

Summary: Climate and Resources

Natural Wealth

Rich natural resources have influenced the economic development of the United States and Canada. Farmlands and prairies with fertile soil, valuable forests, oil fields, and coal have helped to make these two countries leaders in the global economy.

Trade between the United States and Canada is more than \$1 billion a day. The two countries work together on national security and defense, the environment, air traffic, and fishing regulations.

Climate and Vegetation

When people decide where to live and work, they consider several things about the area. One of those things is what water resources are available. Settlers in North America followed rivers to areas where fresh water and fertile soil were good for farming. Businesses grew in these communities.

Another important thing people consider is the region's weather, or climate. The weather affects what types of vegetation people will be able to grow there. Weather includes temperature, wind, and precipitation.

The United States and Canada have a wide variety of vegetation zones. These zones are determined by the climate and physical geography of each area. The polar and tundra regions of Canada and Alaska have cool summers and cold winters. Much of the ground is frozen all year. Evergreen and broadleaf forests cover much of Canada and parts of the United States. Precipitation in these regions averages between 12 and 40 inches a year. Temperatures range from mild to cold in different forested areas. Along the Pacific Coast, rain forests are home to trees that are 300 feet tall. Precipitation can be as much as 167 inches a year and temperatures are moderate. Grasslands cover the center of North America. Some areas have tall, thick grass and get 30 or more inches of precipitation. Others have shorter grass with less precipitation. There, people can grow grain and raise cattle. The deserts of the American Southwest get less than 10 inches of precipitation. Plants must be able to stand sun, heat, and lack of precipitation.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

weather *noun*, the state of the atmosphere near Earth at a given time and place

precipitation *noun*, moisture, such as rain or snow, that falls to Earth

climate *noun*, the typical weather in a region over a long period of time

vegetation *noun*, trees, shrubs, grasses, and other plants

economy *noun*, the way businesses use resources to provide the goods and services that people want



After You Read

REVIEW How do climate and geography influence why people move to an area? Highlight the sentences that answer this question.

REVIEW What common interests make the United States and Canada allies and partners? Draw a box around the paragraph that answers this question.

REVIEW List some important natural resources of the United States and Canada. Circle four natural resources of the United States and Canada.