

Summary: What's Special About the Great Lakes States

Where People Live

The Great Lakes states are Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Each state borders a Great Lake. The northern states, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, have thick forests. The southern Great Lakes states have good farmland. Most people live in cities or in suburbs near cities.

Chicago is the biggest city in the region. It is an important center for business, manufacturing, and transportation because of its location near waterways. As Chicago grew, the city built public transportation. The elevated train carries many people without getting in the way of busy city traffic.

The Great Lakes states also have more than 400,000 farms. In recent years, farmers started using more machines and fewer workers to grow crops. People in rural areas usually earn lower wages, but they also pay less for living than city people.

Tourists visit the Great Lakes states to camp, fish, boat, or swim. Winter activities like snowmobiling and ice fishing are popular. In cities, people like to visit sports arenas and museums.

Leaving Cities

People once moved to cities looking for better jobs and lives than they had in rural areas. Now many people live in the suburbs and travel to cities to work and shop. Some businesses have moved to the suburbs. Some people can work at home using new technology. Cities have problems when people leave. Buildings and homes may be empty, and crime rises. Fast-growing suburbs can also cause environmental problems. Building may not leave enough natural areas for people to enjoy. Air pollution increases because many people drive instead of walking. Cities like Detroit are rebuilding their downtowns to get people to live there again. Cities also work to improve public transportation and protect open space. This may improve life in some cities.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

elevated train *noun*, a railway that runs above the ground on raised tracks

wages *noun*, the payments for work



After You Read

REVIEW What is an **advantage of the elevated train**? Circle the words that tell why the train works well in Chicago.

REVIEW How can the **growth of suburbs affect the environment**? Underline two sentences that tell why suburbs can cause environmental problems.