

Summary: Resources and Economy

Using Resources

People in the West use their natural resources to make goods and sell services. Soil and climate are important resources. Farmers grow fruit and vegetables to sell. Many people have jobs processing and shipping food. Trees are also a key resource. People cut trees down and make them into lumber and paper at mills. People catch fish in the ocean.

The West's climate helps many businesses. People make movies and tourists come for vacations. Aircraft companies build airplanes. People mine natural mineral resources, such as copper, gold, uranium, and coal. Other people make products from the minerals. The U.S. government owns a lot of land in the West. Some of it is in national parks, such as Glacier, Yellowstone, and Grand Canyon.

The West's Economy

Many businesses in the West do research or provide services. Many companies in the West make computer products, software, or aircraft. Technology is important to the economy, especially in the Southwest and Pacific States. Many businesses have a specialization. For example, a company might make just one part of a computer, not the whole computer. The company can improve how that part works and also learn to make it at a lower cost.

Some people are skilled workers. They have special training or education. For example, many people in the computer industry have advanced training. They research and invent computer products. For some jobs, workers need no special training. Businesses can hire unskilled workers. Skilled workers usually make more money than unskilled workers.

Many people in Hawaii and Alaska work for the government. In all regions of the West many people work in service jobs, like health care or construction.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

national park *noun*, an area of land set aside by the federal government

specialization *noun*, when a business makes only a few goods or provides just one service

skilled worker *noun*, someone who has special training or education to do a job

unskilled worker *noun*, someone who does not need special training or education to do a job



After You Read

REVIEW What are two ways that people use resources in the West?

Underline two sentences that tell what resources people in the West grow or use.

REVIEW Which parts of the West have the most technology companies?

Draw a box around the sentence that tells where technology is important to the economy.