

# Summary: Land and Climate

## A Varied Land

To understand the United States, we must learn geography. Geographers ask where a place is and what it is like. They want to know how the land affects people, and how people affect the land. Geography helps us understand our past, present, and future.

There are many different landforms in the United States. The Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Coast Ranges are near the Pacific coast. The Basin and Range area is to the east of these mountains. This region has many high mountains and plateaus. A plateau is a high, steep-sided area rising above the land. Rivers running over plateaus have worn away rock to make canyons like those at Bryce Canyon National Park.

Further east are the Rocky Mountains. East of the Rockies are wide, flat plains that slope toward a valley in the middle of the country. The Mississippi River is in the center of this huge valley. East of the Mississippi, the Central Plains rise again to the Appalachian Mountains. These mountains go from Maine to Alabama. East of the Appalachians is the Atlantic Coastal Plain, which meets the Atlantic Ocean.

## Climate

The United States has many climates. Climate is the type of weather a place has over a long period of time. It includes temperature and how much rain, snow, or sleet falls. The southern part of the country is usually warmer than the northern part. The closer a place is to the equator, the warmer it is.

Landforms affect climate. Lower places are usually warmer than places high in the mountains. Plants and trees also affect climate. Their leaves release water and make shade. A place with many plants or trees has a cooler temperature.



### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**geography** *noun*, the study of the world and the people and things that live there

**landform** *noun*, a feature on the surface of the land

**plateau** *noun*, a high, steep-sided area rising above the surrounding land

**climate** *noun*, the type of weather a place has over a long period of time

**equator** *noun*, the imaginary line around the middle of the Earth



### After You Read

**REVIEW** What questions do geographers ask?

Underline two sentences that tell the answer.

**REVIEW** What is climate?

Circle the sentence that tells the answer.