

Oklahoma Studies Weekly

OUR NATION

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Introducing the Northeast

Steven: Hi! I'm Steven. I'm here with Natalia. Today, we are going to talk about the Northeast Region.

Natalia: The region has 11 states. They are New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maryland and Delaware.

Steven: The Northeast Region is bordered by Canada to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the Southeast Region to the south and the Midwest Region to the West.

Natalia: Much of the region is mountainous. The major mountain ranges are the Allegheny Mountains, the Pocono Mountains, Adirondack Mountains and the Catskills.

Steven: The region has many rivers. Some of them are the Delaware, the

Kennebec, the Hudson, the Connecticut, the Niagara, the Penobscot and the Ohio.

Natalia: What about the climate?

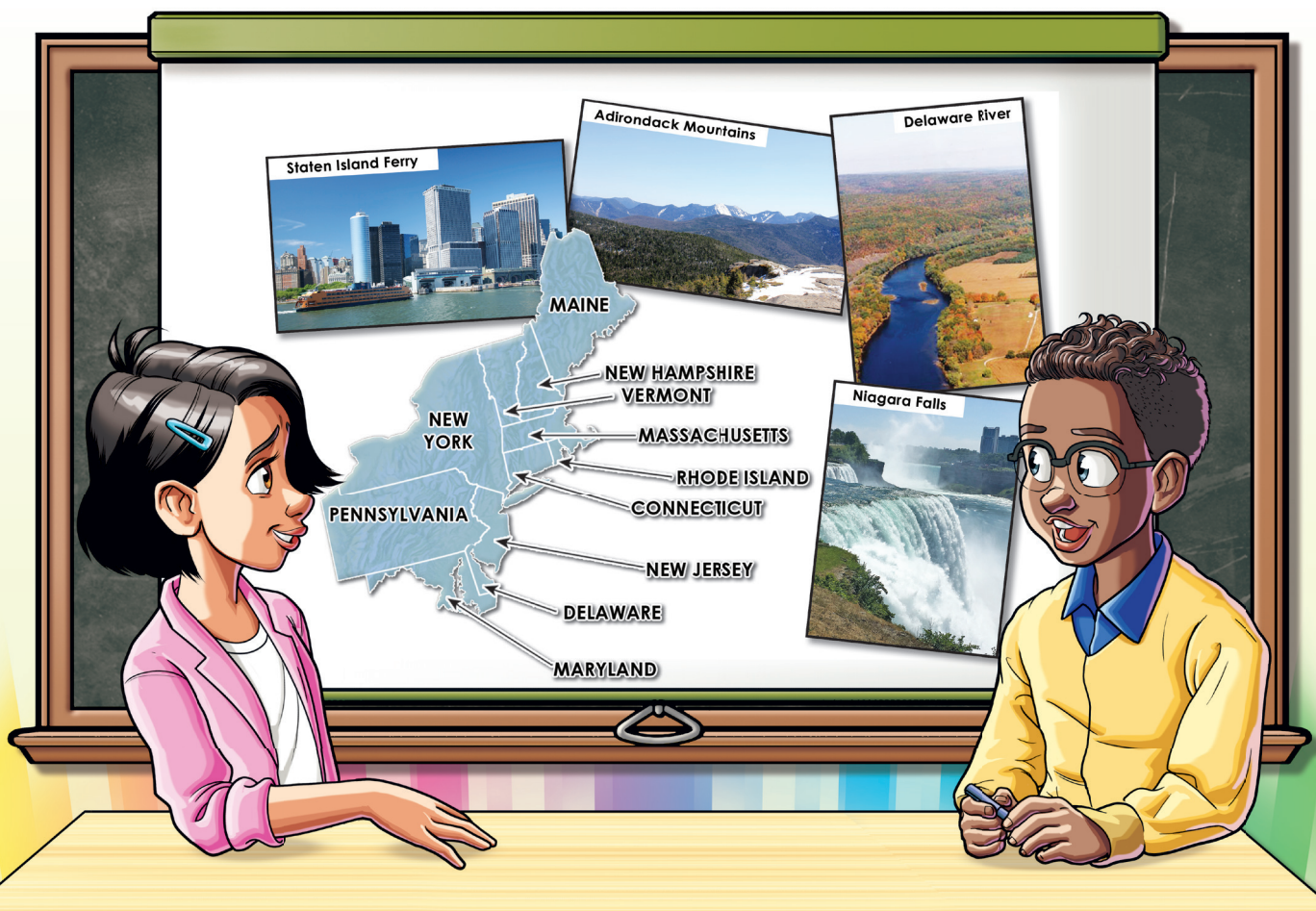
Steven: It has a diverse climate. It has all four seasons. The average precipitation is about 20 inches. The abundance of water sources affects the climate.

Natalia: Water also affects the economy, doesn't it? Water helps agriculture and other industries.

Steven: Yes! Water is very important for transportation. People and goods can be transported by boats, ships and ferries. This is also good for tourism.

Natalia: A lot of tourists like to go boating, fishing, swimming or visit Niagara Falls.

Steven: And, don't forget outdoor sports, like hunting, camping and hiking. I hear there is a trail you can hike all the way to Canada. It's called the Appalachian Trail.



Connections



Satellite Images

Satellites are devices that are sent into orbit around Earth. They are launched into space using rockets. Satellite images are photos taken from above Earth. Satellites can take many types of photos. These photos have many uses. We can use the photos to look at things on Earth from a spatial perspective. Everything from the largest mountain to the smallest tree can be seen from these photos. We can use the photos to track changes in the weather. Another great use of satellite images is to see changes in areas of Earth over a period of time. You can do this by comparing images that were taken years apart. This is important for seeing changes in the oceans, the land and glaciers all over the world.



Ecosystems of the Northeast

The Northeast region of the United States has many different ecosystems. An ecosystem is a group of living and nonliving things that depend on each other to survive. The living things are plants, trees, animals and insects. The nonliving things are the soil, water, air and even sunlight. An ecosystem can be as large as a huge lake or as small as a single drop of water. They can also be as large as a forest or as small as a single log on the ground. The forests of the Northeast are the largest ecosystems found there. Nearly half the land in the Northeast region is covered in different types of trees! From the western border on the Great Lakes to the beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, all the states in the Northeast are covered with forests. There are also freshwater ecosystems like wetlands, lakes, ponds, streams and rivers. Many beaches make up the main type of marine ecosystems of the Northeast. Let's take a look at each and find out where they are located and what animals and plants they have.



Forest Ecosystem



Forests

What do you think of when you hear the word "forest"? Trees, of course! Different types of trees make up most of what can be found in the forest ecosystem. There are also many animals in the Northeast region's forest ecosystem. Can you name any animals you would find in the forest in the Northeast region? There are bears, deer, squirrels, raccoons, chipmunks and mountain lions. That's only naming a few! There are even moose in Maine! There are also many types of birds, insects, reptiles and amphibians found in the forest of the Northeast region.

Wetlands

A wetland is an area that has shallow

water either year-round or for just part of the year. Wetlands can be bogs, swamps or marshes. They can be found in flat lands that are around water features like lakes, rivers and the ocean. They are often flooded by rains or ocean tides. They keep part of the water in their soil. Trees don't do very well in the wetlands because there is too much water. Plants, shrubs and grasses will get more sunlight without the trees covering them and will grow well. Since these areas are so wet, many mammals do not live there, besides beavers and deer. Instead of mammals, many different types of amphibians and reptiles can be found in wetlands. Snakes, turtles, salamanders and newts thrive in wetlands. Many plant species that thrive in water also can be found here. These plants actually help the wetlands to stay wet by stopping the water from draining away.

Lakes, ponds, rivers and streams are all freshwater ecosystems. They are found all over the Northeast region. Many different types of fish are found here. There are also many types of plants that grow in freshwater. Lily pads, grasses, shrubs and bushes all grow in freshwater.

Beaches

A beach is a marine ecosystem. A marine ecosystem has saltwater instead of freshwater. Beaches are all along the coast of the Northeast region. Crabs, starfish, lobsters, clams, sharks and even dolphins are all part of the marine ecosystem. Many types of birds are also found here, including pelicans and sandpipers. A common plant found here is kelp. No matter which ecosystem you may visit in the Northeast, you are sure to find many different and exciting plants, animals, birds and fish.



Wetland Ecosystem



Freshwater Ecosystem



Marine Ecosystem



Beach-Bound: The Atlantic Coast

Pack your towel and grab some sunscreen! The Northeast region of the United States has many beautiful beaches. There are beaches of different types from Maine to Maryland. The temperature outside, the temperature of the water and even the sand on the beach are all different depending on which state's beach you visit. There are only two states without beaches in the Northeast region: Pennsylvania and Vermont. Both of these states are landlocked, meaning they don't touch an ocean.

Although most of the Northeast states have beaches, the beaches are different from state to state. New York state has a much smaller beach on the Atlantic Ocean when compared to beaches in other states. Like New York, the state of Maine only has a small number of sandy beaches. The rest of Maine's beaches are rocky, and many of these rocky beaches have lighthouses to make sure boats do not crash into them in the night. The rest of the beaches in the Northeast states have beaches with more sand than the beaches in Maine. The beaches in Maine stay colder longer because they are at a higher latitude. A higher latitude means that they are farther north and take longer to warm up. States with lower latitudes are warmer, and people get to swim sooner in the summer.



Maine



New York

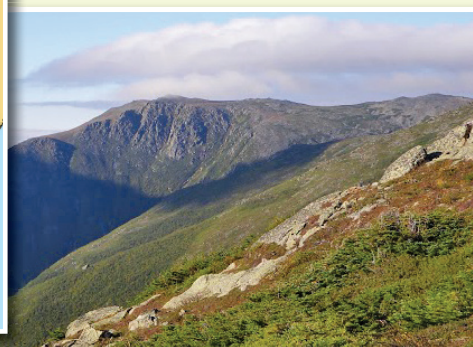
Niagara Falls

Niagara Falls State Park is run by the state of New York. Millions of tourists visit the waterfall each year. The falls make up a small part of the border between Canada and the USA. The two countries share the falls and each has a town on their side of the falls. The towns on each side of the falls are both named Niagara Falls. There are many hotels and amusement parks on each side of the falls. There's even a boat tour that takes tourists directly under the falls! The falls formed because Lake Erie is higher than Lake Ontario. Millions of gallons of water drop from Lake Erie into Lake Ontario every day. If you ever get the chance to visit the falls, make sure to bring a raincoat. You are definitely going to get wet from the water that sprays from the falls!



Windy Mount Washington!

Mount Washington is a mountain that is located in New Hampshire. The mountain was formed millions of years ago. Plates under Earth hit each other and pushed each other up, forming a mountain. About 50,000 years ago, huge glaciers formed and scraped away at the mountain. The peak of this mountain is 6,288 feet high. A mile is 5,280 feet. That means this mountain is over a mile high! This huge glacier freezing and melting over and over gave Mount Washington its shape. Mount Washington has some of the worst weather found anywhere in the world. Mount Washington is the highest mountain peak in the Northeast. The peak once held the world record for highest wind speeds at 231 miles an hour. It is not only Mount Washington's size and shape that give it these strong wind speeds and low temperatures. Mount Washington is located where extreme weather from America and Canada all meet. All of these features combine to create weather that is like weather in the north and south poles.



The Rivers Run Through It

There are many major rivers in the Northeast Region. We will talk about four of the main rivers. The Delaware River starts in the mountains of New York and ends in the Atlantic Ocean. This river is 300 miles long and goes through five states. The river provides millions of people with fresh water. The Delaware River passes through two of the largest states in the Northeast, Pennsylvania and New York. The Connecticut River passes through four states and is just over 400 miles long. It forms the border between New Hampshire and Vermont. This river is the longest river in New England.

The Hudson River is 315 miles long and only flows through two states, New York and New Jersey. The Hudson flows right next to the Bear Mountain we talked about earlier in this edition. The Susquehanna River is 464 miles long. This river is the longest river on the East Coast of the United States. There are two main branches in this river. One branch starts in New York and another starts in Pennsylvania. The two branches meet in central Pennsylvania and flow to Maryland. All four of these rivers flow into the Atlantic Ocean?



Name _____

The Erie Canal

On July 4, 1817, workers began construction on a 363-mile waterway that would connect the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean through the Hudson River. It was to be known as the Erie Canal. For years, explorers had been searching for a water route from the Northeast Region to the resource-rich areas of the Great Lakes with no luck.

Jesse Hawley, a flour merchant from New York, came up with the idea for a canal and published a series of essays about it that got the attention of New York City mayor DeWitt Clinton. Clinton saw that a water route linking New York to

the multiple resources available in the Great Lakes region would be crucial to the economic growth in the area.

Workers began work on the canal by clearing the land. Building such a large canal had never been attempted, meaning engineers had to come up with new equipment to get the job done. They devised new equipment that could uproot trees as well as the first cement that could set and harden underwater.

The opening of the Erie Canal on October 26, 1825, led to a major change in the Northeast. It gave New York City direct water access to the Great

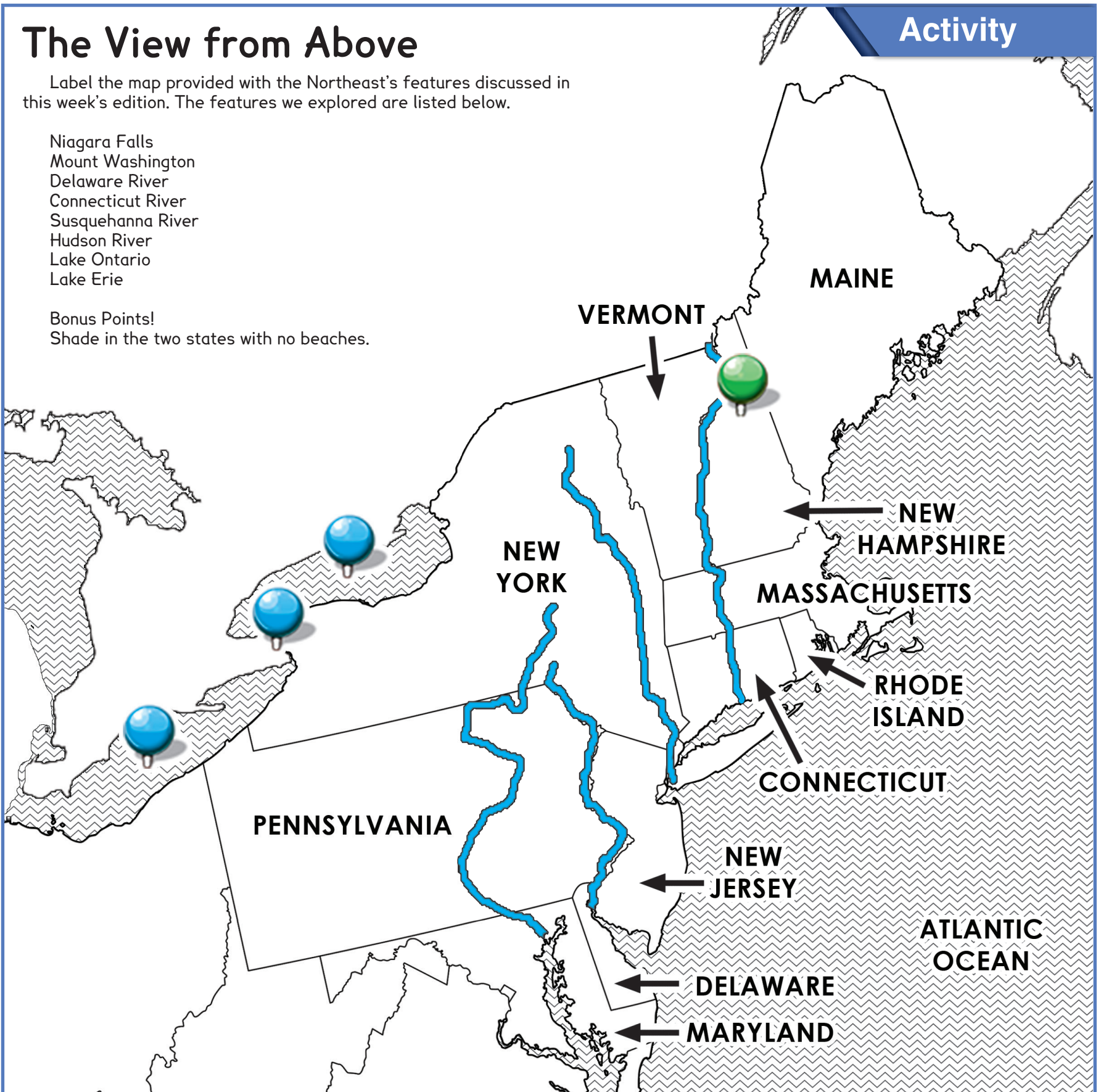
Lakes and the resource-rich areas of the Midwest. This created an opportunity for New York to grow. The population quadrupled between 1820 and 1850. New York became the epicenter of the nation's economics as well as the main port of entry for European immigrants to enter the United States. The Erie Canal allowed people to transport goods at one-tenth of the cost and less than half the time as before. For the first time, goods could be shipped in bulk to the frontier! All of this was made possible by the Erie Canal.

The View from Above

Label the map provided with the Northeast's features discussed in this week's edition. The features we explored are listed below.

- Niagara Falls
- Mount Washington
- Delaware River
- Connecticut River
- Susquehanna River
- Hudson River
- Lake Ontario
- Lake Erie

Bonus Points!
Shade in the two states with no beaches.



Let's Write

Write a paragraph to describe three of the ecosystems found in the Northeast. Please use evidence from the text to support your descriptions.

Think & Review

1. Where are the Appalachian Mountains located?
2. How can satellites be used?
3. Are all beaches alike?
4. What does the term landlocked mean?
5. What is unique or special about Mount Washington?