

# Summary: The Land and Its Resources

## Geography of the United States

The United States has many landforms. In the East, the Appalachian Mountains stretch from Maine to Alabama. The Rocky Mountains are in the west. Other ranges stretch along the Pacific coast.

There are wide plains across the center of the nation. Rivers from this area flow into the Mississippi River. This is the nation's longest river. The Great Lakes are north 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, computers, desks, and books in your school are capital resources. Human resources are people who use their skills and knowledge in their work.

Both consumers face the problem of scarcity. This means that people must make choices. For example, say your class has enough money either to go on a trip or to buy a new computer. An opportunity cost of going on the trip is not buying the computer.

Countries make the same kinds of choices. A nation's economic system helps countries decide how people use resources and produce goods.



### 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 all the things people want

**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



### After You Read

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

Underline two sentences that tell the answer.

**REVIEW** What is an economic system? Draw a box around the sentence that tells what an economic system is.