

# Summary: Turkey Today

## Between Two Worlds

Turkey lies between Europe and Southwest Asia. After World War I, Turkey had a new leader. His name was Mustafa Kemal. He believed in westernizing the country.

Kemal founded modern Turkey. He started the Grand National Assembly, or legislature. Then the assembly made him president. In 1923, Turkey became a republic.

Kemal made many changes. The Western alphabet replaced the Arabic alphabet. The Western calendar replaced the Islamic calendar. A 1934 law required Turks to use last names. Kemal's new last name was Atatürk. It means "Father of the Turks."

## Changes Brought by Modernization

Atatürk replaced Islamic law with secular law. He closed religious schools and started secular ones. Many Turks disliked the changes. The reforms helped Turkish women, however. Women got new marriage rights. They also could vote and run for office.

Turkey wrote a new constitution in 1982. It promised rights and freedoms, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press. The Turkish government does not always honor these promises, though. For example, people can be arrested for writing articles against the government.

Turkey belongs to the North Atlantic Treaty Association (NATO). It was formed in 1949 to keep the Soviet Union from attacking Western Europe. When the Soviet Union fell apart, many NATO members wanted to disband. Turkey did not. NATO helps protect Turkey's borders. Being in NATO gives Turkey more power.

Most of Turkey's trade is with Western Europe. In 1987, Turkey asked to join the European Union (EU). There are not enough jobs in Turkey for all of the people. The EU feared that Turkey's membership in the EU would let more Turkish workers into their countries than they could handle.



### Before You Read

Find and underline the vocabulary word. With a partner, make a list of some names for similar groups in other countries.

**Grand National Assembly**  
*noun*, Turkey's legislature



### After You Read

**REVIEW** Which of Mustafa Kemal's changes do you think had the greatest effect on Turkish life? Highlight the sentences that tell about Mustafa Kemal's changes.

**REVIEW** Why did Turkey think NATO should continue after the Soviet Union fell apart? Draw a box around the two sentences that answer the question.