

Summary: Our Country's Geography

Traveling West to East

The West begins with the coast next to the Pacific Ocean. The West has mountain ranges. There are the Coast Ranges and the Sierra Nevada mountains. Between these two mountain ranges is the Central Valley. East of the Sierra Nevada is the Basin and Range. This land is desert and mountains. The hottest place in the country, Death Valley, is there.

The Colorado Plateau has mountains and canyons. The Grand Canyon is in the west. The Rocky Mountains are east of the Grand Canyon.

The Central United States

East of the Rocky Mountains the land is flatter than in the West. Rivers, lakes, and plains are the main features of the central United States. The Great Plains is a large region of dry grasslands. Farther east, the Central Plains have forests. To the south, the Gulf Coastal Plain is low and flat. The Mississippi River is more than 2,000 miles long. It flows south into the Gulf of Mexico. Far to the north, the five big lakes of the Great Lakes are the largest body of fresh water on the earth.

Eastern Mountains and Plains

The East is an area of mountains, hills, plains, and rivers. The Appalachian Mountains run from Maine to Georgia. The Atlantic Coastal Plain has plains, beaches, and wetlands. The Everglades are large wetlands in Florida. The East ends at the Atlantic Ocean.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

coast *noun*, the land next to the ocean

desert *noun*, a dry area where little rain falls and few plants grow

region *noun*, an area that shares one or more features



After You Read

REVIEW Name three landforms in the western part of our country. Underline the names of landforms in the West.

REVIEW In what way is the central part of the country different from the western part? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW Describe some of the main features of the eastern part of the country. Draw a box around the sentences that tell about the East.