

# Summary: Our Nation's Resources

## Geography of the United States

The United States has many landforms. In the East, the Appalachian Mountains stretch from north to south. The Rocky Mountains are in the West. There are wide plains across the center of the nation.

Large rivers from the plains flow into the Mississippi River. This is the nation's longest river. The Great Lakes are on the northern side of the central plains. The Mississippi River and the Great Lakes are important waterways.

## The Nation's Resources

The United States has resources all over the country. A resource is something people use to produce goods and services. Renewable resources can be replaced. Fish are a renewable resource. New fish hatch to replace those that are caught. Nonrenewable resources cannot be replaced. Oil is nonrenewable. When it is taken from the ground, no new oil will take its place.

Flow resources can only be used where and when they are found. Wind, water, and sunlight are flow resources that can be used to make electricity.

Capital resources are the buildings, tools, and machines that people use to make goods and provide services. For example, farmers use tractors to grow and harvest corn. Human resources are people who use their skills and knowledge in their work.

Everyone who uses resources has a problem with scarcity. This means that people must choose what they want most. For example, say your class has enough money to buy either books or art supplies. If you choose to buy the books, the opportunity cost would be the art supplies.

Countries make the same kinds of choices. A nation's economic system helps countries decide how people use resources and produce goods. The economic system of the United States is a free enterprise system.

### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**resource** *noun*, something people use to produce goods and services

**scarcity** *noun*, not having enough resources to provide for all our needs and wants

**opportunity cost** *noun*, the thing that you give up when you decide to do or have something else

**economic system** *noun*, a set of rules that guides the use of resources and production of goods in a country

**free enterprise** *noun*, a system by which businesses and individuals, instead of the government, answer certain economic questions

### After You Read

**REVIEW** What is the difference between renewable and nonrenewable resources?

Circle two sentences that tell the answer.

**REVIEW** Who is affected by scarcity? Draw a box around the sentence that tells who has a problem with scarcity.