Objectives

• Describe how geography influenced the development of Eastern Europe.

• Understand how migrations contributed to cultural diversity in Eastern Europe.

• Learn about three early Eastern European kingdoms.
Terms and People

- **Balkan Peninsula** – a triangular piece of land that juts from southeastern Europe into the Mediterranean Sea

- **ethnic group** – a group of people who share a common language and cultural heritage

- **diet** – an assembly of nobles who meet to vote on laws

- **Golden Bull of 1222** – a charter signed by the Hungarian king recognizing the rights of the nobles and limiting royal power
How did geography and ethnic diversity contribute to the turmoil of Eastern European history?

The history of Eastern Europe has been marked by migration, foreign conquest, and war. The region is home to a diverse mix of peoples who have often battled with each other and with foreigners.

At the same time, this diverse mix of peoples has greatly enriched the culture of the region.
Throughout history Eastern Europe has been both a buffer and a crossroads.

Eastern Europe includes flat plains to the north and the rocky **Balkan Peninsula** to the south.

Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Byzantine Empire in 1300
Eastern Europe’s geography contributed to its diversity, because many **ethnic groups** migrated through the region.

- Western Slavs settled in the present-day Czech Republic, Poland, and the Slovak Republic.
- Southern Slavs and other groups settled in the Balkans.

Waves of Vikings, Germanic peoples, Asian Huns, Avars, Bulgars, Khazars, and Magyars came at times as well.
Eastern Europe was influenced by both Christians and Muslims.

| Byzantine missionaries spread Eastern Orthodox Christianity in the Balkans. | German knights brought Roman Catholic Christianity to Poland. | Ottoman invaders later brought Islam to the Balkans. |
Jews left Western Europe for Eastern Europe.

- Thriving Jewish communities existed in Muslim Spain and other countries.
- But they were blamed for hard times and natural disasters such as the Black Death.
- Jews were also attacked during the Crusades.
Jewish people were expelled from many lands.

Beginning in 1264, Polish kings offered tolerance to the Jews and many settled there.

Jewish merchants and scholars helped Poland grow.

Migration and Expulsions, 500–1650
During the Middle Ages many kingdoms and small states existed in Eastern Europe.

Some were absorbed by empires, some merged or formed alliances.

Others were tied together by royal marriages.
Poland and Lithuania forged a large and powerful state stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

In 1383, Polish Queen Jadwiga married Duke Wladyslaw Jagiello of Lithuania.
In Poland and Lithuania, power shifted from the monarch to a **diet**, an elected body of nobles.

- In the diet a single noble could block passage of a law, making it difficult to take decisive action; this led to a decline.

- A high point of the state was in 1687, when Polish King Sobieski broke the Ottoman siege of Vienna.

- **In the eighteenth century Poland fell to ambitious neighbors.**
The Magyars came from the Asian steppes and settled in what is now Hungary.

- During the Middle Ages they ruled present-day Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, and part of Romania.
- Like the Slavs in Poland, the Magyars adopted Roman Catholicism.
The Hungarian king was forced to sign the Golden Bull of 1222.

- Like King John in England, the Hungarian king was forced to recognize the rights of the nobles.
- The Golden Bull also strictly limited the king’s power.

The Ottoman Turks ended Hungarian rule in 1526.
The Serbs set up a kingdom in the Balkans in the 1100s.

- The peak of Serb power came between 1308 and 1355 in the reign of Stefan Dusan, who added Albania and Macedonia.

- Most Serbs practiced Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

The Serbs fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1389.
Section Review

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Know It, Show It Quiz

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