

# Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia is one of the largest countries in the Middle East. It is about five times the size of the state of Texas. It is bordered on the west by the Red Sea and on the east by Qatar, Oman, and the Persian Gulf. Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait lie to the north, while Yemen and Oman form the southern boundary.

Saudi Arabia is by far the richest nation of the Middle East. Approximately one quarter of the world's oil reserves lies beneath its surface. Wealth from oil has transformed the country into a modern, booming nation. Many Saudis enjoy a relatively high standard of living.

About 80 percent of Saudis live in urban areas. The remainder are farmers or Bedouin nomads. Nomads are people who tend animals and move from place to place to feed them. Today, Saudi Arabia's nomads often have cars and pickup trucks parked among their camels and livestock. The Arabian camel is called a dromedary and has one hump. This is in contrast to the Asian Bactrian camel, which has two humps.

In spite of progress in most areas, Saudi Arabia has made few steps toward developing a democratic society. Its government is an absolute monarchy, ruled by a king. Although the king has consultants and advisers, he determines the laws—and the laws can be swift and cruel. People convicted of serious crimes are beheaded in a city's public square. The punishment for theft is having a hand cut off.

Women are also treated differently in Saudi Arabia—they can neither vote nor run for office. While out in public, they must follow a rigid dress code. They wear long robes that cover their bodies from head to toe. A veil is required to cover their face. "Religion police" patrol the streets to make sure the dress code is followed.



## Project #1

Make a poster showing the difference between the Arabian camel and its Asian counterpart.

### Materials

- research materials
- pencil
- poster board
- marker
- yardstick
- colored pencils or crayons

### Directions

1. Find pictures of the dromedary, or one-hump camel, and the Bactrian, or two-hump camel in a book or on the Internet.
2. Write a title for your poster.
3. Below the title, draw a straight line dividing the space into two equal columns.

4. In the left column, draw a picture of the dromedary, or one-hump camel.
5. In the right column, draw a picture of the Bactrian, or two-humped, camel.
6. Color the pictures.
7. At the bottom of the poster, write important facts about camels. Consult an encyclopedia or the Internet.

