Comparing Countries: Central Asia Semantic Feature Analysis

Ethnicity, religion, language, and a shared history can combine to pull a country together and reawaken latent feelings of nationalism. In contrast, the same forces can pull a country apart. The semantic feature analysis, a language arts tool for recognizing nuances of meaning in vocabulary words, can be used to compare the various attributes of the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

1. Locate the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus.
2. Describe their location relative to the Russian Federation.
3. Predict which countries would be most likely to be affected by influences from bordering countries.
4. Which features of the physical environment may facilitate interaction?
5. Which features of the physical environment may inhibit interaction?

Complete the data retrieval chart using the following symbols:

0 (does not have); **+** (has); — (information not found)

Country	Deserts	Mountains	Landlocked	Oil Resources	Oil Pipeline
Armenia					
Azerbaijan					
Georgia					
Kazakhstan					
Kyrgyzstan					
Tajikistan					
Turkmenistan					
Uzbekistan					

For information on oil resources and pipelines consult pp. 344-345 in your text.

6. Which countries do you predict would have the higher per capita GDPs?

The physical environment is only one predictor of difficulties a country may experience in building a national identity. Use other resources to identify the following cultural characteristics of the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

0 (does not have); **+** (has); — (information not found)

Country	Christian	Muslim	Iranian–based language	Turkic-based language
Armenia				
Azerbaijan				
Georgia				
Kazakhstan				
Kyrgyzstan				
Tajikistan				
Turkmenistan				
Uzbekistan				

7. Explain how language and religion could serve to both unify and fragment a country.