Identifying Main Ideas  Make this foldable to help you identify key facts about the people and places of Southeast Asia.

**Step 1** Fold the paper from the top right corner down so the edges line up. Cut off the leftover piece.

**Step 3** Cut up one fold line and stop at the middle. This forms two triangular flaps.

**Step 5** Fold the X flap under the other flap and glue together.

**Step 2** Fold the triangle in half. Unfold. The folds will form an X that creates four equal sections.

**Step 4** Draw an X on one tab and label the other three the following: Mainland Countries, Indonesia, and Other Island Countries.

This makes a three-sided pyramid.

Reading and Writing  As you read, write main ideas inside the foldable under each appropriate pyramid wall.

Why It Matters

**A High Price for Prosperity**

Some Southeast Asian countries—such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore—have become major economic centers. They manufacture goods and export natural resources. One possible negative impact of this economic prosperity might be the destruction of the region’s beautiful landscapes.
South of China and east of India lies Southeast Asia. This region includes thousands of islands and a long arm of land called the Malay Peninsula. Several countries lie entirely on the mainland of Southeast Asia. They are Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

**Myanmar**

Myanmar, also called Burma, is about the size of Texas. Rugged, steep mountains sweep through its western and eastern borders. Two wide rivers—the Irrawaddy (ih-rh•ah•WAH•dee) and the Salween—flow through vast lowland plains between these mountain ranges. Monsoons, or seasonal winds that blow over a continent for months at a time, cause wet summers and dry winters in Myanmar.

About two-thirds of the country’s people farm. The main crops are rice, sugarcane, beans, and peanuts. Some farmers work their fields with tractors, but most rely on plows pulled by water buffalo.

Tattoos and piercings in the United States are no match for the fashion statements found in Southeast Asia. This woman belongs to the Padaung ethnic group found in Myanmar and Thailand. A series of brass rings covers her neck. The rings do not stretch the woman’s neck but actually push down her collarbone and ribs.
Myanmar exports wood products, gas, and foods such as beans and rice. The country provides about 75 percent of the world’s teak-wood. Myanmar’s prized forests are decreasing, however, because of **deforestation**. This is the widespread cutting of trees. Fortunately, the country also exports precious gems. **Precious gems** are valuable stones such as rubies, sapphires, and jade.

Almost 75 percent of Myanmar’s 49.5 million people live in rural areas. The most densely populated part of the country is the fertile Irrawaddy River valley. Many rural dwellers build their homes on poles above the ground for protection from floods and wild animals.

The capital and largest city, **Yangon** (formerly called Rangoon), is famous for its modern university and its gold-covered Buddhist temples. Buddhism is the main religion in Myanmar. Most people are of Burman heritage, and Burmese is the main language.

Myanmar was part of British India for many years. It became an independent republic in 1948. Since then, military leaders have turned Myanmar into a socialist country. **Socialism** is an economic system in which most businesses are owned and run by the government. Some
people have tried to build a democracy in Myanmar. A woman named Aung San Suu Kyi (AWNG SAN SOO CHEE) has become a leader in this struggle. In 1991 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts but still faces opposition from the government today.

Reading Check Where is Myanmar’s most densely populated area?

Thailand

The map on page 709 shows you that Thailand looks like a flower on a stem. The “flower” is the northern part, located on the mainland. The “stem” is a narrow strip on the Malay Peninsula. The country’s main waterway—the Chao Phraya (chow PRY•uh) River—flows through a central plain. Like Myanmar, Thailand has wet summer monsoons and dry winter monsoons.

Once called Siam, Thailand means “land of the free.” It is the only Southeast Asian country that has never been a European colony. The Thai people trace their independence as a kingdom back to the A.D. 1200s. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy with a king.

One of Thailand’s agricultural products is rubber. The government has taken steps to limit deforestation to protect this industry. Thailand is also one of the world’s leading producers of tin and tungsten. Most manufacturing is located near Bangkok, the capital. Workers make cement, textiles, computers, and electrical appliances. Tourism is an important industry as well.

Most of Thailand’s 63.1 million people belong to the Thai ethnic group and practice Buddhism. Hundreds of Buddhist temples called wats dot the cities and countryside. Buddhist monks, or holy men, walk among the people to receive food offerings.

About 80 percent of Thais live in rural villages, although thousands look for jobs in Bangkok. This city has beautiful temples and royal palaces that are surrounded by modern skyscrapers and crowded streets. Bangkok has so many cars that daily traffic jams last for hours.

Reading Check Thailand is a leading producer of what two elements?

Laos and Cambodia

Landlocked Laos is covered by mountains. Southern Laos includes a fertile area along the Mekong (MAY•KAWNG) River, Southeast Asia’s longest river. Once a French colony, Laos became independent more than fifty years ago.

Laos is an economically poor country. Its Communist government has only recently allowed tourism. About 80 percent of Laos’s 5.6 million people live in rural areas. Farmers grow rice, sweet potatoes, sugarcane, and corn along the Mekong’s fertile banks. Industry is largely undeveloped because of isolation and years of civil war. A civil war is a fight among different groups within a country. Laos lacks railroads and has electricity in only a few cities. Vientiane (vyehn•TYAHN) is the largest city and capital. The Communist government discourages religion, but most Laotians remain Buddhists.
Cambodia  For many years, Cambodia was a rich farming country that exported rice and rubber. By the 1980s, its economy was in ruins because of years of civil war and harsh Communist rule. Cambodia's few factories produce items such as wood products, textiles, and rubber. Most of Cambodia's 12.6 million people belong to the Khmer (kuh•MEHR) ethnic group. About 82 percent live in rural villages. The rest live in cities such as the capital, Phnom Penh (puh•NAWM PEHN). Buddhism is Cambodia's main religion. About 1,000 years ago, Cambodia was the center of the vast Khmer Empire. During Khmer rule, huge temple complexes like Angkor Wat were built.

In modern times, Cambodia was under French rule, becoming independent in 1953. Since the 1960s, there has been almost constant warfare among rival political groups. A Communist government led by the dictator Pol Pot took control in the mid-1970s. Pol Pot forced many city dwellers to move to rural areas and work as farmers. More than 1 million Cambodians died. Some fled to other countries. In 1993 Cambodia brought back its king, but rivalry among political groups continues.

Reading Check Why is Cambodia's economy in ruins?

Vietnam  Vietnam's long eastern coastline borders the Gulf of Tonkin, the South China Sea, and the Gulf of Thailand. In the north lies the fertile delta of the Red River. A delta is an area of land formed by soil deposits at the mouth of a river. In the south you find the wide, swampy delta of the Mekong River. Monsoons bring wet and dry seasons.

Farmers grow large amounts of rice, sugarcane, cassava, sweet potatoes, corn, bananas, and coffee in river deltas. Vietnam's mountain forests provide wood, and the South China Sea yields large catches of fish.
With almost 80.8 million people, Vietnam has the largest population in mainland Southeast Asia. About 75 percent live in rural villages. The largest urban area is **Ho Chi Minh (HOH CHEE MIHN) City**, named for the country’s first Communist leader. Located in the south, it used to be called Saigon (sy•GAHN). Vietnam’s capital, **Hanoi**, is located in the north. Most people are Buddhists and belong to the Vietnamese ethnic group. The rest are Chinese, Cambodians, and other Asian ethnic groups. Vietnamese is the major language, but Chinese, English, and French are also spoken.

The ancestors of Vietnam’s people came from China more than 2,000 years ago. From the late 1800s to the mid-1950s, Vietnam was under French rule. Vietnamese Communists drove out the French in 1954. The Communist government controlled northern Vietnam, while an American-supported government ruled the south. In the 1960s, fighting between these two groups led to the Vietnam War. During this extended conflict, more than 2.5 million Americans helped fight against the Communists. The United States eventually withdrew its forces in 1973. Within two years, the Communists had captured the south. Many thousands of people fled Vietnam, settling in the United States and other countries.

In recent years, Vietnam’s Communist leaders have opened the country to Western ideas, businesses, and tourists. They have also loosened government controls on the economy. In these two ways, the Communist leaders hope to raise Vietnam’s standard of living.

**Reading Check** What is the largest urban area in Vietnam?
Reading a Contour Map

A trail map would show the paths you could follow if you went hiking in the mountains. How would you know if the trail follows an easy, flat route, though, or if it cuts steeply up a mountain? To find out, you need a contour map.

Learning the Skill

Contour maps use lines to outline the shape—or contour—of the landscape. Each contour line connects all points that are at the same elevation. This means that if you walked along one contour line, you would always be at the same height above sea level.

Where the contour lines are far apart, the land rises gradually. Where the lines are close together, the land rises steeply. For example, one contour line may be labeled 1,000 meters (3,281 ft.). Another contour line very close to the first one may be labeled 2,000 meters (6,562 ft.). This means that the land rises 1,000 meters (3,281 ft.) in just a short distance.

To read a contour map, follow these steps:

• Identify the area shown on the map.
• Read the numbers on the contour lines to determine how much the elevation increases or decreases with each line.
• Locate the highest and lowest numbers, which indicate the highest and lowest elevations.
• Notice the amount of space between the lines, which tells you whether the land is steep or flat.

Practicing the Skill

Study the contour map above, and then answer the following questions.

1. What area is shown on the map?
2. What is the lowest elevation on the map?
3. What is the highest elevation on the map?
4. Where is the landscape flattest? How can you tell?
5. How would you describe the physical geography of this island?

Applying the Skill

Turn to page 10 in the Geography Handbook. Use the contour map of Sri Lanka to answer the five questions above.
The island countries of Southeast Asia are Indonesia, East Timor, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei (bru•NY), and the Philippines. Indonesia is Southeast Asia’s largest country. It is an archipelago of more than 13,600 islands.

Indonesia and East Timor

The map on page 709 shows you the major islands of Indonesia—Sumatra, Java, and Celebes (SEH•luh•BEEZ). Indonesia also shares two large islands with other countries. Most of the island of Borneo belongs to Indonesia. In addition, Indonesia controls the western half of the island of Timor. Another country—East Timor—lies on the eastern half.

Indonesia lies where two of the earth’s tectonic plates meet. Tectonic plates are huge slabs of rock that make up the earth’s crust. Indonesia’s location on top of these plates causes it to experience earthquakes.
The volcanoes that formed Indonesia have left a rich covering of ash that makes the soil good for farming. Because Indonesia lies on the Equator, its climate is tropical. Monsoons bring a wet season and a dry season. The tropical climate, combined with fertile soil, has allowed dense rain forests to spread.

**Economic Activities** Foreign companies build factories on the island of Java because labor is inexpensive. Agriculture provides work for nearly half of the people of Indonesia. Farmers grow rice, coffee, cassava, tea, and peanuts. The country of East Timor also has agricultural products such as coffee, mangoes, and vanilla.

Indonesia has large reserves of oil and natural gas. Its mines yield tin, silver, nickel, copper, bauxite, and gold. Dense rain forests provide teak and other valuable woods. Some companies that own large tracts of land are cutting down the trees very quickly. The environment suffers from this deforestation. When the trees are cut down, rich soil runs off into the sea during heavy rains.

**People of Indonesia and East Timor** Indonesia has about 220.5 million people—the fourth-largest population in the world. It is also one of the world’s most densely populated countries. On Java you will find Jakarta (juh•KAHR•tuh), Indonesia’s capital and largest city. It has modern buildings and streets crowded with cars and bicycles.

Forty-five percent of Indonesians belong to the Javanese ethnic group. The official language, Bahasa Indonesia, is taught in schools. Indonesia has more followers of Islam than any other country. Other religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism, are also practiced. On the beautiful island of Bali, Hindu beliefs are held by most of the people.

Thousands of years ago, Hindus and Buddhists from India settled the islands that are today Indonesia. Their descendants set up kingdoms. These kingdoms grew wealthy by controlling the trade that passed through the waterways between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In the A.D. 1100s, traders from Southwest Asia brought Islam to the region. Four hundred years later, Europeans arrived to acquire the valuable spices grown here. They brought Christianity to the islands. The Dutch eventually controlled most of the islands as a colony. Independence finally came to Indonesia in 1949.

In the late 1990s, severe economic problems led to unrest. Indonesia’s people forced their dictator to resign. Today the country has a democratic government. With so many different ethnic groups, many small political parties arise. As a result, Indonesia’s leaders find it difficult to form a government that is strong enough to deal with challenges.

Most recently, the people of East Timor, who are largely Roman Catholic and were once ruled by Portugal, voted for independence from Indonesia. In 2002 East Timor was internationally recognized as independent and the world’s newest democracy. About 800,000 people live here.

**Reading Check** When did East Timor win its independence?
Malaysia

Malaysia is located on the southern end of the Malay Peninsula and also on the island of Borneo. Dense rain forests and rugged mountains make up the landscape. The Strait of Malacca lies to the west of the Malay Peninsula. A strait is a narrow body of water between two pieces of land. The Strait of Malacca is an important waterway for trade between the Indian Ocean and the Java Sea.

Malaysia is a world leader in exporting rubber and palm oil. The country also exports petroleum and natural gas. Malaysia is rich in tin, iron ore, copper, and bauxite. Consumer and high-technology goods, including microchips, are produced here. Malaysia’s ports are important centers of trade as well. Kuala Lumpur (KWÄH•luh LUM•PUR) is the capital and largest city. The Petronas Towers—among the world’s tallest buildings—soar above this city. In contrast, many rural villagers live in thatched-roof homes built on posts a few feet off the ground.

Most of Malaysia’s 25.1 million people belong to the Malay ethnic group. Their ancestors came from southern China thousands of years ago. In the 1800s, the British—who then ruled Malaysia—brought in Chinese and South Asian workers to mine tin and to work on rubber plantations. As a result, in marketplaces today you can hear Malay, Chinese, Tamil, and English spoken. Most Malaysians are Muslims, but there are also large numbers of Buddhists, Christians, and Hindus.

Where are the Petronas Towers located?

Economics

What other products does Malaysia export?

Singapore, Brunei, and the Philippines

Singapore lies off the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. It is made up of Singapore Island and 58 smaller islands. Singapore is one of the world’s smallest countries, yet it has one of the world’s most productive economies. The city of Singapore is the capital and takes up much of Singapore Island. Once covered by rain forests, Singapore Island now holds highways, factories, office buildings, and docks.

The city of Singapore has one of the world’s busiest harbors. It is a free port. This is a place where goods can be unloaded, stored, and shipped again without payment of import taxes. Huge amounts of goods pass through this port. Singapore’s many factories make high-tech goods, machinery, chemicals, and paper products. Because of their productive trade economy, the people of Singapore enjoy a high standard of living.
Founded by the British in the early 1800s, Singapore became an independent republic in 1965. Most of the country’s 4.2 million people are Chinese, but Malaysians and Indians make up about 25 percent of the population.

**Brunei**  On the northern coast of Borneo lies another small nation—Brunei. Oil and natural gas exports provide about half of the country’s income. Brunei’s citizens receive free education and medical care, as well as low-cost housing, fuel, and food. Today the government is investing in new industries to avoid reliance on income from fuels. All political and economic decisions are made by Brunei’s sultan, or ruler.

**The Philippines**  The Philippines includes about 7,000 islands in the South China Sea. Volcanic mountains and forests dominate the landscape. About 40 percent of the people farm. They have built terraces on the steep mountain slopes. **Terraced fields** are strips of land cut out of a hillside like stair steps.

Cities in the Philippines are busy and modern. **Manila**, the country’s capital, is a great commercial center. Factory workers here produce high-tech goods, food products, chemicals, clothing, and shoes.

Named after King Philip II of Spain, the Philippines spent more than 300 years as a Spanish colony. As a result of the Spanish-American War, the United States controlled the islands from 1898 until World War II. In 1946 the Philippines became an independent democratic republic.

The Philippines is the only Christian country in Southeast Asia. About 90 percent of Filipinos follow the Roman Catholic religion, brought to the islands by Spanish missionaries. The culture today blends Malay, Spanish, and American influences.

**Reading Check**  For whom was the Philippines named and why?
Shadow Puppets

Late at night, long after dark has fallen on a small stage in Java, a shadow puppet show is about to begin. The glow of a lamp shines behind a wide linen screen. Puppets stand hidden from direct view. The “good” characters are on the right. The “bad” ones are placed on the left. The audience waits anxiously on the other side of the screen. Once the story begins, the performance will continue until dawn.

The Performance

Wayang kulit, the ancient Indonesian shadow puppet theater, dates back at least 1,000 years. Today there are several thousand puppeteers. This makes shadow puppets the strongest theater tradition in Southeast Asia.

Shadow puppets are flat leather puppets. Many have movable limbs and mouths that are operated by sticks. During the show, the puppets cast their shadows onto the screen. The dalang, or puppeteer, sits behind the screen and manipulates the figures. He brings each to life in one of the more than 200 traditional puppet stories.

The Stories

Although Islam is now the major religion of Indonesia, much of the traditional shadow puppet theater is based on stories from two ancient Hindu epics from India. At one time, the principal purpose of shadow puppetry was to provide moral and religious instruction in Hinduism. Now the stories combine Hindu themes with elements of Buddhism and Islam, as well as Indonesian history and folklore. Often the performance is given in celebration of public or religious holidays or to honor a wedding or birth.

The Puppeteer

The skill of the dalang is critical to the show’s success. The dalang operates all the puppets, narrates the story, provides sound effects, and directs the gong, drum, and flute orchestra that accompanies the puppet show. The puppeteer changes his voice to create an individual sound for each character. The dalang performs without a script or notes, adding jokes and making small changes to suit the crowd and the occasion. Because a shadow puppet show can last as long as nine hours, the dalang must have both a tremendous memory and great endurance.

Many dalangs carve their own puppets, having learned this art from earlier generations. Each figure must appear in a specific size, body build, and costume. Even the shape of the eyes tells about the figure’s character and mood.

Making the Connection

1. How do shadow puppets move?
2. What kinds of stories do shadow puppet shows present?
3. Drawing Conclusions In what way is the dalang a master of many different art forms?
### Section 1 Life on the Mainland

**Terms to Know**
- precious gems
- deforestation
- socialism
- civil war

**Main Idea**
The countries of mainland Southeast Asia rely on agriculture as a major source of wealth.

**Region** Mainland Southeast Asia includes the countries of Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

**Place** These countries have highland areas and lowland river valleys with fertile soil. Monsoons bring heavy rains in the summer.

**History** Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that is free of the influence of colonial rule.

**Economics** Conflict has hurt the economies of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

### Section 2 Diverse Island Cultures

**Terms to Know**
- plate
- strait
- free port
- terraced field

**Main Idea**
The island countries of Southeast Asia have a variety of cultures and economic activities.

**Region** The island countries of Southeast Asia include Indonesia, East Timor, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and the Philippines.

**Place** Indonesia—with the world’s fourth-largest population—is an archipelago formed by volcanoes.

**Economics** Indonesia has rich supplies of oil, natural gas, and minerals.

**Government** Indonesia’s leaders face the challenge of creating a nation out of a land with many different groups and political parties.

**Economics** Malaysia produces palm oil and rubber, among other goods. Its capital, Kuala Lumpur, is a commercial center.

**Economics** The port of Singapore is one of the world’s busiest trading centers.

**Culture** The Philippines shows the influence of Malaysian, Spanish, and American culture.

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People in Bangkok, Thailand, face traffic snarls and pollution that are among the worst in the world.
Using Key Terms

Match the terms in Part A with their definitions in Part B.

A.
1. free port
2. deforestation
3. plate
4. strait
5. terraced field
6. civil war
7. socialism
8. precious gems

B.
- a. the widespread cutting of trees
- b. war fought between groups within a country
- c. strip of land cut out of a hillside
- d. economic system in which the government owns many businesses
- e. stones such as rubies, sapphires, and jade
- f. place where shipped goods are not taxed
- g. slab of rock that makes up the earth’s crust
- h. narrow body of water that runs between two land areas

Reviewing the Main Ideas

Section 1 Life on the Mainland
9. Economics What products do workers in Thailand make?
10. Culture What are wats?
11. Economics What countries have poor economies because of recent conflict?
12. Economics How is Vietnam trying to improve its economy?

Section 2 Diverse Island Cultures
13. Economics How do nearly half of the people of Indonesia make a living?
14. Location How does location make Indonesia a center of trade?
15. Government Why does Indonesia have many political parties?
16. Location Why is the Strait of Malacca important?
17. Economics What economic activities are important in Singapore in addition to its harbor industry?
18. Economics What resources have made Brunei wealthy?
19. Culture How does religion show Spanish influence in the Philippines?

Place Location Activity

On a separate sheet of paper, match the letters on the map with the numbered places listed below.
1. Mekong River 6. Singapore
2. South China Sea 7. Thailand
3. Gulf of Tonkin 8. Vietnam
5. Indonesia 10. Philippines
Critical Thinking

20. Predicting Outcomes  Experts believe that Brunei has enough oil reserves to last until 2018. What might happen to the country’s economy and standard of living at that time?

21. Organizing Information  Create a chart like this one. List three countries—Indonesia, a country from mainland Southeast Asia, and another from island Southeast Asia. Under the other columns, write two facts about each country you listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing Regions Activity

22. Geography  Compare the island countries of Southeast Asia to the island countries in the Caribbean. What landforms are similar and different? How does geography affect the economies of these island countries? Write a paragraph using the information you find.

Mental Mapping Activity

23. Focusing on the Region  Draw a map of Southeast Asia, and then label the following:

- Borneo
- Irrawaddy River
- Java
- Malay Peninsula
- Philippines
- South China Sea
- Strait of Malacca
- Thailand

Technology Skills Activity

24. Using the Internet  Use the Internet to learn about the foods in a Southeast Asian country. Find recipes and pictures. Prepare a display that shows a typical meal, or cook the meal yourself and share it with the class.

Standardized Test Practice

Directions: Study the graph below, and then answer the questions that follow.

1. About how much tin does Indonesia produce each year?
   A 51,000,000 metric tons
   B 51,000 metric tons
   C 51.00 million metric tons
   D 51.00 billion metric tons

2. About how much tin does Bolivia produce each year?
   F 12,500 metric tons
   G 12,500,000 metric tons
   H 12.5 million metric tons
   J 12.5 billion metric tons

Test-Taking Tip: In order to understand any type of graph, look carefully around the graph for keys that show how it is organized. On this bar graph, the numbers along the left side represent the exact number shown. You do not have to multiply by millions or billions to find the number of metric tons.