

## Lesson 1: Land and Climate of the West

### Land and Water of the West

1. There are **13** states in the West, divided into **3** regions
  - a. Southwest: **Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico**
  - b. Mountain States: **Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, Montana**
  - c. Pacific States: **Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii**
2. There are **2** states not connected to the other **11** states
  - a. They are **Alaska and Hawaii**
3. Because the West is so big, its **land** and **climate** are different from state to state.
  - a. Landforms of the West: **mountains, valleys, deserts, rain forests, glaciers, volcanoes**
  - b. The country's **warmest** and **coldest temperatures** are found in the west.

### Mountains of the West

1. There are **4** mountain systems that run from north to south in the West
  - a. Rocky Mountains: **formed as tectonic plates pushed against each other**
    - i. Faults: **cracks in the earth's crust; earthquakes happen when there's movement on faults**
  - b. Cascade Range: **volcanoes; formed when lava pushed through Earth's crust and hardened**
    - i. Volcanoes: **mountains that release geothermal energy in the forms of lava and gas**
  - c. Yosemite Valley: **in the Sierra Nevadas; formed by glaciers**
  - d. Grand Canyon: **carved by the Colorado River, widened wind/water erosion; Arizona**
2. The land between the Rockies and western mountains is **full of basins, valleys, and plateaus (rugged and beautiful)**
  - a. Business: **ranching and mining**
  - b. Tourism: **skiing and hiking**
  - c. Natural Tourism: **Grand Canyon, Yellowstone NP, Yosemite, Mt. Rainier, volcanoes/mountains**

### Water, Climate and Wildlife

3. Many rivers flow **west** from the Rocky Mountains
  - a. Irrigation: **supplying land with water for drinking, farming, etc.**
4. People who settled in the west often chose to live **near coastal areas** because these places get **most of the rain**.
5. Hydroelectric power: **electricity produced from flowing water; Hoover Dam, Grand Coulee Dam**
6. Lakes
  - a. Some created by **people**, like **Lake Mead (Hoover Dam)**
  - b. Natural lakes: **Great Salt Lake**
7. Climate
  - a. The Pacific Ocean: **affects climates in the west**

- i. How? Cool, moist air flows east from the Pacific; drops rain on the western mountain slopes, and then dry air flows down the eastern slopes
- b. What affects temperatures in the West? Latitude, the ocean, and elevation
  - i. Northern areas: short summers and long winters (Alaska)
  - ii. Coastal Areas: moderate temperatures from cool ocean breezes (California, Washington, Oregon)
  - iii. High Elevations: low temperatures (Mt. McKinley)
- 8. Plants and Animals of the West
  - a. Plant life changes with climate
    - i. Hawaii: tropical climate so plants like orchids can survive
    - ii. Arid areas: southwest; very dry with little water; cactus and mesquite
    - iii. Coastal areas: get lots of rain so giant trees like redwoods grow
    - iv. Mountain areas: high altitudes, drier with colder temperatures; bristlecone pine
      - 1. Bristlecone Pine: believed to be oldest living trees on earth: maybe 5,000 years, oldest is about 4,846 years
  - b. Animals
    - i. Brown Bear: Found in Alaska; can weigh 1,700 pounds
    - ii. California Condor: largest flying bird in North America; can have 9 foot wingspans; very endangered
    - iii. Other animals: elk, bighorn sheep, cougars, scorpions, lizards, tarantulas, snakes

## Lesson 2: Resources of the West

Using Resources (p. 256)

- 1. The West has many natural resources that create jobs for people who live in the West.
  - a. Farmers use fertile soil and warm climate to raise many crops
    - i. Crops grown in the West: pineapples, avocados, peas, citrus fruit, grapes, potatoes
    - ii. Farming creates other jobs besides growing crops: food processing, selling, shipping food, farm equipment
  - b. Forests:
    - i. Jobs: huge forests in the West create jobs; lumber mills make wood for houses, furniture, etc.
  - c. Oceans, Rivers, and Lakes:
    - i. Jobs: fishing, transportation, recreation
    - ii. Recreation: fishing, swimming, sailing
- 2. Movies and Mines (p. 257)
  - a. Other industries depend upon the West's climate
    - i. Airplane Companies: good flying conditions make this a good spot for these companies

**Main Idea:**  
 Westerners have found ways to use their land, climate, water, and minerals.

- ii. Movies: Los Angeles/Hollywood
- iii. Tourism: natural tourism like beaches, hiking, camping
- b. Mineral Resources
  - i. Copper: Arizona and Utah
  - ii. Other minerals: gold, uranium, coal
- c. U.S. Government
  - i. Owns more than 600 million acres of land in the West
  - ii. National Parks: Glacier, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Yosemite
  - iii. U.S. gov't lets mining, logging and livestock companies use its land.
    - 1. Rules: these companies can use it as long as they obey the law

National Park: Land set aside by the U.S. government because of its natural or historical importance

Remember!  
The economy is how an area makes money.

Main Idea: Workers in the West make *specialized* products.

#### The West's Economy (p. 258)

- 2. Not all industries in the West are based on natural resources.
  - a. Technology jobs: computer products
    - i. California: Silicon Valley
    - ii. Seattle, WA: Microsoft
  - b. Specialization: When a company makes only a few products or provides one service

#### Skilled and Unskilled Workers (p. 259)

- 3. Skilled Workers: workers who have received special training; often paid more
- 4. Unskilled Workers: someone who does not need special training for their job
- 5. Mountain States: fewer urban areas, but some technology jobs
  - a. Colorado: medical equipment
- 6. Service Jobs: health care, construction, tourism
- 7. Alaska and Hawaii: government and military work

### *Lesson 3: People of the West*

#### *Early Peoples of the West*

- 1. Many scientists think people first came to the West 15,000 years ago.
  - a. Land bridge: People crossed it from Asia to Alaska
    - i. Groups: Aleut and Inuit in the North; Hopi and Navajo in the South
  - b. Hawaii: Polynesians came across the Pacific by boat

#### *Pueblo Indians*

- 2. 700 years ago, the Pueblo lived in the Rio Grande area of New Mexico
  - a. This land is arid, but the Pueblo were very good farmers
    - i. Built irrigation ditches and dams to control water.
    - ii. Crops: corn, beans, squash, cotton
    - iii. They also hunted animals and gathered wild plants
  - b. Pueblo homes looked like huge apartment buildings
    - i. Built with adobe, which is a type of clay

- c. Arts and Crafts
  - i. The Pueblo were great at making baskets and pottery
  - ii. They used these things to trade for salt, food, and animal hides

### *Tlingit Indians*

- 3. Lived on the northwest coast of the U.S.
- 4. Long, wooden houses
- 5. Unlike the Pueblo, the Tlingit did not grow crops
  - a. Food: gathered wild plants, hunting, fishing
  - b. Trade: seal oil for furs from inland groups
- 6. Artists
  - c. Weaving: baskets, blankets
    - i. Blankets: showed figures that were important to the family or village; told stories

### *American Indians in the West*

- 7. Ancestors: Many Native American groups still practice the skills of their ancestors
- 8. Modern Society: Native Americans live in the same modern society we do.

### Spanish Settlements (pp. 264-265)

- 9. 1521: The Spanish conquer the American Indians in Mexico; called it New Spain
  - a. Then, the Spanish traveled north along the Pacific coast to Canada
  - b. What did they want? gold, more land for Spain, and to teach Christianity to the American Indians
- 10. 1610: Santa Fe, New Mexico
  - c. Spanish spread into Arizona and California
  - d. Later, the Spanish took control of the Southwest, Texas and Florida
- 11. Missions:
  - e. The Spanish wanted the Indians to become Christians
    - i. So they set up missions
    - ii. Many missions grew into cities like San Diego and San Francisco, California
- 12. Cultural Influences
  - f. Missions: Priests sometimes taught more than religion:
    - i. European culture: wanted Am. Indians to live like Europeans
    - ii. Language: taught them to speak Spanish
    - iii. Farming: grew Spanish crops (grapes, wheat)
  - g. 1800s: Spain loses control
    - i. 1821: Mexico gains independence from Spain
    - ii. 1836: Texas gains independence from Mexico
    - iii. 1845: Texas becomes part of the United States
    - iv. 1846: U.S. went to war with Mexico
      - 1. Who won? United States
    - v. 1848: U.S. forces Mexico to give Southwest states and California to the United States

- h. Influences today
  - i. Names: Many places have Spanish names
  - ii. Language: Spanish is commonly spoken
  - iii. Culture: Festivals, food, art
  - iv. Immigration: Many people from Mexico/Latin America still move to the West

13. More people moved west when the United States took control of the region

14. Rush of Settlers

- a. 1848: Gold discovered in California
  - i. Thousands of Americans, Chinese, and Europeans went to California to find gold.
- b. Others came west to buy cheap land
  - i. Oregon Trail: connected Missouri to Oregon, 6-month trip
    - 1. Wagon train: \_\_\_\_\_ line of wagons that carried settlers and everything they owned
- c. Religious Freedom
  - i. Mormons: settled in Utah
- d. Affect on Native Americans
  - i. Hunting lands destroyed
  - ii. Land taken by settlers as their own
  - iii. Many Native Americans felt that people could use land, but not own it
  - iv. Fighting between Settlers and American Indians
  - v. Forced to live on reservations

**Main Idea: People traveled west to find gold, get land, or work on the railroads.**



15. The Fifty States

- e. Transcontinental Railroad: first train system to connect the East and West
  - i. Chinese Immigrants: helped build the railroad
  - ii. Railroad finished in 1869
- f. Transportation helped the West's population grow faster
  - i. When the population reached a certain point, the people could ask the government to make it a state
- g. 1959: Alaska and Hawaii become the last of the 50 states