

Azerbaijan: Historical Milestones

(Adopted from the site www.mfa.gov.az)

1. First states in the territory of ancient Azerbaijan

Scholars consider Azerbaijan to include "the land populated today by the Azerbaijan Turks, the people who inhabit the region *stretching* from the northern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains along the Caspian Sea to the Iranian plateau". Azerbaijan is among the areas of earliest human settlement, with *evidence* of human habitation since the Palaeolithic age. Settlements engaging in agriculture and livestock-raising were widely distributed about this area in the seventh and sixth millennia BC. Rock paintings in Gobustan dated by scholars to be in the XIII millennia BC.

The well-known Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdal, who made special trips to Azerbaijan in 1979 and 1994 to study these rock paintings, believes that the shores of the Caspian Sea were the *cradles* of a civilization that then spread over water, southward and northward. Heyerdal found support for his *hypothesis* not only in the Gobustan petroglyphs of reed boats, remarkably similar to those *depicted* centuries later by the Vikings on the walls of caves in Norway, but also in sagas written down in the middle ages. The Gobustan rock paintings of boats *surmounted* by an image of the sun also *attest* irrefutably to the ties between the early settlements of Azerbaijan and the Sumero/Akkadian civilization of Mesopotamia, whose cultural *legacy* includes very similar depictions.

In the end of IV millennium BC and the early years of the III millennium BC, signs appear of the emergence of the first class societies, with a proto-urban civilization and embryonic state structures. It is at this time that the tribal alliances were formed of the Aratta, the Gutians and the Lullubites. According to Sumerian cuneiform sources, the first State to arise on the territory of historical Azerbaijan was the state of Aratta, which came into being in the first half of the third millennium BC in the area to the south and south-east of Lake Urmia. From about 2300 BC, the second State of ancient Azerbaijan sprang up in the area south of Lake Urmia - the state of Lullubum. The Gutian state was formed later in the second half of the third millennium BC in the area west and south-west of Lake Urmia.

A vital role was played in Azerbaijani history by the kingdom of Atropaten, which came into existence in the southern part of the country in the 520s BC and which was heavily influenced by Hellenism.

The Caucasian Albanian state was created in the north of Azerbaijan in the end of IV and the early years of III millennium BC, with the river Araz as its southern frontier. The people of Albania included a number of different nationalities, most of which spoke Turkic languages. Christianity was adopted in Albania since 313.

2. Azerbaijan in the middle Ages

Following invasion by the Arabs, the dominant religion from the early eighth century in Azerbaijan became Islam. Most of the Albanians also accepted the Islam and only a minority retained their former religion.

The *cohabitation* of the populations of Albania and Atropatene within the *confines* of a single state, and their profession of one and the same religion, helped ensure the *consolidation* of the people of Azerbaijan. The notions of freedom, independence and universal equality nurtured the Hurramite movement, led by Babak, which flourished in Azerbaijan in the early ninth century. Following the anti-Caliphate rising by the local population, several new states arose in the territory of Azerbaijan in the ninth century, the most powerful of which was the State of Shirvan, with its capital at Shemakha, which was ruled by the Mezyedi *dynasty*. This endured until the sixteenth century and played an *enormous* role in the history of medieval Azerbaijan. The independent states of the Sajids, Salarids, Ravvadids (with their capital at Maragha, Ardabil and Tabriz) and Shaddadids (with their capital at Ganja) arose from the ninth to the eleventh centuries in the territory of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan was ruled by the Seljuk dynasty from the end of the eleventh century. Over the period 1136-1225, the Atabek Eldegiz state held sway in Azerbaijan.

The sharing by the country's indigenous population of a common Turkic language and Turkic provenance and their *adherence* to the same Islamic faith made possible a process of consolidation of the Azerbaijani nation that reached its culmination in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This same period saw the greatest flourishinif of the culture of Azerbaijan, which *bequeathed* to the world an array of illustrious philosophers, architects, poets and scholars. The crowning achievement of Azerbaijani social and cultural accomplishment of that period was the work of Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209), poet and philosopher, now one of the treasures of the world's cultural heritage.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the rise to prominence, in the mountainous regions of Karabakh, of the Khachen principality, ruled by the Albanian kings. The rule of Hasan Jalal (1215-1262) ushered in an Albanian renaissance and saw the completion of the construction of Gandzasar monastery complex, whose cathedral was to become the centre of the early church and whose *consecration* was presided over by the Catholicos of Albania.

From the mid-thirteenth century, the Azerbaijani states became vassals of the Mongol Hulagid dynasty (1258-1356). In the mid-fourteenth century, following an *uprising* by the local population to cast off the yoke of the invaders, the local Jalairid feudal lords took up the reins of power in Azerbaijan and, with the support of the Azerbaijani nobility, established the Jalairid state (1359-1410).

From the end of the fourteenth century, Azerbaijan was repeatedly invaded by Tamerlan and served as the theater for his battles with the Golden Horde.

The Azerbaijani dynasties of Qara-Qoyunlu and Aq-Qoyunlu ruled over Azerbaijan in 1410-1468 and 1468-1501 and under them Azerbaijan grew significantly in power. In 1501, the Safavid state was formed in Azerbaijan, which was named after the ruling Azerbaijani dynasty, with its capital in Tabriz. Under this dynasty, all the lands of Azerbaijan were united, for the first time in their history, into a single Azerbaijani state. The territory of the Safavid state stretched from the Amu Darya River to the Euphrates and from Derbent to the shores of the Persian Gulf. This polity was created and developed as an essentially Azerbaijani state and all political power remained in the hands of the Azerbaijani feudal nobility. Senior court officials, military generals and provincial governors were all appointed from among the Azerbaijani nobility. The army was made up from the militia of the most powerful Azerbaijani clans. Azerbaijani was the official language of the Safavid state. By the end of the sixteenth century, the capital of the Safavid state had been transferred to Isfahan and its shah now drew his support primarily from the Persian nobility. The State, while ruled by an Azerbaijani dynasty, took on an increasingly Persian aspect.

3. The independent Azerbaijani khanate States.

Division of the territory of Azerbaijan between Russia and Iran in the middle XVIII century, with the weakening of the power exercised by the Persian shahs over the territory of Azerbaijan, the country disintegrated into some 20 khanates, namely, Ardabil, Ganja, Derbent, Erivan, Javad, Karabakh, Karadakh, Khoi, Maku, Maragin, Nakhchivan, Quba, Baku, Sarab, Shirvan, Sheki, Tabriz, Talysh and Urumi. In addition to these khanates, the country was further subdivided into the sultanates of Kazah-Samshadil, Ilisu, Arash, Gutgashen and Nagorno-Karabakh, which was inhabited by Azerbaijani Muslims and Albanian Christians, formed an integral part of the Azerbaijani khanate of Karabakh, which covered the territories lying between the Kura and Araxes rivers. The local duchies - or "melikdoms" - of Dizak, Varanda, Khachen, and Gulistan, all of which lay within the mountainous regions of Karabakh, also formed part of this khanate, to which their inhabitants owed allegiance as vassals.

At the end of the eighteenth and in the first third of the nineteenth centuries, Azerbaijan was fought over by the Persian, Russian and Ottoman empires, and each eager to secure *hegemony* over this country whose geopolitical situation lent it significant strategic advantages. A number of the khanates rose in arms to defend their *sovereignty*, while others were forced, in an effort to defend their own interests, to conclude agreements reducing them to the status of vassaldom.

Thus, on May 14, 1805, a treaty was signed on the banks of the river Kura with the Azerbaijani khan Ibrahim Khalil, under which the independent Azerbaijani khanate

of Karabakh was placed under Russian over lordship. This treaty has particular resonance today, since it demonstrates that Karabakh historically formed part of Azerbaijan.

The first Russo-Persian war of 1804-1813, fought to establish dominance over the Azerbaijani khanates, resulted in the first division of Azerbaijani territories between Russia and Persia. *The peace treaty of Gulistan, signed on October 12, 1813 by Russia and Persia, gave legal recognition to the effective annexation by Russia of the khanates of northern Azerbaijan, with the exception of Nakhchivan and Erivan. The second Russo-Persian war of 1826-1828 led, on February 10, 1828, to the signing of the Turkmanchai peace treaty, under which Persia officially renounced its claims to northern Azerbaijan and finally recognized its annexation, with the inclusion of the Nakhchivan and Erivan khanates, by Russia.*

(add map of Northern Azerbaijan)

This was the time when people of different nation and religious origin from Iran and Turkey were relocated to Azerbaijan, primarily to the khanates of Nakhchivan, Erivan and Karabakh. This was done by the rulers of Russian Empire in order to ensure security of the newly conquered borders of the empire. The Russian scholar K. Shavrov records that, over the period 1828-1830 some 40,000 Persian and 84,000 Turkish Armenians were relocated in the Trans-Caucasus, where they were settled in the best indigenous lands of the Yelisavetpol (Karabakh) and Erivan provinces, where the Armenian population had previously been negligible and where they were allocated 200,000 dessiatines (225,000 hectares) of State land.

According to American scholar McCarthy, between 1828 and 1920 some 560,000 Armenians were resettled in Azerbaijan. In other words, it was actually after the conquest of the southern Caucasus by Russia that the Armenian population of the Azerbaijani lands north of the river Araxes increased so dramatically.

5. Azerbaijan in the XIX - beginning of the XX century

Since the mid-XIX century, the oil industry had been flourishing in northern Azerbaijan. The first ever industrial oil well was drilled in 1848. In the late XIX century into early XX century, Azerbaijan was producing 95% of Russia's and about 50% of the world's oil production. The Nobels and Rothschilds were among the oil magnates of, and earned a considerable income. The fortune of the Nobels was largely derived from the profit of Azerbaijani oil.

The second half of the XIX century into early XX century was time of a breakthrough for Azerbaijani national culture. In 1908, Uzeyir Hajibayov created his "Leyli and Majnun", the first opera in the Muslim world. In general, the country's musical culture was so highly developed that Azerbaijan was known as the "East's Conservatoire" or the "East's Italy".

During this time such remarkable event as publishing of the first newspaper in Azerbaijani language under the name of "Azerbaijan" by the efforts of Azerbaijani intelligentsia in 1858 in Tabriz, southern Azerbaijan. It was the first newspaper in Azerbaijani language and had been repeatedly published under different names over several years.

In North Azerbaijan, between 1875-1877, the newspaper "Ekinchi" (Ploughman) was published under the guidance of the visionary Hasan bay Zardabi. One of the main achievements of "Ekinchi" was to lead the challenge of enriching the native language and to broaden its usage.

At the same time, a number of prominent literary figures emerged to provide further impetus to the nation's cultural development: Mirza Fatali Akhundov, Mirza Alakbar Sabir, Jalil Mammadguluzadah, Jafar Jabbarli, Firudun bay Kocharli, Ahmad Javad, are some that deserve special mention. Similar progress was made at that time in the spheres of fine arts, architecture, the theater and cinematography.

This rapid cultural-ideological movement also made a great influence on political institutionalization and consolidation of Azerbaijani society. Azerbaijanis living within Russia were among the pioneers of the Empire Muslims' democratic movement for the protection of rights. Alimardan bay Topchubashov, a distinguished Azerbaijani statesman, became one of the founders of "Ittifaqi Muslimin" (Union of Muslims). It was established in 1905 in order to represent and pursue the Turkic-Muslim peoples' interests with the Empire's authorities. In general, the Azerbaijani representatives took an active part in this movement, striving for the common aims of oppressed Muslims in Czarist Russia.

Vocabulary

Some keywords to remember: stretch, evidence, cradle, hypothesis, depict, attest, legacy, alliance, cohabit, confine, consolidate, enormous, dynasty, adherence, bequeath, consecrate, up-rise, hegemony, sovereignty

Class Activity: show the map of Azerbaijan and also map of the Turkic nations. Discuss on how Azerbaijan has changed especially since the 19th and 20th century.

Questions

1. What early age of human existence can Azerbaijan be dated back to?
2. What were the early practices of settlers in Azerbaijan territories?
3. What was the name of the Norwegian explorer who studied the rock paintings in Azerbaijan?

4. What were some of the symbols inscribed on the Gobustan rocks?
5. Which state was created in the North of Azerbaijan in the IV century?
6. Which two dynasties ruled over Azerbaijan in the 15th century?
7. Where was the capital of the Azerbaijan dynasty?
8. Where was the 1805 treaty signed?
9. When was the peace treaty of Gulistan signed?
10. What did Uzeyir Hajibayov create in 1908?
11. What other names was Azerbaijan known for due to the Uzeyir Hajibayov opera, which is the first from a Muslim world?
12. What was the first newspaper under Azerbaijani language called?
13. Who was the visionary behind the newspaper Ekinchi?

Subject:	Class:	Date:	Lesson:	Time:	No. of pupils: (boys/girls)	Teacher
Social Students	Grade 5 / 6 / 7 / 8			1 hour		

Topic/Context Azerbaijan: Historical milestones	Prior learning/experience Basic knowledge of English Language in the classroom
Resources Materials prepared for the purpose of teaching English through social studies	Focus of observation (if appropriate) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning English language through social studies 2. Connecting our societies with the rest of the world
Learning Objectives/Intentions: By the end of the lesson students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The important events in history that has led to this day Azerbaijan as that we know 2. Comparing past events with current events 	Success Criteria /How Progress will be demonstrated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student ability to make connection between history and society over different centuries 2. Appreciation of cities in Azerbaijan and it's peculiar features

Clock Time	Learning Activity (TS3)	Key Questions (TS4)	Differentiation (TS5)	Assessment Opportunities (TS6)
	Starter/Bell Work (Where appropriate): LA1: Welcome student to the lesson; attendance and messages LA2: Review of previous lessons	How has our knowledge of previous lessons helped our understanding?	Some students might be new to the class, revising past classwork help them to connect with the lesson	Retentiveness of past lessons; producing text of previous homework
	Main Activities: LA3: Introduce the topic: Azerbaijan: historical milestones LA4: Some important facts about history and roles of different nations, peoples in creating modern day Azerbaijan	What roles have countries such as Russia and Iran played in creating Azerbaijan? Which other country is significant in Azerbaijan history?	Knowledge of Azerbaijani history is important	Students knowledge of history of Azerbaijan; knowledge of geographical locations and significant places
	Plenary/Review: LA5: Keywords –learn the vocabularies and use them in sentences Converting words to other forms (from verbs to Adjectives, nouns, and also from present to past and past participles	Do students understand the proper use of words in context, and also the proper tenses?	Application and understanding of previous lesson is necessary in this activity	Critical thinking
	Homework /Independent Learning LA6: Post-reading questions	N/A	N/A	Comprehension