

Summary: Land and Climate

Land and Water of the South

There are fourteen states in the South. The region is divided into the Upper South and the Lower South. The Upper South has high flat areas called plateaus. Some states have rolling hills and rich river valleys. Some states in the Lower South are at sea level. They have beaches, swamps, and wetlands.

The coastline of the South includes both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. These coastal plains are the lowlands. The Gulf coastal plain stretches from the Rio Grande in Texas to the tip of the Florida peninsula. The Atlantic coastal plain stretches from Florida along the Atlantic Ocean to Virginia. The Appalachian Mountains and the Ozark Plateau are in the interior. They are the South's highest landforms.

The Mississippi River carries fertile soil to the huge delta at the Gulf of Mexico. There are also other wetlands in the South. Cities in the South grew near rivers or coasts. People use water to travel and move goods.

Climate and Wildlife

The South is closer to the equator and tends to be warmer and moister than northern regions. It also has a longer growing season. Southern farmers can grow crops for most of the year.

The South has more than one climate. The latitude, elevation, and closeness to the water affect climate. These factors can be different in each state. The ocean keeps temperatures in coastal areas warm. Winters can be mild and summers can be hot and humid. It is colder in the hills and plateaus. In the Ozark highlands there are often storms and tornados. Tropical storms and hurricanes cause flooding and other damage in the South every year.

Plants and animals have adapted to the Southern climate. In Florida, mangrove trees live in salty swamps. Along the coast, sea turtles hide their eggs on beaches above the high tide line.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

peninsula *noun*, a piece of land surrounded by water on three sides

interior *adjective*, an area away from the coast or border

delta *noun*, a triangle-shaped area at the mouth of a river

adapt *verb*, to change in order to better fit in an environment



After You Read

REVIEW In what ways is the Gulf coastal plain different from the Ozark Plateau? Highlight sentences that tell about each region.

REVIEW Why does the South have such a variety of climates? Underline the sentence that tells about latitude and elevation.