



#9550

CENTRAL ASIA: LIVING IN KYRGYZSTAN

BENCHMARK MEDIA, 1993

Grade Levels: 7-10

23 minutes

DESCRIPTION

Independent from the Soviet Union since 1991, this central Asian country lies on the old Silk Road between China and the Middle East. Looks at its religions, cultural influences, history, geography, industries, and nomadic people, the Kyrgyz.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Geography - Human Systems

- ★ Standard: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
 - Benchmark: Knows the role culture plays in incidents of cooperation and conflict in the present-day world (e.g., conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s, Central Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, states within the former Soviet Union in the 1990s; cooperation such as the religious and linguistic ties between Spain and parts of Latin America; ethnic ties among the Kurds living in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey) (See Instructional Goal #1.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To depict how Central Asia's culture has been influenced by trade routes and the successive ruling empires.
2. To examine how the terrain, natural resources and climate have determined the way the Kyrgyz live.
3. To illustrate the economic conditions in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan.

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. peak | 10. tradition |
| 2. pastoral | 11. ethnic |
| 3. nomadic | 12. nomad |
| 4. caravan route | 13. production line |
| 5. strategic mountain pass | 14. adapt |
| 6. indigenous | 15. incorporate |
| 7. mosque | |
| 8. parishioner | |
| 9. dominance | |



BEFORE SHOWING

1. Locate the following places on a map of the world. Label each as a city, country, continent or land formation.
 - a. Asia
 - b. China
 - c. Middle East
 - d. Russia
 - e. Soviet Union
 - f. USSR
 - g. Kazakhstan
 - h. Uzbekistan
 - i. Turkmenistan
 - j. Tajikistan
 - k. Kyrgyzstan
 - i. Tian Shan Mountains
 - ii. Bishkek
 - iii. Osh
2. List what you know about Kyrgyzstan. Include questions and educated guesses. Consider climate, landforms, politics, religion, culture, history, and economy.



AFTER SHOWING



► Discussion Items and Questions

1. What empires have forged Kyrgyzstan?
2. Why does Kyrgyzstan retain elements of Russian culture?
3. What are the two main religions in Kyrgyzstan?
4. Why did some ethnic Russians flee when Kyrgyzstan first gained independence? How is this consistent with the Kyrgyz national identity?
5. What is the Manas Saga? Who are the manaschi?
6. Why was the Kyrgyz written language seldom used until recently?
7. How has the terrain of Central Asia shaped Kyrgyz traditional life?
 - a. Why is there not much farming in Kyrgyzstan?
 - b. Why are yurts central to the nomadic way of life? How are yurts and shyrdaks built?
8. How have the collective state farms of the Soviets changed in independent Kyrgyzstan?
9. What other changes have happened in the Kyrgyz economy in production and mining?
10. What are problems in the infrastructure, communication systems, and highways in Kyrgyzstan?
11. What are the similarities and differences in the Kyrgyz cities of Bishtek and Osh?
12. What three languages do Kyrgyz children learn? Why?

► Applications and Activities

1. Discuss how culture, climate, terrain, and natural resources effect how people live in your local area. Compare this to life in Kyrgyzstan.
2. Investigate the topography of Central Asia.

- a. Compare the collision that caused the Himalayan Mountains with the Tian Shan Mountains.
- b. Consider the benefits of the dams on the Naryn River to Kyrgyzstan.
3. Read Homer's *Iliad*, the Icelandic Saga, or Kyrgyzstan's *Manas Saga*. Discuss reasons ancient civilizations handed down through oral tradition their legends, myths, and epic poems.
4. Research the three predominant ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan: the Kyrgyz, the Russians, and the Uzbeks. Depict a typical day; include religion, food, dress, language, and traditional livelihood.
5. Plan a trip to Kyrgyzstan. Consider tourist attractions, natural wonders, and cultural events.
6. Investigate the history of Kyrgyzstan. Consider periods of control by the Islamic khans, the Mongols of Genghis Khan, Czarist Russia, the Soviet Union, and independence in 1991.
 - a. Create a timeline showing the major events.
 - b. Evaluate the pros and cons for each era.



RELATED RESOURCES



- [China #8677](#)
- [Pakistan #9338](#)



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.



- **RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN NETWORK INFORMATION CENTER**

<http://reenic.utexas.edu/reenic.html>

A wide array of links to information including political, cultural and climate in addition to maps of the area.

- **LONELY PLANET WORLD GUIDE: DESTINATION KYRGYZSTAN**

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/central_asia/kyrgyzstan/

A site for travelers that includes information on money, attractions, activities, history, culture, environment and links to further information.



- **KYRGYZSTAN NEWS**

<http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kyrgyzstan/index.shtml>



This subsite of the Eurasianet website contains daily news in Kyrgyzstan including environment, politics, and culture. It also lists almanac information and related links.