POLITICAL & CULTURAL
GEOGRAPHY OF THE
NORTH AMERICA

Lesson 7
Ms. Francis
Social Studies

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Section 1

LANDFORMS

• The western mountains of North America are called the ___________ Ranges.
• They include Mount McKinley, in Alaska, which is the highest point on the North American continent.
• The ___________ Mountains like the United States and Canada and stretch northwest from New Mexico to Alaska.
• Dry basins and plateaus, featuring Death Valley and the Grand Canyon fill in the area between the mountain ranges.

LANDFORMS (2)

• East of the Rocky Mountains, the land falls and flattens into the great ___________, which extend across the of North America.
• North America’s oldest mountain chain, the Appalachians, extends from Quebec, Canada to Alabama.
• The Canadian Shield, a giant core of rock, makes up the eastern half of Canada and the northeastern United States.

LANDFORMS (3)

• North American ___________ include Manhattan, home to a major world cultural and financial center, in the northeast.
• The Hawaiian islands in the Pacific are volcanic mountaintops.
• Greenland, the world’s largest island, if just off the coast of Canada’s Ellesmore island.
A FORTUNE IN WATER

- The high ridge of the Rockies is called the ____________.
- Water flows from the west of the Divide toward the Pacific Ocean and east of the Divide into the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.
- One of North America’s longest rivers, the Mississippi flows 2,350 miles from its source.
- It begins in Minnesota as a stream and ends as a broad river that empties into the Gulf of Mexico.
- It drains all or part of 31 states and is one of the world’s busiest commercial waterways.

A FORTUNE IN WATER (2)

- The St. Lawrence River, one of Canada’s most important rivers forms part of the United States-Canada border.
- The major Canadian cities of Quebec, Montreal, and Ottawa developed along the ____________ River and its tributaries.
- Niagara Falls, located on a river connecting Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, is a major source of hydroelectric power for Canada and the United States.

A FORTUNE IN WATER (3)

- Glacial dams created Canada’s Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake.
- The Superior, Erie, Michigan, Ontario, and Huron – are basins created by glacial activity.
- The St. Lawrence Seaway is a network that connects the great lakes with the Atlantic Ocean.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- ____________. An abundance of resources, such as fossil fuels and minerals, has contributed to the prosperity of the United States and Canada.
- ____________. Gold, silver, and copper are found in the Rocky Mountains. Nickel and iron are mined in parts of the Canadian shield.
- Deposits of low-grade iron ore exist in northern Minnesota and Michigan.
- Canada supplies much of the world’s copper and silver.

NATURAL RESOURCES (2)

- ____________. Today, forests cover less than 50 percent of Canada and just 30% of the United States.
- Commercial loggers face the challenge of harvesting trees while preserving the remaining forests.
- ____________. The coastal waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Gulf of Mexico are important sources of fish and other sea animals.
- Some areas around the U.S. and Canada are off-limits due to overfishing.

CLIMATE & VEGETATION

Section 2
A VARIED REGION

• Two-thirds of Canada and the U.S. state of Alaska experience long, cold winters, and brief mild summers.
• Most of the continental U.S. and the southern part of Canada enjoy temperate climates, depending on their elevation.
• _____________, in the south pacific, has a tropical climate.

NORTHERN CLIMATES

• Large parts of Canada and Alaska lie in a ________________ climate zone with very cold winters and extensive coniferous forests.
• Winter temperatures can fall as low as -70°F
• Bitter winters and cool summers in the tundra along the arctic coastline make the area unsuitable for most plants and people.
• Greenland boasts only a few ice-free areas with some extremely hardy trees.

WESTERN CLIMATES

• _________________ West Coast. A marine west coast climate brings nearly 100 inches of rainfall every year to the Pacific coast from California to southern Alaska.
• This amount of precipitation, combined with cool temperatures, is ideal for coniferous forests, ferns, and mosses.
• _________________, Basins, and Deserts. The region between the Pacific Ranges and the Rocky Mountains includes deserts and steppes.
• The weather is hot & dry. Cacti and wildflowers bloom during the brief spring rains.
• Elevation gives the higher reaches of the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Ranges a highland climate.

INTERIOR CLIMATES

• _________________, or naturally treeless expanses of grasses, spread across North America’s midsection.
• The _________________, or _________________
  When farmers settled the Great Plains, they plowed up the sod formed by prairie grasses, leaving the soil without protection.
  During the 1930’s, several seasons of drought and dry winds blew the soil away, and the area was nicknamed the Dust Bowl.

EASTERN CLIMATES

• The southeastern United States, with a humid subtropical climate, has mild winters, and long, muggy summers.
• Much of the original deciduous forest has been cleared for agriculture.
• Wetlands and swamps shelter a great variety of plants and animals.
• Every summer, the region prepares for _________________.
• The northeastern U.S. have a humid continental climate with bands of deciduous and mixed forestland.
• Much of this area is prone to winter _________________—snowstorms with high winds, heavy or blowing snow, and little visibility.

TROPICAL CLIMATES

• Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the southern tip of Florida have _________________ climates.
• Southern Florida has a tropical savanna area, and both Hawaii and Puerto Rico have tropical rain forests.
STUDENT OBJECTIVES

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CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

Section 3

THE PEOPLE

• North America’s first immigrants may have come from Asia thousands of years ago; because they were the first settlers, they are called ________________________
• In recent centuries, people have immigrated to North America from all parts of the world for various reasons – religious or political freedom, economic or educational opportunities.

THE CITIES

• Today, most people in the U.S. and Canada live in ________________________ areas.
• Many population centers in both countries lie in coastal areas where healthy economies support large populations.
• A chain of cities stretching along the northern Atlantic coast of the U.S. – Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. – is home to about 42 million people.

THE CITIES (2)

• Other important U.S. coastal cities include the busy ports of Miami, New Orleans, and Houston.
• Vancouver, a year round warm-water port, is the largest in British Columbia and handles nearly all the trade between Canada and Asia.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

• Canada is larger in ________________________ than the United States, but it has fewer ________________________
• About 90 percent of Canadians live in a narrow strip of land along the U.S.-Canada border
• In the U.S., the northeast, Great Lakes, and the Pacific coast regions are the most densely populated areas.
• Since the 1970’s, the American South and Southwest, including California, have become the country's fastest growing areas.
THE CITIES (3)

- Important cities in North America are located on rivers or lakes.
- These waterways offered both natural resources and transportation routes that contributed to the region's economic growth.
- Major inland cities include Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa in Canada, and Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh in the United States.
- Other inland cities – Dallas, Atlanta, Denver, and San Antonio, in the U.S. – grew from agricultural or trading centers.

THE CITIES (4)

- Because of the low birthrates in Canada and the United States, most population growth in this region comes from migration.
- As immigration adds to the population diversity, living with cultural differences and managing urban congestion are ongoing challenges.

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Section 4

HISTORY

- The lifestyles of Native Americans were shaped by location and climate.
- Native Americans of the cold Arctic tundra hunted animals, while those in temperate areas grew crops and hunted.
- By the late 1500's, Europeans had begun migrating to North America in search of farmland, valuable minerals, and freedom.
- The English colonized what is now southwestern and southern U.S., the English settled along the Atlantic coast, and the French came to northern areas for fur trade.

HISTORY (2)

- The middle Atlantic coastal area provided fertile soil and plenty of game.
- The English settlers there thrived and raised cash crops for trade.
- Plantation owners in the South used enslaved Africans to provide the labor for large-scale farming.

HISTORY (3)

- In the late 1700's British colonies along the Atlantic coast fought a successful war of independence, which created the U.S.
- In 1867, other British North American colonies formed the Dominion of Canada, a self-governing nation within the British empire.
- By the mid-1800's, the U.S. had expanded westward across the North American continent to the Pacific coast.
HISTORY (4)

- ________ was the biggest transformation throughout the U.S. and Canada during the 1800’s.
- The waterfalls of the northeastern United States were good sources of power for factories.
- Coal from the Midwestern states powered steam engines.
- Rivers and lakes throughout the central part of the continent provided easy transport for manufactured goods.

HISTORY (5)

- ________, the raw material of the textile industry became more and more profitable.
- By the 1800’s, the demand for cotton increased the demand for ________ workers.
- Disputes over slavery led to the United States Civil war of 1861-1865.

HISTORY (6)

- The completion of the ________ railroads in the late 1800’s in both Canada and the U.S. led to the increased settlement of the West.
- Thousands of ________ were hired to build the railroads.

GOVERNMENT

- The United States is a ________ with a federal system of government.
- In a federal system, the national government shares power with the state and provincial governments.
- The American plan of government is set in the ________, drafted in 1787.
- Over the years, ________ to the Constitution have been made to meet the country’s changing needs.
- The national government is made of ________ branches — executive, legislative, and judicial.

GOVERNMENT (2)

- Canada is a ________ with a federal system that includes a national government and various provinces and territories.
- The British ________, represented by a Canadian governor-general, is Canada’s ceremonial head of state.
- The Prime Minister, who heads the majority party in parliament is the actual head of government.
- Canada became independent from the United Kingdom in 1931.