

Countries Around the World™

Turkey

Program Summary

Meet 12-year-old Serkan. He and his family live in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city. Join Serkan as he takes a ferry across the Bosphorus Strait to meet his brother, Memet, in the part of Istanbul that is on the European continent. Once there, Serkan joins his brother, and they introduce us to aspects of Turkey's ancient history when they visit the Archeological Museum and its displays dedicated to the Hittites and the ancient Greeks, two early civilizations in Turkey. Next, Serkan and Memet wander through an open-air market and visit Hagia Sophia before relaxing in a hammam, a Turkish bath. Experience the religious traditions of Turkey when Serkan and his family celebrate Seker Bayrami, a three-day Muslim festival that marks the end of Ramadan. Finally, Serkan shows us some Turkish folklore when he uses some of the money he collected during Seker Bayrami to buy a *nazar* — a charm designed to protect against the "evil eye"!

Country Information

- **location:** southeastern Europe and southwestern Asia (the portion of Turkey west of the Bosphorus is geographically part of Europe), bordering the Black Sea to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the southwest, the Aegean Sea to the west and the Sea of Marmara to the northwest; bordered by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Syria
- **capital:** Ankara
- **official language:** Turkish
- **type of government:** republican parliamentary democracy
- **total area:** approximately 780,580 sq km
- **climate:** temperate with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters
- **terrain:** high central plateau (Anatolia); narrow coastal plain; several mountain ranges
- **major bodies of water:** Black Sea, Sea of Marmara, Mediterranean Sea, Tigris River, Euphrates River and Lake Van
- **natural resources:** includes coal, iron ore, copper, chromium, antimony, mercury, gold, barite, borate, celestite (strontium), emery, feldspar, limestone, magnesite, marble, perlite, pumice, pyrites (sulfur), clay, arable land and hydropower
- **industries:** includes textiles, food processing, autos, electronics, mining (coal, chromite, copper, boron), steel, petroleum, construction, lumber and paper
- **agricultural products:** includes tobacco, cotton, grain, olives, sugar beets, edible seeds, citrus and livestock

Vocabulary

Bosphorus Strait — Also "Bosphorus." A channel that separates the European part of Turkey from the Asian part and connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.

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Thrace — A region in southeastern Europe on which a portion of Turkey lies. Eastern Thrace is a part of Turkey while western Thrace is a part of Greece.

Anatolia — A name for the Asian part of Turkey. It is usually considered synonymous with Asia Minor.

peninsula — A portion of land that is surrounded by water on three sides.

Asia Minor — A peninsula of western Asia between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. It is usually considered synonymous with Anatolia.

Ataturk — Turkish for "Father of the Turks." The title given to Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the modern Turkish republic and its first president.

secular — Something not specifically relating to religion.

Hittites — An ancient people who lived in Anatolia and northern Syria from about 2000-1200 B.C.E.

kilim — A tapestry-woven Turkish rug or other textile that has geometric designs in rich, brilliant colors.

Eminönü — A district in Istanbul that is famous for its many mosques, palaces and bazaars.

boza — A fermented drink that is made from grains like millet or wheat.

mosque — A Muslim place of worship.

hammam — Also "hamam." A communal bathhouse that usually has separate baths for men and women.

Seker Bayrami — "Sugar Festival" in Turkish. A 3-day Muslim festival, celebrated at the end of Ramadan, wherein children are given small gifts such as sweets and money.

Ramadan — A month-long period of fasting during the ninth month of the year in the Islamic calendar.

muezzin — The official who calls Muslims to daily prayer.

Kurban Bayrami — "Sacrifice Festival" in Turkish. A 4-day Muslim festival that commemorates Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac. During this time, Turks sacrifice animals, like goats and sheep, and share the meat with friends, relatives and the poor. It has become a common practice to give money to charity in lieu of sacrificing an animal.

baklava — A dessert made of thin layers of pastry, chopped nuts and honey.

Turkish lira — The currency of Turkey.

nazar — Also *nazar boncuğu*, *göz*. Any of several types of jewelry that feature a stylized, usually blue, eye that is believed by many to be a defense against curses.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Ask students about their favorite holidays and why they like them. Then, talk about all the different holidays celebrated in your community and the United States. What do these holidays reveal about American values and traditions? How are these holidays different from each other? What do they have in common? Why do we celebrate them?
- Distribute outline maps of Turkey to the students. Have them find and label the capital, other major cities, bodies of water and the neighboring countries. Ask questions, such as: How many countries border Turkey? Which part of Turkey is located in Europe? Which part is in Asia? Since Turkey is such a big country, do you think there are differences among the people who live there? How might the people in Thrace be different from the people living in the eastern part of the country?
- Lead a discussion about people who are considered to be national heroes or figures of prominence. Ask questions, such as: Whom do you consider to be a hero? Why? What kinds of traits do you think a heroic person should have? In the United States, who are the people we consider to be national heroes? What have these people done to be considered heroic? How are these people still part of our culture today? As they prepare to watch the program, have students look for references to national figures in Turkey.

Follow-up Activities

- Students will have fun learning all about Turkey by creating their own question and answer books. Begin by dividing the class into small groups and assigning each group a topic to cover, such as climate, history, food or wildlife. Once they have finished creating their books, students can use the material from their question and answer books in a classroom trivia game about Turkey. An interactive tool for making a question and answer book can be found at www.readwritethink.org/materials/flipbook/.
- The intricate patterns and vibrant colors featured in Turkish kilims and ceramics make them highly prized collectibles, sought by people all over the world. But these Turkish crafts are more than just decorations; they are expressions of the heritage and cultures of the people who make them. Invite students to create their own versions of Turkish crafts, such as kilims, tiles and pottery, by using paper and various craft materials. For examples of patterns used on Turkish tapestries, visit www.turkishculture.org/pages.php?ParentID=13. For examples of different kinds of Turkish ceramics visit www.turkishculture.org/pages.php?ParentID=9. Students can base their designs on the Turkish ones and even incorporate their own imagery into the crafts. Encourage students to share their designs with the class.
- Let's talk Turkish! Students can learn some basic words and phrases in Turkish by visiting www.turkeytravelplanner.com/details/LanguageGuide/100words_lessons/. Students can then pick a few Turkish words and phrases and create flash cards that feature the Turkish words and their English translations. Students can take turns presenting their flash cards to the class. Post the students' cards on a word wall dedicated to Turkish.
- Beware the "evil eye"! Many people in Turkey believe that there are wicked forces in the world that have the power to put curses on people, bringing them bad luck and terrible misfortune. However, the Turks believe they have a means of protecting themselves from these forces: a talisman that reputedly has the power to dispel hexes, the *nazar*! Students can learn more about these folkloric charms by visiting www.nazarboncugu.com/. Discuss the concepts of curses, bad luck and ways people try to ward them off, relating the use of *nazar* in Turkey to charms more common in the United States, like rabbits' feet or four-leaf clovers. Then, using various craft materials, students can create their own jewelry that feature *nazar*. Encourage students to share their designs with the class. As an extension, students can invent new charms that are designed to ward off bad luck and write and illustrate stories explaining their charms' origins.
- Have students investigate the holidays celebrated in Turkey, such as Seker Bayrami, Kurban Bayrami and Victory Day. Discuss the similarities and differences between the holidays celebrated in Turkey and those celebrated in the United States. Students can then create posters for Turkish holidays that feature information about the holiday, such as the history behind it, the reasons for its celebration and the types of foods, music and activities associated with it. Hang the posters in the classroom.
- Students can pretend that they are the owners of a Turkish hammam and create brochures advertising their businesses. Students can create Turkey-inspired names for their hammams, devise slogans, illustrate the brochures and write price menus for the services offered. Students can even write a Turkish lira-to-U.S. dollar conversion table for their spa services. An interactive tool for creating brochures can be found at interactives.mped.org/ppress110.aspx.
- One of the great civilizations of the ancient world, the Hittite Kingdom flourished in Asia Minor, thousands of years ago, in what is now Turkey. Students can learn more about the Hittites, including their history, religious beliefs and social structure, by visiting history-world.org/hittites.htm and www.allaboutturkey.com/hitit.htm#top. Students can even explore www.hattuscha.de/eng/eng.html for information about Hattusas, the capital city of the Hittites. Then, each student can create a page on something he or she learned about the Hittites for inclusion in a class book. The students' pages can include facts, pictures or illustrations, maps and time lines.

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- Every year, thousands of tourists flock to Istanbul to see the city's many sites and experience the centuries of Turkish culture and heritage. Students can see pictures of Istanbul by visiting www.istanbulphotos.com/. Then, students can write journal entries that create a narrative about traveling around Turkey's largest city and provide facts about the different places (e.g., "Today I visited Hagia Sophia, or as the Turks call it, Ayasofya, a 6th-century building that was a church, and then a mosque, before it became a museum."). Students also can draw pictures of the different places discussed in their journal entries.

Suggested Internet Resources

- www.turkishculture.org/
This site, from the Turkish Cultural Foundation, features comprehensive information on Turkish culture.
- www.timeforkids.com/TFK/teachers/aw/wr/main/0,28132,1554552,00.html
Discover Turkey and what it is like to live there! This web site by Time Inc. presents information about Turkey's famous sites, history and language. Also includes a quiz.
- www.turkishembassy.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=202&Itemid=209
This site for children, hosted by the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C., features basic information about Turkey.
- www.cia.gov
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on Turkey and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the "World Factbook" link.

Suggested Print Resources

- Barber, Nicola. *Istanbul*. World Almanac Library, Strongsville, OH; 2005.
- Dalokay, Vedat. *Sister Shako and Kolo the Goat: Memories of My Childhood in Turkey*. Harper Collins, New York, NY; 1994. This is a memoir written by the former mayor of Ankara that deals with growing up in a small village in Turkey.
- Englar, Mary. *Turkey: A Question and Answer Book*. Capstone Press, Mankato, MN; 2006.
- Sheehan, Sean. *Turkey*. Marshall Cavendish, Tarrytown, NY; 2004.

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