

Countries Of The World: Vietnam

By National Geographic Kids, adapted by Newsela staff on 03.14.18

Word Count **555**

Level **350L**



Image 1: Ha Long Bay is a popular place to visit in Vietnam. It is known for its beautiful limestone islands and scenic views. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Photo from: Getty Images/SPC#JAYJAY.

Vietnam is a country in Southeast Asia. It is a long, narrow country. It looks like the letter "S." North of Vietnam is China. To the west are Laos and Cambodia. The South China Sea lies to the east and south.

One of Vietnam's largest rivers is the Mekong River. Another is the Red River. Both lead to the South China Sea. They end in huge swampy plains. These areas are called deltas. Most of the country's people live here. The land is good for farming.

Nature

Vietnam has many different types of land. Some of the country is covered with mountains. Other areas have forests and wetlands. Many animals live in Vietnam. Some are pretty unusual. They include tigers, rhinos and giant catfish.

Forests once covered most of Vietnam. But that changed over the years. Many of the trees were cut down. Today, the forests are much smaller. The government wants that to change. It has started a program to plant new trees.

People And Culture

Most Vietnamese people live in the countryside. They mainly live in the river deltas. But some people have begun to move. Many now live in Vietnam's main cities. One of these cities is Ho Chi Minh. Another is Hanoi.

Sports are popular in Vietnam. People play soccer, table tennis and volleyball. They also practice martial arts.

Government And Economy

Vietnam is a communist country. Communists believe the government should be in charge of all businesses. They also believe the government should own everything in a country. People cannot own land or a business. This has started changing, though. Today, some people in Vietnam can own and run businesses.

Vietnam makes many products. It sells them to other countries. The products include oil, rice and clothing.



History

People have lived in Vietnam for a long time. They first settled here about 5,000 years ago. Later, the Chinese took over. The Chinese ruled for many years. Then the Vietnamese drove the Chinese out.

Many years later, France took over Vietnam. France took from the land in Vietnam. It took rice, rubber and coal. France used and sold these materials. Then Japan took over. But Japan ruled for only a very short time. It lost control in 1945. That was about 75 years ago.

At this point, things were changing in Vietnam. The communists had a lot of power. Their leader was Ho Chi Minh. He declared Vietnam a free country. The French were not happy about this. They tried to retake Vietnam by fighting the communists. Several years of war followed.

In 1954, the fighting came to an end. Vietnam was split into two countries. The north became North Vietnam. It was communist. The south became South Vietnam. It was not communist.

In 1957, a new war began. Communist fighters rose up in the south. They wanted to make Vietnam one country again. Not everyone in North Vietnam wanted that. They went to war with South Vietnam.

Other countries soon joined the war. One of them was the United States. The war lasted a long time. In 1975, the communists finally took over the south. This brought the war to an end.



Quiz

1 Look at Map 1 under the introduction [paragraphs 1 and 2].

What detail from the introduction does Map 1 show?

- (A) Vietnam is a long and narrow country.
- (B) Vietnam has a river called the Red River.
- (C) Vietnam has swampy plains called deltas.
- (D) Vietnam has land that is good for farming.

2 Look at Image 2.

What does the image show about Vietnam?

- (A) The country is dark most of the day.
- (B) The country is 3 miles long.
- (C) The country has the world's largest cave.
- (D) The country has many national parks.

3 What is the section "Nature" MAINLY about?

- (A) the programs to plant trees in Vietnam
- (B) the types of tigers that live in Vietnam
- (C) the size of the forests in Vietnam
- (D) the types of land and animals in Vietnam

4 What is the MAIN topic of the section "History"?

- (A) how the Chinese took control of Vietnam
- (B) how control of Vietnam changed over time
- (C) how communism runs businesses
- (D) how the United States joined a war

Answer Key

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