

Summary: Tennessee's Regions

Tennessee's Location

Tennessee is located in the Upper South region of the United States. It shares boundaries with eight states. A boundary is the edge of a region. The state is also divided into three regions, or grand divisions: West Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, and East Tennessee.

West Tennessee has a mild climate, a fair amount of rainfall, and rich soil. These conditions allow people in this region to earn a living from farming. One major industry is food processing. Some people manufacture goods such as plastics, automobile parts, and paper goods. Memphis is in the southwest corner of the state overlooking the Mississippi River. Memphis has the largest population of any city in Tennessee. Its location led it to become a major shipping center.

Middle Tennessee

Middle Tennessee stretches from the Tennessee River to the Cumberland Plateau. It includes the Nashville Basin and the Highland Rim. Middle Tennessee has the largest and most varied economy in the state. The Nashville Basin has land that is good for farming. Farmers also raise animals such as cattle, dairy cows, and hogs. Many people work in manufacturing in the Highland Rim. Nashville is located in the Nashville Basin. Nashville has the state's second largest population. It provides jobs in government, business, education, health care, tourism, and the music recording industry.

East Tennessee

East Tennessee stretches from the Cumberland Plateau to the Unaka Mountains. Important natural resources in this area are timber, coal, and zinc. Many people make their living in the timber and mining industries, and in science and technology. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park also provides jobs in tourism.

Tennessee's climate is different in the different regions. One factor that affects climate is the distance from the equator. Elevation also affects climate. Scientists can use a climograph to show the monthly average temperatures and precipitation for a place.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

boundary *noun*, the edge of a region

climograph *noun*, a graph that shows monthly average temperatures and precipitation for a place

After You Read

REVIEW What effect has the geography of West Tennessee had on its economic activities?

Underline the sentence that tells one way people earn a living because of the mild climate and rich soil. Draw a circle around the sentence that tells how a river affected the economy of Memphis.

REVIEW What are some of the ways people in Middle Tennessee earn a living?

Highlight some of the ways people in Middle Tennessee earn a living.

REVIEW What are some of the ways people in East Tennessee earn a living?

Draw a box around the two sentences that tell how some people in East Tennessee earn a living.