

Scandinavia

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The history of Scandinavia dates back to the time of the Vikings.
2. Scandinavia today is known for its peaceful and prosperous countries.

The Big Idea

Scandinavia has developed into one of the most stable and prosperous regions in Europe.

Key Terms and Places

Vikings, p. 458
 Stockholm, p. 460
 neutral, p. 460
 uninhabitable, p. 461
 Oslo, p. 461
 Helsinki, p. 461
 geysers, p. 462

TAKING NOTES As you read, take notes on the history of Scandinavia and the region today. Use a chart like the one below to help you organize your notes.

Scandinavia	
History	Region Today

If YOU lived there...

You live in Copenhagen, the picturesque capital of Denmark. One of your favorite walks is along the waterfront, which is lined with colorful medieval buildings. Sailing boats of all sizes are anchored here. A famous statue in the harbor shows the Little Mermaid. But your favorite place of all is the huge amusement park called Tivoli Gardens, where you can enjoy fun and good food.

What sights would you show to a visitor?

BUILDING BACKGROUND After a long and warlike history, the modern countries of Scandinavia are models of peace and prosperity for the rest of Europe. Their cultures are similar in several ways, but each country has its own personality.

History

Hundreds of years ago, Scandinavia was home to warlike Vikings. The Vikings were Scandinavian warriors who raided Europe and the Mediterranean in the early Middle Ages. Excellent sailors, the Vikings used quick and powerful longboats to attack villages along coasts or rivers. The Vikings conquered the British Isles, Finland, and parts of France, Germany, and Russia. They were some of the most feared warriors of their time.

The Vikings were also great explorers. They established the first settlements in Iceland in the 800s and in Greenland in the 900s. A short time later, Vikings led by Leif Eriksson became the first Europeans to reach North America. The ruins of a Viking colony have been found in present-day Newfoundland, off the southeast coast of Canada.

In the 1100s the Viking raids ended. Powerful Scandinavian chiefs instead concentrated on strengthening their kingdoms. During the Middle Ages three kingdoms—Norway, Sweden, and Denmark—competed for power in the region.

Denmark was the first to gain the upper hand. By the late 1300s Denmark ruled a union of all the Scandinavian kingdoms and territories. Eventually, Sweden challenged Denmark's power.

In time, Sweden left the Danish-led union, taking Finland with it. Many years later, Sweden won control of Norway as well.

By the 1900s Scandinavian countries wanted their independence. Norway won its independence from Sweden in the early 1900s. Soon after, Finland became independent after centuries of foreign domination,

or control, by Sweden and later by Russia. Iceland, then a Danish territory, declared its independence in 1944. To this day, however, Greenland remains a part of Denmark as a self-ruling territory.

FOCUS ON READING

What other word has the same meaning as domination? How can you tell?

READING CHECK Analyzing What historical ties do the countries of Scandinavia have?

Close-up

Viking Raids

The Vikings of Scandinavia launched raids on many European settlements in the early Middle Ages. Using powerful longships, Viking warriors attacked towns and villages near coasts and rivers. Vikings even sailed as far as North America in their longships.



A large woolen sail helped increase the ship's speed.

Sometimes as many as 30 oars spanned each side of a longship.

Viking longships were designed the same at each end. As a result, warriors did not have to turn the ship around to make a quick escape.

The longship's shallow design made river travel possible and allowed Viking raiders to sail their ships ashore.

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

What aspects of Viking longships might have frightened Europeans who saw them approaching?

Scandinavia Today

Today the countries of Scandinavia have much in common. Similar political views, languages, and religion unite the region. The countries of Scandinavia have large, wealthy cities, strong economies, and well-educated workers. Scandinavians enjoy some of the world's highest standards of living. Each country provides its citizens with excellent social programs and services, such as free health care. Sweden, Denmark, Greenland, Norway, Finland, and Iceland are among the world's most peaceful, stable, and prosperous nations.

Sweden

Sweden is Scandinavia's largest and most populous country. Most Swedes live in the southern part of the country in large towns

and cities. In fact, more than 80 percent of Swedes live in urban areas. **Stockholm**, Sweden's capital and largest city, is located on the east coast near the Baltic Sea. Often called a floating city, Stockholm is built on 14 islands and part of the mainland.

For almost 200 years, Sweden has been a neutral country. **Neutral** means that it has chosen not to take sides in an international conflict. Sweden does, however, play an active role in the United Nations as well as the European Union.

Denmark

Denmark, once the most powerful country in Scandinavia, is also the smallest. It is Scandinavia's most densely populated country, with some 333 people per square mile (128 per square km).

Scandinavia Today

Like most Scandinavians, the people of Oslo, Norway, enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world. High per capita GDPs are one reason why.

ANALYZING VISUALS What elements in the photo indicate a high standard of living?



Scandinavia's Per Capita GDP

Country	Per Capita GDP (U.S. \$)
Denmark	\$37,000
Finland	\$32,800
Iceland	\$38,100
Norway	\$47,800
Sweden	\$31,600
United States	\$43,500

go.hrw.com KEYWORD: SJ7 CH18

About 50 percent of Denmark's land is used for farming. Farm goods, especially meat and dairy products, are important Danish exports. Denmark also has modern industries, including iron, steel, textiles, and electronics industries.

Greenland

The island of Greenland is geographically part of North America. However, it is a territory of Denmark. A thick ice sheet covers about 80 percent of the island. Because of this, much of Greenland is **uninhabitable**, or not able to support human settlement. Most people live on the island's southwest coast where the climate is warmest.

Recently, a movement for complete independence from Denmark has gained popularity. However, economic problems make independence unlikely, as Greenland relies heavily on imports and economic aid from Denmark.

Norway

With one of the longest coastlines in the world, Norway takes advantage of its access to the sea. Fjords shelter Norway's many harbors. Its fishing and shipping fleets are among the largest in the world. **Oslo**, Norway's capital, is the country's leading seaport as well as its industrial center.

Norway has other valuable resources as well. Oil and natural gas provide Norway with the highest per capita GDP in Scandinavia. However, North Sea oil fields are expected to run dry over the next century. Despite strong economic ties to the rest of Europe, Norway's citizens have refused to join the European Union.

Finland

Finland is Scandinavia's easternmost country. It lies between Sweden and Russia. The capital and largest city is **Helsinki**, which is located on the southern coast.

FOCUS ON CULTURE

The Sami

The Sami (SAH-mee) people are a unique culture group that lives in far northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and parts of Russia. They are descendants of Scandinavia's earliest settlers. Traditionally, Sami have earned a living herding reindeer, farming, and fishing. While today's Sami often work and live in modern cities and towns, they try to preserve many traditional Sami culture traits. The Sami language is taught in public schools, traditional reindeer grazing land is protected, and organizations promote Sami customs.

Making Inferences Why do you think the Sami are trying to preserve their traditions and customs?



As with other countries in the region, trade is important to Finland. Paper and other forest products are major exports. Shipbuilding and electronics are also important industries in Finland.

Iceland

Iceland is much greener than its name implies. Fertile farmland along the island's coast produces potatoes and vegetables and supports cattle and sheep.

Icelanders also make good use of their other natural resources. Fish from the rich waters of the Atlantic Ocean account for about 70 percent of Iceland's exports.

Iceland

Iceland's geysers and hot springs produce great amounts of energy. Geothermal plants like this one near the Blue Lagoon hot spring provide heat for buildings and homes throughout the country.



In addition, steam from hot springs and geysers produces geothermal energy. **Geysers** are springs that shoot hot water and steam into the air. Geothermal energy heats many of Iceland's buildings. Each year thousands of tourists flock to see Iceland's many geysers, volcanoes, and glaciers.

READING CHECK Comparing and Contrasting

In what ways are the countries of Scandinavia similar and different?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Scandinavia today is a region of relative peace and stability. A common history and culture link the people of the region. Today, Scandinavia is one of the wealthiest regions in Europe and in the world. In the next chapter, you will learn about the unique geography, history, and culture of another European region—Eastern Europe.

Section 3 Assessment

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Online Quiz

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Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- Identify** Who were the Vikings?
 - Analyze** What effect did the Vikings have on Scandinavian history?
 - Evaluate** Do you think the Vikings helped or hurt the future of Scandinavia? Explain your answer.
- Define** What does the term **neutral** mean?
 - Compare** What features do the countries of Scandinavia have in common today?
 - Elaborate** In which Scandinavian country would you prefer to live? Why?

Critical Thinking

- Finding Main Ideas** Use your notes and this chart to identify two main ideas about Scandinavia's history and two about its culture today.

History	Today

FOCUS ON WRITING

- Writing about Scandinavia** Where would you travel and what would you see in Scandinavia? Take notes on the details you might include in your letter.