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STUDY GUIDE: WORLD GEOGRAPHY, PART 2--WESTERN EUROPE
CENTRAL EUROPE

Most geographers divide Europe into three main divisions: Central Europe, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe. However, not all geographers agree about the exact classification of the countries. At one time, the term Western Europe referred exclusively to the non-Communist countries of Europe. This study guide will deal with the countries that are classified as Western European or Central European countries by most geographers. Any other European country will be discussed in World Geography, Part 3, Eastern Europe.

WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE ARE FURTHER SUBDIVIDED INTO GROUPS OF COUNTRIES BASED UPON THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE BASIC EUROPEAN DIVISIONS:

1. United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
Ireland is part of Western Europe, but is NOT part of the United Kingdom. However, Northern Ireland IS part of the United Kingdom.
2. Scandinavian (or Nordic) Countries: Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland
3. Benelux Countries or Low Countries: Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg
4. Mediterranean Europe: Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Monaco
(Some geographers consider Greece an Eastern European country.)
5. Central Europe: France, Andorra, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein, and the Benelux Countries, which have been named above.

The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia are sometimes classified as Central European Countries, but will be discussed in the next study guide with the Eastern European countries.

The four most populated nations in Western Europe are: Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. Two-thirds of the population of Western Europe live in these four countries.

The five largest cities in Western Europe are all capital cities. They are listed below from largest to smallest.

1. London
2. Paris
3. Madrid
4. Berlin
5. Rome

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The five thousand islands clustered off the northwestern coast of Europe are called the British Isles. The largest island in the British Isles AND THE LARGEST ISLAND IN ALL EUROPE is Great Britain. Ireland is the second largest island. Ireland's nickname is the Emerald Isle. Ireland is known for its potato famine in the 1840's.

The United Kingdom is made up of four separate countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. England, Scotland, and Wales are grouped together as Great Britain, with England being the most densely populated.

Scotland can be divided into three main geographic divisions: the northern highlands, the central lowlands, and the southern uplands. The highlands are filled with broad, treeless, rolling plains called moors. There are many bogs on the moors. Bogs are areas of wet, spongy ground. The highlands also have many lochs, deep lakes that were carved out by glaciers. The most famous loch is LOCH NESS, the home of the dinosaur-like monster called Nellie that supposedly resides there. The people of the highlands are also known for their bagpipes, plaid kilts, and highland dances.

England's queen resides at Buckingham Palace in London, the capital city of England. London is located on the Thames River. The House of Parliament and the Tower of Big Ben are also located in London. The Prime Meridian runs through Greenwich, England, and the White Cliffs of Dover are a popular tourist attraction.

Wales, like Scotland, is a country and not a British state. As a symbol of England's influence in their laws, the heir to the English throne has been called the Prince, or the Princess of Wales.

The Nordic Nations

Two separate peninsulas make up the Nordic Nations. These are the Scandinavian Peninsula composed of Finland, Norway, and Sweden, and the Jutland peninsula on which

Denmark is located. The island of Iceland is also one of the Nordic Nations. All the Nordic countries are democracies.

All of the Nordic nations are known for their long winters and short summers. Much of the landscape of the Scandinavian countries is the product of huge glaciers. These glaciers carved out thousands of lakes and jagged coastlines, which later filled with water, creating flooded glacial valleys known as fjords. Norway has the highest elevations of the Nordic Nations, while Iceland is the home of the largest glacier in Western Europe.

The Baltic Sea separates the Scandinavian Peninsula from the rest of Europe to the south.

CENTRAL EUROPE

Central Europe is composed of the Benelux countries, France, Germany, Switzerland, Andorra, Liechtenstein, and Austria. FRANCE is the LARGEST COUNTRY in Central Europe. GERMANY has the LARGEST POPULATION with 79.2 million people, and THE NETHERLANDS are THE MOST DENSELY POPULATED with 931 people per square mile.

France is bordered by three bodies of water: the English Channel, the Bay of Biscay, and the Mediterranean Sea. Six other countries also border France. To the east are Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Italy and Germany. To the south is Spain, and although England does not actually border France, it lies directly across the English Channel and the Straits of Dover.

The longest river in France is the Loire River. The country's busiest seaport is Marseille on the Mediterranean Sea. The French Riviera is a thin strip of low-lying coastal land that attracts millions of tourists each year with its warm climate and beautiful beaches. It is often called the Azure Coast because of the lovely blue sky, blue sea, and lavender flowers found in the area. Bordeaux, France is noted for its vineyards and excellent wines. Large deposits of iron ore are mined in Lorraine. The Eiffel Tower, a huge cast-iron tower, stands in Paris, and the Louvre Art Museum is another popular Parisian landmark.

Germany has been known for the Berlin Wall, a 99 mile long wall built in 1961 by the communist government of East Germany to keep their citizens from escaping to West Germany. In 1989, twenty-eight years later, the wall was torn down and Germany was once again united.

Germany's capital city, Berlin, is the largest city in the country. Hamburg is the second largest city and is the largest port in Germany. Rostock is Germany's only major port on the Baltic Sea. Germany is well-known for its Black Forest, an area of dense forests on steep hillsides.

Germany is THE LEADING INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY IN WESTERN EUROPE. Most of the country's iron and steel is obtained or produced in the Ruhr River Valley. Duisburg (DOOS boorg) and Munich (MUE nikh) are also important German cities.

Switzerland is an inland country that's bordered by France, Italy, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Germany. It is made up of 26 small states called cantons. Throughout history, Switzerland has remained neutral during world conflicts.

There is very little flat land in Switzerland, because the Alps Mountains are the most dominant landform in the country. Therefore, very few crops are grown. Dairy farming, however, is very common, and Switzerland is known for its chocolate and cheese that are exported worldwide. The country manufactures many products, including Swiss watches, high quality tools, and microscopes. It is also a leader in banking. Because of its stand on neutrality, people from all over the world deposit money in Zurich, Geneva, and other Swiss cities. Zurich is Switzerland's largest city.

Tourism is also important to the country. The Alps are filled with scenic ski resorts. The Alps are the tallest mountains in Western Europe, and Mont Blanc is the tallest mountain peak in the Alps, rising to a height of 15,771 feet.

Austria is a leading manufacturer of machine tools, chemicals, and textiles. Many dairy farms are also found in this country. German is the major language spoken in Austria, which is divided into 9 provinces.

Liechtenstein is located in the Rhine River Valley between Switzerland on the west and Austria on the east. It is a constitutional monarchy that is only 62 square miles in area.

The Benelux countries are also included in Central Europe. The three Benelux countries are Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. They are sometimes called "The Low Countries."

Holland is another name given to the Netherlands. People associate Holland with tulips, windmills, and wooden shoes. In fact, the Netherlands are the world's largest exporter of flowers and bulbs. They also export more cheeses than any other country in the world.

Although much of the Netherlands is rustic, there is one large, densely populated area called Randstad, a word meaning "ring city." This area contains a ring of cities that form one huge arc-shaped metropolis. The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Utrecht are four of the cities in this ring. Rotterdam is the Netherland's busiest port. Although Amsterdam is the capital city, the Hague is the seat of government where Parliament actually meets. It is also the headquarters for the International Court of Justice.

Belgium's population is divided into two main groups. Thirty percent of the country's residents speak French and call themselves Walloons. The remaining 55% speak

Flemish and call themselves Flemings. The Flemings live in the northern part of Belgium which is often called Flanders. Brussels is the capital of Belgium and is also the seat of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO.

Luxembourg is smaller than our state of Rhode Island, having an area of only 998 square miles. French is the official language of the country, but a German dialect is also spoken. The country is a big manufacturer of steel, since much iron ore is mined in the northern hill section.

Andorra is a small country that is only 174 square miles in area. It is located high in the Pyrenees Mountains between Spain and France. The Principality of Monaco is only 3/4 of a square mile. It is bordered on three sides by France, and on the fourth side by the Mediterranean Sea.

MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE

Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece are classified as Mediterranean European countries. Spain and Portugal form a peninsula called THE IBERIAN PENINSULA. Italy forms a peninsula, itself, called the ITALIAN PENINSULA, and Greece is also composed of two main peninsulas that are bordered on three sides by the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Ionian Sea. Attica is the wedge-shaped Greek peninsula that juts into the Mediterranean Sea, and Peloponnesus (pel uh puh NEE sus) is a peninsula that lies just south of Attica.

Greece shares its northern border with the Eastern European nations of Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Approximately 1,400 islands are included in the land area of Greece. The two largest islands are Crete, which is located to the south of the Greek Mainland, and Rhodes, which is east of Crete, near Turkey in the Mediterranean Sea. About 35,000 years ago, Crete was the center of the Bronze Age culture that was named Minoan after Minos, the legendary King of Crete.

The most populous area of Greece, called Sterea Hellas, is found in northern Greece where Athens is located. One-third of Greece's population resides in Athens, which has been called the "Birthplace of Western Civilization."

Piraeus (py REE us) is the largest port in the country, and shipbuilding is a major industry. Greece is also known for its olives.

Italy is easy to recognize on a map because it resembles the shape of a boot with the island of Sicily at the toe of the boot. Another Italian island, Sardinia, is located to the northwest of Sicily. Both islands are located in the Mediterranean Sea. Sicily is the home of Mt. Etna, a violent volcano that last erupted in 1981.

The northern border of Italy is shared with France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia. The Alps form most of this northern border. The Apennines Mountains run lengthwise down the country.

The Po River is the main river in the country. The Po River Valley, located between the Alps and the Apennines, is where two-thirds of the factories are located. Milan and Turin are cities that are also located in this area.

Other important cities include Naples, Venice, Bologna, Genoa, Florence, and Rome. Genoa and Naples are important port cities. Bologna is an agricultural city nicknamed "The Fat" for the many different foods produced or grown in the area. Florence is a major cultural center and was the birthplace of the Renaissance in the 1300's.

Rome is the capital city. The remains of the ancient Colosseum, Europe's largest stadium, and the Forum, a popular public meeting place, can be viewed in Rome. The headquarters for the Roman Catholic Church is also set within the city limits of Rome. This area is called the Vatican, or Vatican City. Although it is named as a city, the Vatican is actually an independent state. St. Peter's Basilica, with its famous dome designed by Michelangelo, is located within the Vatican.

IMPORTANT RIVERS IN WESTERN EUROPE and THE MAIN COUNTRIES IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED

<u>River</u>	<u>Major Location</u>
1. Seine	France
2. Thames	England
3. Rhine	Starting in Switzerland and flowing north through Germany into the Netherlands.
4. Loire	France
5. Po	Italy
6. Danube	Germany, Austria, and eastward to the Black Sea
7. Rhone	Begins in Switzerland and flows south through France to the Mediterranean

Three capital cities are located on the Danube River: Vienna, Austria
Budapest, Hungary
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

OTHER IMPORTANT BODIES OF WATER OR NATURAL LANDFORMS IN WESTERN EUROPE

1. Adriatic Sea--An arm of the Mediterranean Sea between Italy and the Balkan Peninsula.
2. Aegean Sea--An arm of the Mediterranean Sea between Greece and Turkey.
3. Alps-- A major south central mountain system extending through France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Yugoslavia.
4. Apennines--A mountain system that extends the length of Italy and into Sicily.
5. Corsica--A French island in the Mediterranean located west of Italy.
6. English Channel--An arm of the Atlantic Ocean located between England and France. It connects the Atlantic to the North Sea.
7. Ionian Sea--An arm of the Mediterranean Sea between Greece and southern Italy.
8. Pyrenees Mountains--A mountain system that divides Spain and France.

WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR CAPITAL CITIES

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>CAPITAL CITY</u>
1. Andorra	Andorra la Vella
2. Austria	Vienna
3. Belgium	Brussels
4. Denmark	Copenhagen
5. Finland	Helsinki
6. France	Paris
7. Germany	Berlin
8. Great Britain	London
9. Greece	Athens

10. Iceland	Reykjavik
11. Ireland	Dublin
12. Italy	Rome
13. Liechtenstein	Vaduz
14. Luxembourg	Luxembourg
15. Netherlands	Amsterdam
16. Norway	Oslo
17. Portugal	Lisbon
18. San Marino	San Marino
19. Spain	Madrid
20. Sweden	Stockholm
21. Switzerland	Bern