

## CHAPTER 12

# Western Europe: The Western Nations of a Small Continent



### Where Can You Find?

Where can you find a small country with three official languages?

### Think About As You Read

1. How have the seas helped Western Europe?
2. What types of government are found in Western Europe?
3. How are the countries in Western Europe different from each other? How are they alike?

### People and Places

- ◆ Western Europe
- ◆ Italy
- ◆ Germany
- ◆ North Sea
- ◆ Baltic Sea
- ◆ Mediterranean Sea
- ◆ North European Plain
- ◆ Alps
- ◆ Rhine River
- ◆ London
- ◆ Paris
- ◆ Christians
- ◆ Jews
- ◆ Muslims
- ◆ Switzerland

### New Words

- ◆ peninsula
- ◆ raw materials
- ◆ ocean currents
- ◆ fertile
- ◆ constitutional monarchy
- ◆ steel
- ◆ agriculture
- ◆ fertilizer

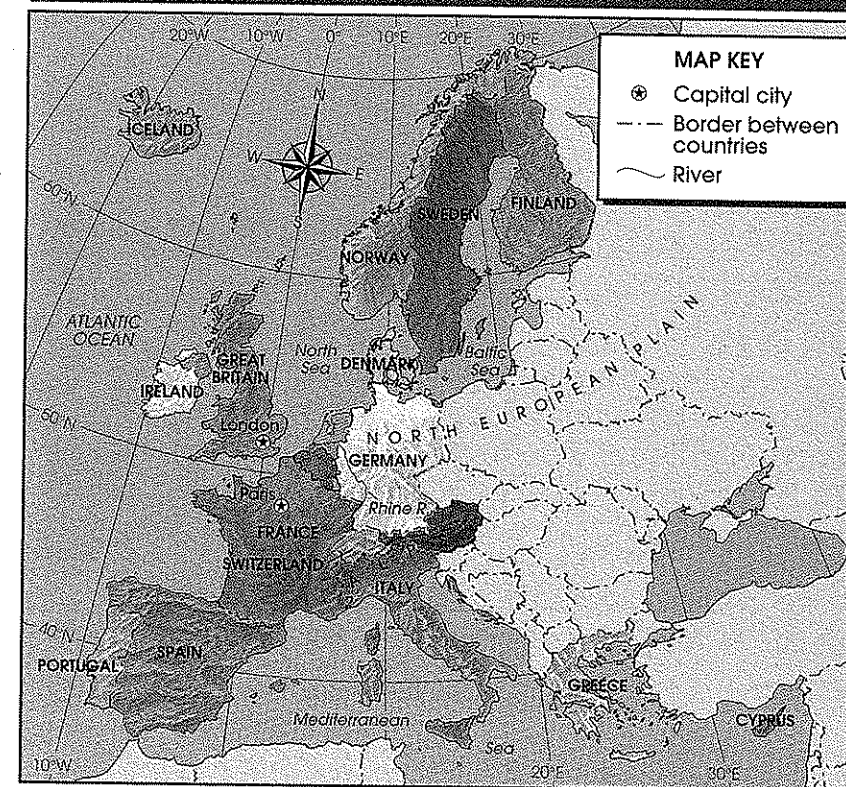
**A**n American decided to buy a car made in Europe. Several countries in Western Europe make cars. Which country did the new car come from? It came from Italy. Cars are also made in Great Britain, Germany, France, and other countries in Western Europe. Cars are one of many products that are made in this region.

### Geography and Climate of Western Europe

Europe is the second smallest continent. The region called Western Europe includes the countries shown on the map on page 97. Western Europe is only one third the size of the United States. But this region has many countries and more than 380 million people. It has far more people than the United States. This region has a high population density.

Western Europe is a large **peninsula**. A peninsula is land that has water on three sides. Many countries in

## WESTERN EUROPE



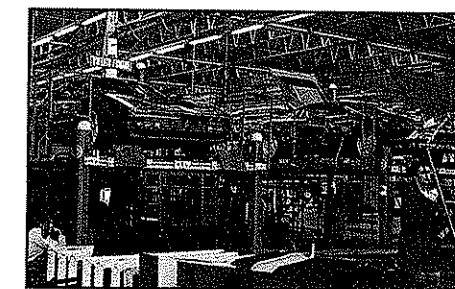
There are many countries in Western Europe. Which small country is located between France and Italy?

Western Europe are smaller peninsulas. Look at the map. Which countries in this region are peninsulas?

The seas are very important in Western Europe. No place in this region is more than 300 miles from a sea. The Atlantic Ocean is to the west. The Arctic Ocean, the North Sea, and the Baltic Sea are in the north. The Mediterranean Sea is to the south.

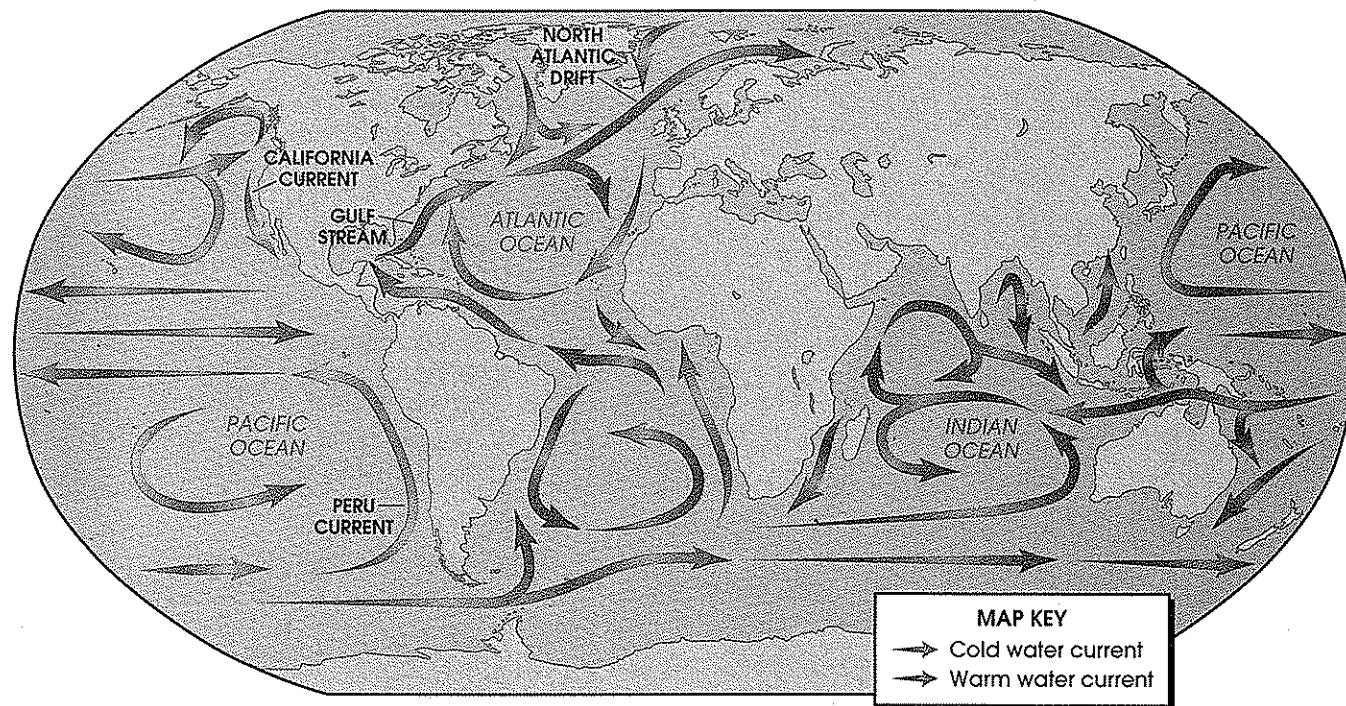
Europe has a long coast. It has many good ports. For hundreds of years, the seas have helped Europe. People from many countries in Europe have used the seas to sail to far-off lands. For hundreds of years, European countries ruled many colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

The seas have helped Europe in three other ways. First, people use the seas for fishing. Second, Europeans use the seas for shipping and trading. Trading ships carry goods and **raw materials** to Europe from many lands. Raw materials are natural resources that are used to make products. Countries in Western Europe make products from the raw materials. Then they sell the products to many nations.



A car factory in Italy

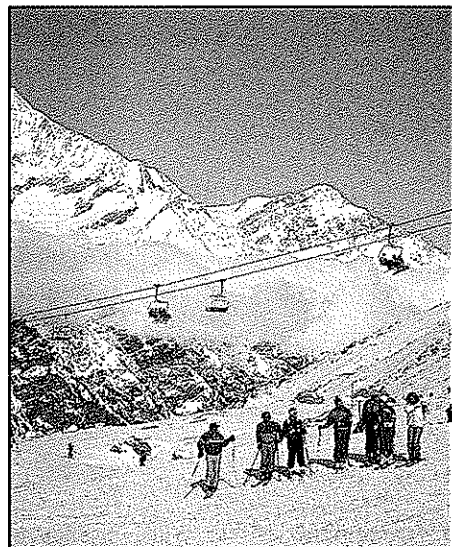
## OCEAN CURRENTS



Warm water and cold water currents affect the weather around the world. Which two currents bring warm water in the direction of Western Europe?

Third, the seas help Western Europe by giving the region a mild climate. Did you know that Western Europe is as far north as Canada? But Western Europe has a much warmer climate. This happens because the warm **ocean currents** bring warmer air to most of Western Europe. Ocean currents are streams of water in the ocean. Ocean currents can be warm water or cold water. Warm ocean currents cross the Atlantic Ocean from the Americas to Western Europe. These warm ocean currents keep the region's climate mild.

Plains and mountains are the two main landforms in Western Europe. The North European Plain covers a large part of Western Europe. This large flat area stretches across the northern part of Europe. The soil on the plain is **fertile**. This land is very good for farming. Mountains cover the most northern parts of Europe. There are also mountain chains in parts of southern and central Europe. The Alps are Europe's most famous mountain chain. Many mountains in the Alps are covered with snow all year.



Skiers in the Alps



There are many different cultures in Western Europe. These dancers are from Italy.

Western Europe has many important rivers. This region also has many canals. The longest river in Western Europe is the Rhine River. The Rhine River is 820 miles long. It is much shorter than the Mississippi and Amazon rivers. The rivers and canals of Western Europe form important waterways. There are many port cities along these waterways. Ships carry goods from these ports to the seas. Then the goods are shipped to other countries.

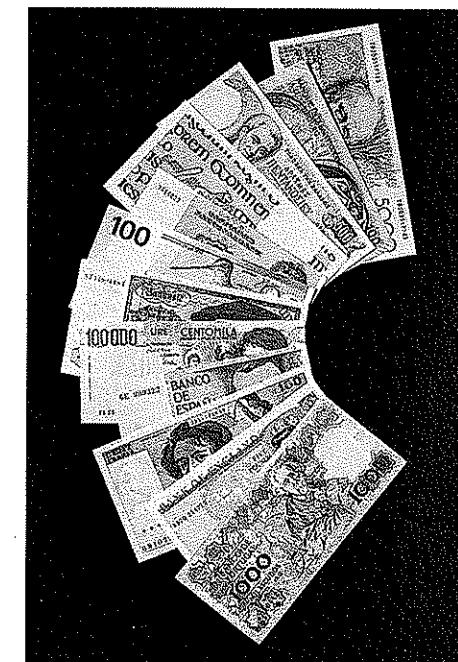
### Cities, People, Cultures, and Government

Most people in Western Europe live in cities. Most large cities in this region are located on rivers. Cities like London, England, and Paris, France, are famous.

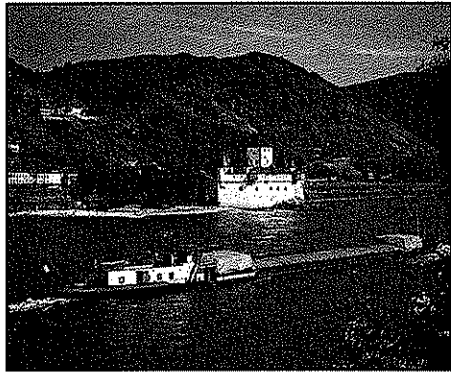
Who are the people of Western Europe? Most Europeans are white. But many people from Africa and Asia have moved to Europe in order to find jobs.

Most people in Western Europe are Christians. They belong to Roman Catholic or Protestant churches. Jews and Muslims are smaller religious groups found in Western Europe.

There are many different countries in Western Europe. Each one has its own laws, stamps, and flags. Each country has its own culture with special foods, customs, and holidays. Almost every country has its own language. In some countries a few different languages are spoken. Switzerland is a small country



Each country in Western Europe has its own money.



The Rhine River

with three official languages. Most Europeans can speak two or more languages. Most children in Western Europe spend many years in school. Almost everyone knows how to read and write.

Most countries in this region are democracies. Some countries also have a king or a queen. The king or queen has little power. Instead a president or a prime minister leads the country. A democracy that has a king or a queen is a **constitutional monarchy**.

### Natural Resources and Earning a Living

Western Europe is a region with developed nations. Most people have a high standard of living. The region has many factories and many industries.

Western Europe is not rich in natural resources. But it has some resources that are used in factories. Waterpower from rivers is used to make electricity. Many countries have coal and iron. Coal and iron are used to make **steel**. Some countries, such as Great Britain, have oil.

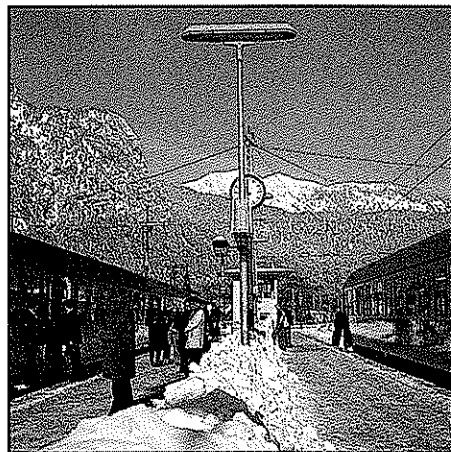
Many people in Europe work at service jobs. Others work at factory jobs. A small part of the population works at **agriculture**, or farming. Europeans use modern farm machines and lots of **fertilizer**. Fertilizers make soil more fertile to help grow more crops. Most countries grow enough food for their people. Some countries export food.

There is excellent public transportation throughout Western Europe. People can easily travel within their own country or from one country to another by train.

Four large countries in Western Europe are often in the news. These leading countries are Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. In the next chapters, you will learn why these countries are important.

### Chapter Main Ideas

1. Western Europe is a large peninsula. Many countries in the region are smaller peninsulas.
2. Most of the countries of Western Europe are democracies. Some are constitutional monarchies.
3. There are many countries, cultures, and languages in Western Europe.



Train station in Western Europe

## USING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

### ◆ Vocabulary

**Finish Up** Choose the word or words in dark print that best complete each sentence. Write the word or words on the correct blank line.

**steel**    **fertilizer**    **ocean currents**    **peninsula**    **agriculture**

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is land that has water on three sides.
2. Streams of water in the sea are called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Coal and iron are used to make \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Another word for farming is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. To grow more crops, farmers improve the soil by adding \_\_\_\_\_.

### ◆ Read and Remember

**Find the Answer** Put a check (✓) next to each sentence that tells why Western Europe is a region with developed nations. You should check five sentences.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Farmers grow enough food for the region.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Western Europe has many factories.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Each country has its own laws, stamps, and flag.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Almost everyone can read and write.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. People speak many different languages in Western Europe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Ships bring to Europe raw materials that people use to make factory products.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. European ships carry factory products to many countries of the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Europe is the second smallest continent.

## ◆ Think and Apply

**Drawing Conclusions** Read each pair of sentences. Then look in the box for the conclusion you might make. Write the letter of the conclusion on the blank.

1. People use the seas for fishing.  
People use the seas for trading and shipping.

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Western Europe is warmer than Canada.  
Western Europe's winters are not too cold, and summers are not too hot.

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

3. There are port cities on many rivers.  
People travel on rivers through many parts of Western Europe.

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Western Europe has coal and iron.  
Western Europe has waterpower and some oil.

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Each country in Western Europe has its own leaders, government, and money.  
Each country has its own culture and flag.

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

### Conclusions

- A. Rivers are important in Western Europe.
- B. Western Europe has some of the resources it needs for its factories.
- C. Warm ocean currents give Western Europe a mild climate.
- D. The countries of Western Europe have different cultures.
- E. The seas help Western Europe.

## ◆ Journal Writing

Write a paragraph that tells why many people in Western Europe have a high standard of living.