

Summary: Sweden

Sweden's Government

Sweden shares the Scandinavian Peninsula with Norway. The country is a constitutional monarchy. Its royal ruler cannot make laws. The Swedish people elect representatives. These representatives make laws in the parliament known as Riksdag.

The Riksdag's 349 members choose Sweden's prime minister. They also choose ombudsmen to protect the rights of citizens.

Sweden has practiced armed neutrality since World War I. Its military does not fight for or against other nations. Sweden will not take part in a war unless it is directly attacked. The country is a strong supporter of the United Nations.

The Economy and Daily Life

Sweden's economy depends on private businesses and international trade. It exports goods, including metals, minerals, and wood. Automobiles are one of Sweden's major industries. Engineering and communications are important too.

Most of Sweden's electrical power comes from hydroelectricity. Another source is nuclear power. Sweden has also been looking into other sources of energy. Solar power and wind power are high on the list.

One major problem for Sweden is acid rain. Acid rain occurs when precipitation brings air pollutants back to Earth. These pollutants may soon poison trees in the region. Sweden and other countries are trying to control air pollutants made by cars and factories.

Ninety percent of native Swedes belong to the Lutheran Church. Most people speak Swedish. Immigrants have made Sweden their home since World War II. Many have come from Turkey, Greece, and other countries. They have brought their cultures with them to Sweden.

Winter and summer sports are popular in Sweden. People skate, play hockey, and ski. In summer, people visit the skerries along the Swedish coast. They hike, camp, and fish on these islands. Other activities include tennis, soccer, and outdoor performances.

Sweden is known for its drama, literature, and film. August Strindberg's plays, Astrid Lindgren's children's books, and Ingmar Bergman's films are popular all over the world.

Before You Read

Underline each vocabulary word.

ombudsman *noun*, a Swedish official who protects citizens' rights and makes sure that the courts follow the law

armed neutrality *noun*, a country that has military forces but does not take sides in the conflicts of other nations

hydroelectricity *noun*, electrical power generated by water

acid rain *noun*, precipitation that carries air pollutants back to Earth

skerry *noun*, a small island

After You Read

REVIEW What causes acid rain? Highlight the causes of acid rain.