



Texas

5 Studies Weekly

OUR NATION

Political and Economic Regions of the United States

Political Regions

We organize the Earth into regions to help us learn about our world. A **region** is an area that has similar characteristics. Dividing large areas of the world into regions makes it easier for us to study them. Regions can have political boundaries, such as cities, states, countries, and continents.

Economic Regions

Economic regions are groups of states that have similar industries that are the major economic force for that region. Silicon Valley is an example of an economic region dominated by the technology industry. The New England coast is another example that features fishing and shipbuilding. Much of the economic base of the Midwest comes from large corporate farms and agriculture-related businesses.

Silicon Valley

Most of California's computer industry is located in the Santa Clara Valley. The city of San Jose is the biggest city in the valley. Many electronics and computer companies are found in this region. This area is often called Silicon Valley after the material silicon, which is used to make microchips. Microchips can be so small they can be held in the mouth of an ant. California exports more than \$43 billion worth of computers and electronics each year.

Rust Belt

The Rust Belt is a region that includes most of the area around the Great Lakes. It includes parts of central New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

This region became known as the Rust Belt when it began facing economic problems. The area was famous for manufacturing. It was a major producer of goods made from iron and steel. From the late 1800s to the middle 1900s, business was booming.

However, during the 1960s and 1970s, the economy began to struggle. The region fell into a decline and began to show signs of ruin, like rust forming on iron or steel. That's how the region became known as the Rust Belt.

Business and political leaders wanted to help the working-class and middle-class families who lived there. So, they started to make some changes. For example, they lowered prices for houses. This attracted new homeowners to the area in recent years. The Rust Belt is bouncing back!

Oil Fields

Just as blood is vital to the human body, petroleum is vital to the United States. Petroleum comes from crude oil that is found underground. Crude oil is used to make gasoline. Much of it is sitting beneath the Southwestern states.

Texas and Oklahoma produce much of the nation's oil. Oil companies provide jobs for workers throughout this region. They also sell their products to other companies throughout the nation and the world.

To extract crude oil, an underground oil well first needs to be drilled. Oklahoma and Texas have a lot of oil, so companies continue to drill there. Technology has made it easier to pull oil from beneath lakes and other areas without harm. Once the oil is extracted, refineries take crude oil and turn it into usable fuels. Jet fuel and kerosene come from crude oil. Other fuels, such as gasoline, diesel, and heating oil are also made in refineries.

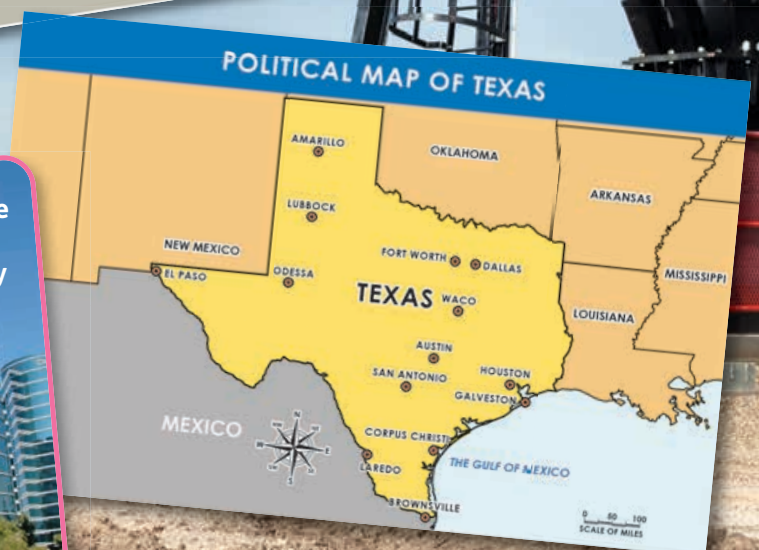
Breadbasket

The landscape in the Midwest is mostly flat, with rolling prairies, few trees, and many types of grass. A portion of the states in this region are part of the Great Plains. The Great Plains receive 10-20 inches of rain per year. The region is home to some of the most fertile (able to grow) farmland in the world. This flat, fertile land stretches from the north of Mexico to Canada and includes Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, and parts of Missouri and Minnesota. It is sometimes referred to as the "breadbasket of the world." The Great Plains produce a large amount of wheat, corn, and barley. These grains are used to make most of the bread we eat.

One of the country's biggest crops is wheat. When farmers started planting large fields, they found that wheat was cheap and grew well. Selling and trading wheat helped farmers survive. Today, wheat flour is used in making many types of bread, as well as cakes, cookies, and cereals. Wheat grown in America's breadbasket is in high demand. It is exported to countries all around the world.



Texas counties map



Oracle-Zentrale headquarters in Silicon Valley



American Indian Trade Routes

For thousands of years, American Indians operated huge trade networks to get what they needed from other people in the Americas. For example, people in what is now North Dakota quarried a hard stone called flint near Knife River. The stone was so valuable in ancient times that 4,000 years ago, it was being traded far from the quarry. Copper and obsidian have also been discovered far from their natural locations. This proves a trade system existed.

Another example of trade comes from the Hohokam tribe in what is now Arizona. The Hohokam traded bison hides for seashells. Neither resource comes from Arizona. The hides came from tribes on the Plains. Plains tribes often traded bison robes, dried meat, and tallow with other tribes for corn and squash. The shells came from the Mojave tribe in California. By trading with both groups, the Hohokam became middlemen within a larger trade route. Middlemen took goods from one group to another during trade.

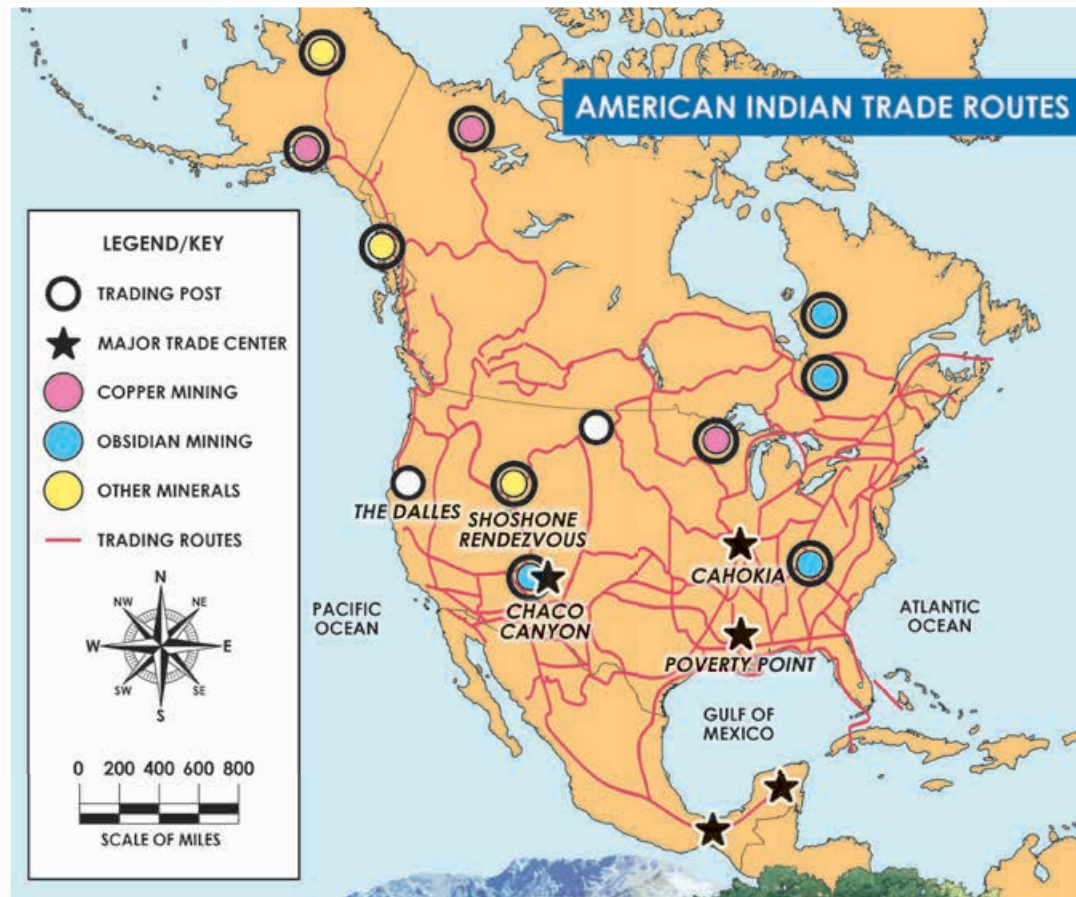
Trade was an essential part of the government. Agreements had to be made in order to trade safely. But not all trade was peaceful. Sometimes tribes would go to war to control trade routes and resources. Eventually, peace would be made with chiefs making agreements for their bands.

Rivers and Trails

Rivers were extremely important when native people needed to travel. Many traveled by canoe on major rivers like the Mississippi, Ohio, Columbia, and Missouri. Some canoes could haul thousands of pounds of goods for trade. Rivers were the "highways" for tribes. If rivers were the highways, paths were like the smaller "roads" we use today. Paths crossed all over North America.

Native peoples made and named other paths. One well-known route stretched from the forests by Lake Erie to the South Carolina coast. This trail, called the Trading Path, appeared on maps in the 1700s. Parts are still marked today.

Trails often followed the "military crest" of the ridge. Trails ran alongside, but not on the ridge tops. This way, a person could travel along the trail without being seen by those on the other side of the ridge. Many American Indians disciplined themselves to walk heel-to-toe in a single file. This left the smallest



mark on the ground and allowed them to travel without being seen.

Trading Sites

Trade was very important to tribes. They exchanged food, goods, and information. Some locations were more permanent trading locations, while others moved where the people went.

One example of a permanent trading station is the straits of Mackinac. The straits of Mackinac is where Lakes Michigan and Huron meet. This area in the Great Lakes attracted tribes from all over the eastern woodlands to trade. The Odawa and Chippewa had villages at Mackinac and conducted the trade.

Most of the trade happened when native people went to other villages or designated areas for trade. These areas were often convenient locations along travel routes. One such site, the Dakota Rendezvous site, was held along the James River.

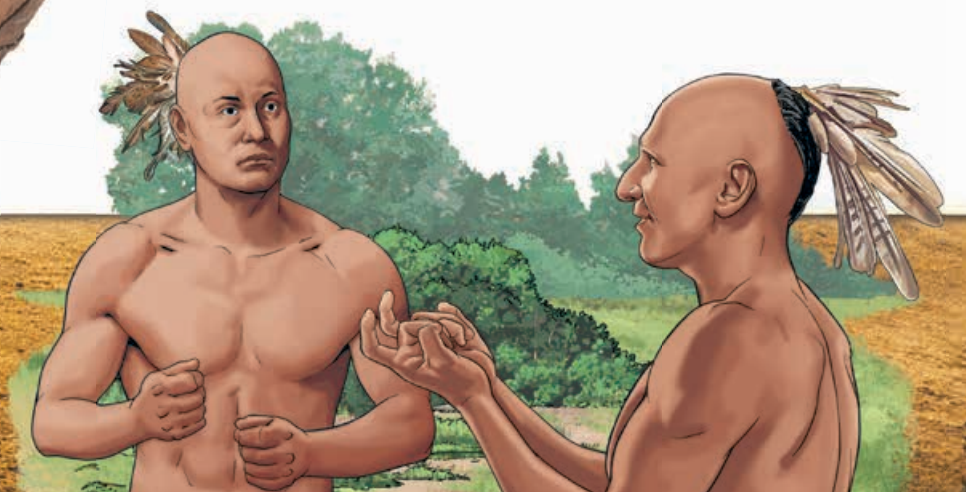
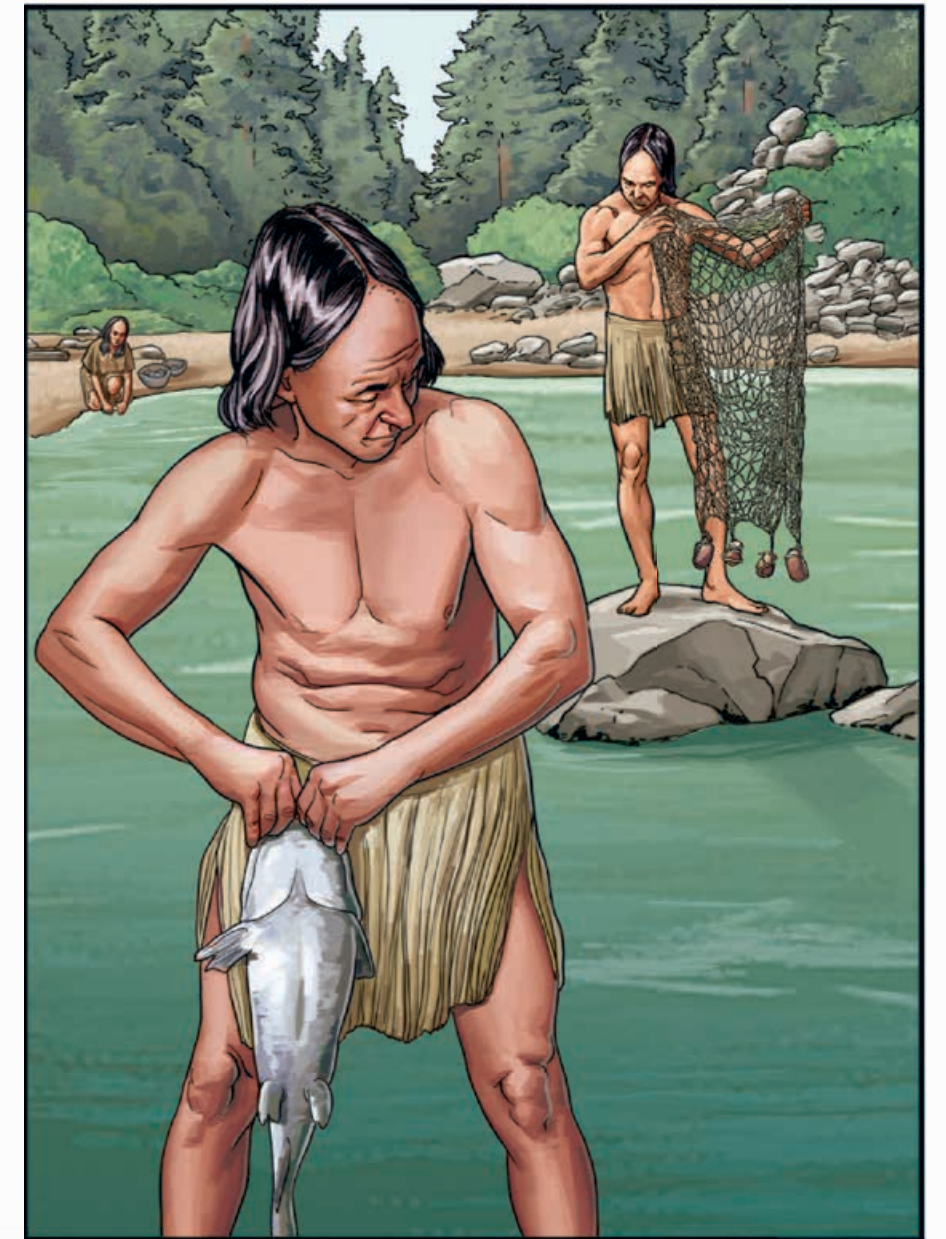
Trade Routes' Impact Today

We still use a lot of native trails and trade routes. Many major city roads and U.S. highways follow the same paths American Indians took thousands of years ago. For example, highway I-94 between Chicago and Detroit is on top of an old path native peoples used 11,000 years ago. Another example is interstate I-75 from Michigan to Florida. This is also on top of an old native path. The original name for this route was "the Great Path."

Arrowheads



Pottery



American Geography and Resources

Early colonists in America had to use every available resource to get what they needed to survive. American Indians had been using natural resources for centuries. What resources were available to the colonists?

New England Colonies

In the New England Colonies, the Appalachian mountain range is close to the coast. The shoreline is rocky with small beaches. The mountains are snow-capped in winter and are covered in thick forests. The soil is rocky and thin. The weather is harsh in the winters and mild in the summers. Because of the cold winters, the animals have thick furs and many birds migrate south. The ocean and streams are home to a variety of wildlife.

Middle Colonies

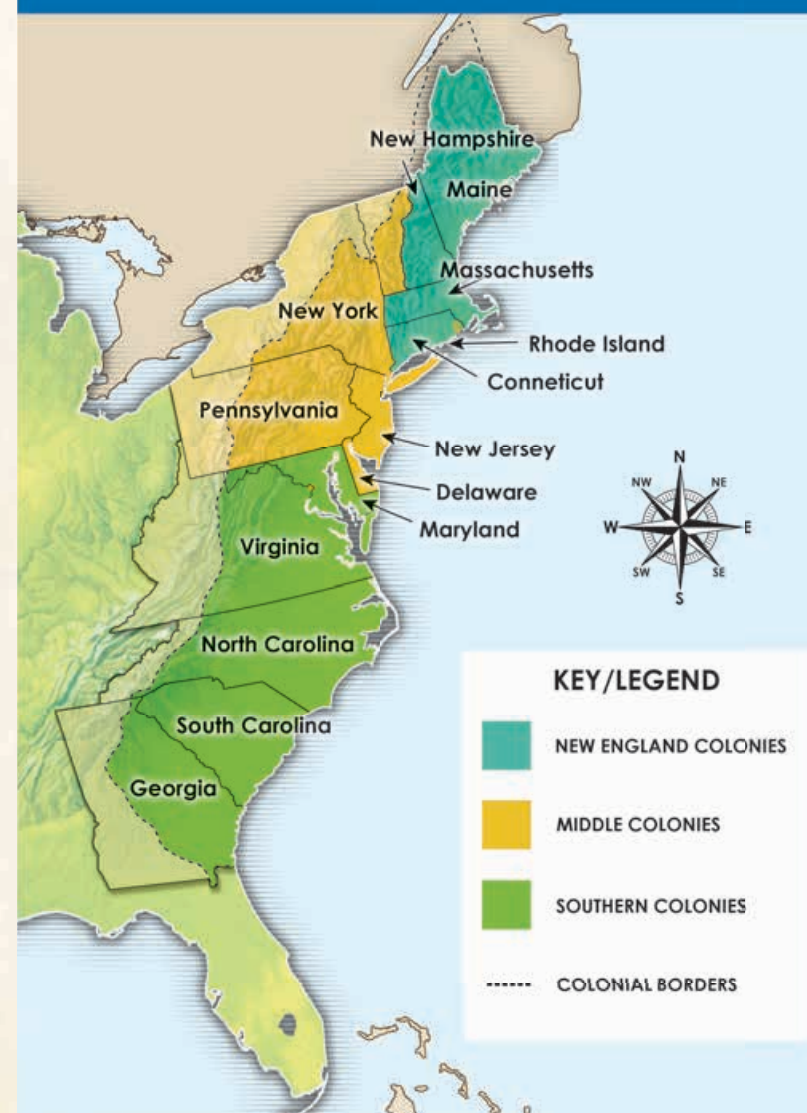
The Appalachian Mountains are farther from the ocean in the Mid-

Atlantic Colonies. The soil in the meadows is fertile and deep. Where rivers flow into the ocean, there are deep, natural harbors. The mountains are lower and don't have snow-capped peaks. There are thick, dense forests, and thickets provide protection for deer, small game, and birds. Chesapeake Bay is a home for birds and sea life.

Southern Colonies

In the Southern Colonies, the Appalachian Mountains are a greater distance from the coast. The hills extend from the foot of the mountains to the coastal plain. The waterways from the mountains come to the coast and provide deep harbors. In the hills, the soil is fertile and deep. Mild winters give way to long, hot summers. The birds from the north find homes in the south during the winters. The ocean currents are warm and bring many varieties of sea life.

NEW ENGLAND, MIDDLE, AND SOUTHERN COLONIES



How Does Climate Affect Settlement and Economic Activities?

A region's geography dictates its climate. The climate dictates what that region can produce. Regions closer to the Equator tend to have longer growing seasons. That means they can produce more kinds of fruits and vegetables in greater amounts. Regions with cooler weather and shorter growing seasons are better suited to livestock. They are also better suited to producing hardy vegetables and grains.

North America has a broad range of climates. The climate of a given location has much to do with how people live and make a living there. Those who want to live in a specific area have to adapt. Their houses, jobs, and sometimes even the foods they eat and the clothes they wear help them to successfully survive in their chosen environments. Businesses also have to carefully choose where to establish themselves. The ideal place to establish a business is in a place where there are people to work in the business and consume their product or services. Colleges and universities are ideal places for companies to hire skilled workers. Some companies tend to be located in or near university towns and cities.

Over time, people have found ways to

adapt to their environments and make harsh regions more livable. The invention of air conditioning has helped make areas in the southern United States more habitable. People who live in the Plateau and Mountain regions of the United States have furnaces to keep their homes warm. People in the desert

have air conditioners to keep their homes and other buildings cool. This has led to an increase in population in desert, humid, and tropical areas of the United States. With more people moving south, some companies have also relocated or established branches in the southern states.



Name _____

Impact of Natural Resources on Economic Advancement

Geography plays a large role in where people choose to build and settle. It affects where people decide to live, the natural resources they can use, and the way they make a living.

A **natural resource** is any material from the Earth that people can use. Some examples are trees, coal, oil, natural gas, plants, and gold. Natural resources are important to make life better for the people in a community. People need water to survive, so the first settlers in an area usually build communities near rivers or streams. In places where the soil is very rich, many people may be farmers or ranchers. People who live near deposits of minerals like gold, silver, or iron might

make their living as miners. Those in coastal areas may rely on shipping or fishing industries.

Think about where you might see factories or watermills. More often than not, both are located near or right next to bodies of water. Moving water can be used as a source of power. Rivers and ports can be used to transport goods. Oil rigs and drills are built above areas where oil can be drilled. There is an abundance of the resources needed to make steel in the northeast of the U.S., such as coal and iron. For this reason, most of the steel mills in the U.S. were built in western Pennsylvania, close to these sources.

Geography also has an impact on

transportation. Transportation, in turn, plays a large role in the economy. In places with lots of lakes and rivers, people may build bridges or use boats to travel and transport goods. In places with vast stretches of land with little interruption, such as the Great Plains, highways and railroads are more common. Large cities like Chicago and Denver are heavily dependent on railroads to transport their goods. Port cities on the coast like Los Angeles and New York City are particularly important for shipping goods around the world. Air travel is also extremely important. It transports people and goods faster than any other mode of transportation.



New York City, NY



Los Angeles, CA



Chicago, IL



Houston, TX



Phoenix, AZ



Modern San Francisco skyline