You are in a busy fish market in a small town on the coast of Italy, near the Mediterranean Sea. It is early morning. Colorful fishing boats have just pulled into shore with their catch of fresh fish and seafood. They unload their nets of slippery octopus and wriggling shrimp. Others bring silvery sea bass. You are looking forward to lunch—perhaps a tasty fish soup or pasta dish.

## How does the Mediterranean affect your life?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** The Mediterranean Sea has shaped the geography, climate, and culture of Southern Europe. All of these countries have long coastlines, with good harbors and beautiful beaches. Because much of the interior is rugged and mountainous, the sea has also been a highway for trade and travel.

## Physical Features

The continent of Europe has often been called a peninsula of peninsulas. Why do you think this is so? Look at the map of Europe in this book's Atlas to find out. Notice how Europe juts out from Asia like one big peninsula. Also, notice how smaller peninsulas extend into the many bodies of water that surround the continent.

Look at the map of Europe again. Do you see the three large peninsulas that extend south from Europe? From west to east, these are the Iberian Peninsula, the Italian Peninsula, and the Balkan Peninsula. Together with some large islands, they form the region of Southern Europe.

Southern Europe is also known as Mediterranean Europe. All of the countries of Southern Europe have long coastlines on the **Mediterranean Sea**. In addition to this common location on the Mediterranean, the countries of Southern Europe share many common physical features.

## Landforms

The three peninsulas of Southern Europe are largely covered with rugged mountains. In Greece, for example, about three-fourths of the land is mountainous. Because much of the land is so rugged, farming and travel in Southern Europe can be a challenge.

The mountains of Southern Europe form several large ranges. On the Iberian Peninsula, the **Pyrenees** (PIR-uh-nee-z) form a boundary between Spain and France to the north. Italy has two major ranges. The **Apennines** (A-puh-nyn-z) run along the whole peninsula, and the **Alps**—Europe's highest mountains—are in the north. The Pindus Mountains cover much of Greece.

Southern Europe's mountains extend into the sea as well, where they rise above the water to form islands. The Aegean Sea east of Greece is home to more than 2,000 such islands. Southern Europe also has many larger islands formed by undersea mountains. These include Crete, which is south of Greece; Sicily, at the southern tip of Italy; and many others.

Not all of Southern Europe is rocky and mountainous, though. Some flat plains lie in the region. Most of these plains are along the coast and in the valleys of major rivers. It is here that most farming in Southern Europe takes place. It is also here that most of the region's people live.

### FOCUS ON READING

As you read, ask yourself this question: Where are the Pyrenees?



Interactive Map

## Southern Europe: Physical

ATLANTIC OCEAN



Bay of Biscay

Cantabrian Mountains

PORTUGAL

SPAIN

ANDORRA

PYRENEES

Douro River

Tagus River

Guadiana River

Guadalquivir River

Straits of Gibraltar

IBERIAN PENINSULA

Balearic Islands

Corisca

Sardinia

Sicily

MALTA

AFRICA

ITALY

ALPS

Po River

Dolomites

Apennines

San Marino

Vatican City

Adriatic Sea

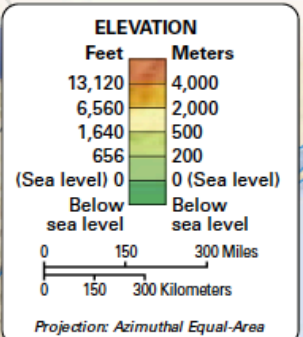
Ionian Sea

Aegean Sea

GREECE

Peloponnese

Crete



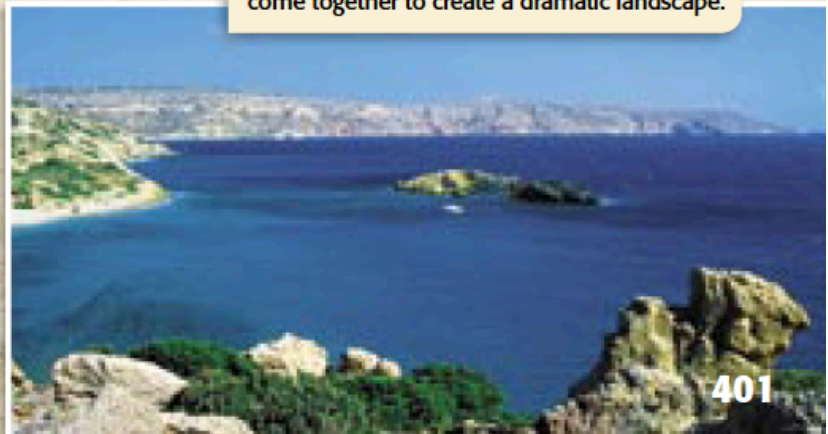
map zone Geography Skills

**Region** The countries of Southern Europe lie on three peninsulas that extend into the Mediterranean Sea.

1. **Name** What mountain range separates Spain from the rest of Europe?
2. **Interpret** In what ways might mountains affect life in this region?

go.hrw.com KEYWORD: SJ7 CH16

Southern Europe is known for mountains and seas. On Greece's coast, these two features come together to create a dramatic landscape.





## Close-up

# Mediterranean Climate

Southern Europe is known for its Mediterranean climate, which features warm, dry summers and mild, wet winters. This climate affects nearly every aspect of life in the region.



**1 Agriculture** The climate of Southern Europe is ideal for growing many crops. Here, Portuguese farmers harvest grapes.

## Water Features

Since Southern Europe is mostly peninsulas and islands, water is central to the region's geography. No place in Southern Europe is very far from a major body of water. The largest of these bodies of water is the Mediterranean, but the Adriatic, Aegean, and Ionian seas are also important to the region. For many centuries, these seas have given the people of Southern Europe food and a relatively easy way to travel around the region.

Only a few large rivers run through Southern Europe. The region's longest river is the Tagus (TAY-guhs), which flows across the Iberian Peninsula. In northern Italy, the Po runs through one of Southern Europe's most fertile and densely populated areas. Other rivers run out of the mountains and into the many surrounding seas.

**READING CHECK** **Finding Main Ideas** What are the region's major features?

SPAIN  
PORTUGAL

1

2



**2 Tourism** The region's mild and sunny climate draws millions of tourists to places like this beach in Ibiza, Spain.

## Climate and Resources

Southern Europe is famous for its pleasant climate. Most of the region enjoys warm, sunny days and mild nights for most of the year. Little rain falls in the summer, falling instead during the mild winter. In fact, the type of climate found across Southern Europe is called a **Mediterranean climate** because it is common in this region.

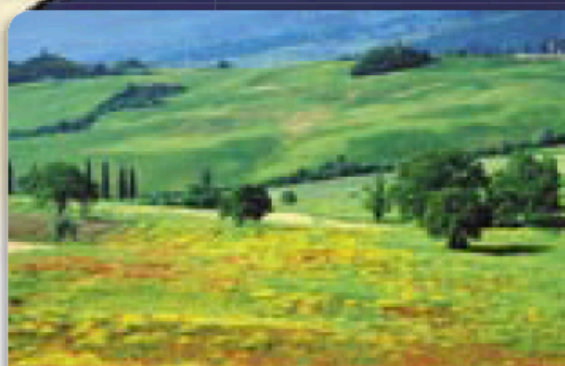
The region's climate is also one of its most valuable resources. The mild climate is ideal for growing a variety of crops, from citrus fruits and grapes to olives and wheat. In addition, millions of tourists are drawn to the region each year by its climate, beaches, and breathtaking scenery.

ITALY

3

GREECE

4



**3 Vegetation** This field in Tuscany, a region of Italy, shows the variety of plants that thrive in Southern Europe's climate.

The sea is also an important resource in Southern Europe. Many of the region's largest cities are ports, which ship goods all over the world. In addition, the nearby seas are full of fish and shellfish, which provide the basis for profitable fishing industries.

**READING CHECK** **Generalizing** How is a mild climate important to Southern Europe?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** In this section you learned about the physical features of Southern Europe. In the next section you will learn how those features affect life in one country—Greece.



**4 Architecture** Climate also affects architecture in Southern Europe. Buildings, like these in Greece, are airy and made of light materials to reflect sunlight and heat.

**ANALYSIS SKILL**

**ANALYZING VISUALS**

What are four ways in which the Mediterranean climate affects life in Southern Europe?

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**Online Quiz**

KEYWORD: SJ7 HP16

## Section 1 Assessment

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

1. **a. Recall** Which three peninsulas are in Southern Europe?  
**b. Explain** Why is the sea important to Southern Europe?  
**c. Elaborate** Why do you think most people in Southern Europe live on coastal plains or in river valleys?
2. **a. Describe** What is the **Mediterranean climate** like?  
**b. Generalize** How is climate an important resource for the region?

### Critical Thinking

#### 3. Finding Main Ideas

Draw a diagram like the one shown here.

In the left oval, use your notes to explain how landforms affect life in Southern Europe. In the right oval, explain how climate affects life in the region.

Landforms

Climate

### FOCUS ON WRITING

4. **Describing the Setting** Your news report will be about an imaginary event someplace in Southern Europe. That event might happen on a beach, in the mountains, or on a farm. Write some ideas in your notebook.