

Summary: The Southwest

Where People Live

The four Southwest states are Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, and Arizona. The climate is dry. They have mountains, plateaus, deserts, and other landforms.

Big cities grew in the deserts. Phoenix is the largest city in the Southwest. The first people to live there were the Hohokam. They built irrigation canals to water their crops. Later, European settlers found the canals and rebuilt the settlement. They built dams on rivers to provide water. Today, Phoenix has a steady supply of water. Over one million people live there. Buildings in Phoenix are made in Spanish, Mexican, and American Indian styles.

Thousands of American Indians live in the Southwest in cities and on pueblos. The Navajo Indian reservation is the largest in the nation. It covers 16 million acres in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. The Pueblo, Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and Laguna Indians live in pueblos near the Rio Grande. Some of the oldest ranches in North America are in the Southwest. People raise sheep, cattle, and horses on these ranches.

The Southwest Today

Millions of tourists come to the Southwest each year. They want to see the high mountains, wild rivers, and beautiful canyons. Weathering and erosion carved the Grand Canyon and many natural arches in Utah. There are ghost towns and national parks to visit. People ride bicycles and hike. They paddle the rivers and swim in lakes. They can enjoy Mexican food, Indian festivals, and rodeos. People in the Southwest speak English, Spanish, and Indian languages.

Water is scarce in this region. Reservoirs are made to store water. People practice water conservation. Plants that don't need extra watering are used in parks and public places. Farmers conserve water by using drip irrigation. Drip irrigation does not flood the fields with water. It allows water to slowly soak into the soil.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

weathering *noun*, the breakdown of rock caused by wind, water, and weather

conservation *noun*, using something carefully and not wasting it



After You Read

REVIEW Describe how the Spanish, Mexicans, and American Indians have influenced life in the Southwest. Who were the first people to live in Phoenix? How did they get water? Which American Indian groups live in the Southwest today? Buildings in Phoenix are made in different styles. What are they? Circle the words and sentences that tell you the answers.

REVIEW How do people conserve water? What kinds of plants are used in parks and public places? How do farmers conserve water? Underline the sentences that tell you the answers.