



Morocco: Art and Architecture

Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading

Morocco is located in the northwest corner of Africa and is bordered by the North Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Algeria and the Western Sahara are the land borders to the south and east. Morocco is about the same size as California.

The high Atlas Mountains separate the mild coastline from the harsh Sahara Desert. Rainfall is unpredictable and is not enough to supply all the water needed for the people from year to year.

Moroccans are Berber and Arab and most of the people follow the religion of Islam. The Berbers have been in North Africa for over 2,000 years. Many of the Berber people live in the Atlas Mountains and still speak the Berber language, but today they are moving to cities to find work.

Moroccans enjoy drinking mint tea sweetened with sugar. The people take their time making tea and sipping it with family and guests. In the cities, the pace is a bit faster than in the countryside. Fifty-seven percent of the people live in cities such as Fez, Casablanca, and Marrakech, on the coastal plain.

The cities of Morocco share similar features. They have places of worship known as mosques with beautiful towers called minarets. Bazaars, a type of open market, are common in Morocco, as are Medinas, the older medieval section of a city. Old fortresses found throughout Morocco, called Kasbahs, are strong buildings built from palm-tree fibers and mud from the riverbanks.

Source: *National Geographic, Book of Peoples of the World: A Guide to Cultures*

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Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading

Name: _____ Date: _____

Fill in the blanks with the best answer choice from the reading:

1. Morocco is a _____. (country or continent)
2. The famous desert that is found in Morocco is called the _____. (Gobi Desert or Sahara Desert)
3. The _____ people have lived in Morocco for 2,000 years. (Arab or Berber)
4. The Berber people live in the _____ Mountains. (Rocky or Atlas)
5. Open markets called _____ are common throughout Morocco. (bazaars or malls)

On the map of Africa, locate Morocco and color it red to help you remember the Berber people who live there.



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Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading **KEY**

Fill in the blanks with the best answer choice from the reading:

1. Morocco is a **country**. (country or continent)
2. The famous desert that is found in Morocco is called the **Sahara Desert**. (Gobi Desert or Sahara Desert)
3. The **Berber** people have lived in Morocco 2,000 years. (Arab or Berber)
4. The Berber people live in the **Atlas Mountains**. (Rocky or Atlas).
5. Open markets called **bazaars** are common throughout Morocco. (bazaars or malls)

On the map of Africa, locate Morocco and color it red to help you remember the Berber people who live there.

