

Summary: What's Special About the Mountain States

Cities and Rural Areas

The Rocky Mountains run through Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. These states are called the Mountain States. There are also hills, plateaus, plains, and valleys. The Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Apache, Ute, and Crow Indians were the first people to live in the region.

Denver is the capital of Colorado. It is on a mile-high plain east of the Rockies. The mountains block moisture coming from the west. This keeps the climate dry.

Most people in the Mountain States live in the cities. The cities are centers for entertainment, education, and health care. Some people live in rural areas. Here, the land is rugged. The winters are long and cold. People raise cattle and sheep. There are usually only a few doctors, dentists, schools, and other services in these areas. People living in rural areas travel to cities to get supplies and services.

Recreation and Tourism

Many people work in mining, farming, and forestry industries in the Mountain States. Tourism is also an important industry. The high elevation of the Mountain States creates a perfect place for winter sports. Tourists come to ski in the winter. They camp, hike, fish, and ride horses in the summer. Tourists spend money and buy services, such as hotels and meals. Tourism creates jobs.

There are many national parks in the region, including Yellowstone and Glacier. National parks protect wilderness areas and historical places. Yellowstone is the nation's oldest national park. It is a complete ecosystem with many different habitats. Animals like the buffalo were almost extinct. Now they are protected in the park. Yellowstone is also famous for its geysers. The heat inside the earth causes geysers to shoot out hot water. Visitors can also see hot springs and bubbling mud pots.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

ecosystem *noun*, an environment and all its living things, working together as a unit

habitat *noun*, the natural home of a plant or animal

extinct *adjective*, no longer existing

After You Read

REVIEW Name two things the four Mountain States have in common. Circle the landforms that the Mountain States share. Highlight a sentence that tells where most people live.

REVIEW What attracts visitors to the Mountain States? What do tourists do in the summer and the winter? Which national parks can they visit? Underline the sentences that tell the answers.