

SS#12

SS#12



319 S. Naperville Road, Wheaton, IL 60187
Phone: (630) 580-5735 Fax: (630) 653-8666
Website: www.questionsgalore.net E-Mail: info@quesitonsgalore.net

STUDY GUIDE

STUDY GUIDES: U.S. GEOGRAPHY, Part I

This first study guide on U.S. Geography will be a general overview of our country. It will deal with the land features, rivers, lakes, comparative sizes, and basic facts. Later parts will deal with more specific information on individual states.

MOUNTAINS

1. Rocky Mountains--These are the highest and broadest mountains in our country. They extend from Central America, through the western part of our country, and into Canada to Alaska. They are not a single mountain range, but are composed of:

- The Front Range in Colorado
- The Grand Tetons in Wyoming
- The Wasatch in Utah
- The Sawtooth in Idaho
- The Brooks Range in Alaska

ROCKY MOUNTAIN STATES: States most often grouped as the Rocky Mountain States include: Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. Nevada is sometimes included in this group, but is mainly known for the Great Basin. Although the Rockies extend into Alaska, Alaska is usually grouped with The Pacific Coast States.

MOST OF THE HIGHEST PEAKS IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS ARE FOUND IN COLORADO, IN THE FRONT RANGE SECTION. The highest peak in Colorado is Mount Elbert (14,433 feet). However, Pike's Peak in Colorado (14,410 feet) is visited more frequently.

The Rocky Mountains form the Continental Divide. This range of peaks separates the rivers that flow west to the Pacific Ocean from those that flow east toward the Atlantic.

2. Appalachian Mountains--These mountains are located in the eastern part of our country. They are older, with more rounded peaks, and less elevation than the Rockies. They are also composed of several ranges:

Mountain Ranges within the Appalachian Mountains:

Green Mountains in Vermont
White Mountains in New Hampshire
Catskill Mountains in New York
Blue Ridge Mountains in Pennsylvania, Virginia,
Maryland, West Virginia
Allegheny Mountains in the same states as the Blue
Ridge Mountains, but farther west
Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and North
Carolina (a few in Kentucky and South
Carolina)
Cumberland Mountains in Virginia, West Virginia,
and Alabama

The highest peak in New England is in the White Mountains:

Mount Washington in New Hampshire (6,288 feet)

The highest peak in the Appalachian Mountains:

Mount Mitchell (6,684 feet) in North Carolina

The upland section of foothills to the east of the
Appalachian Mountains is called the PIEDMONT.

3. Ozark Plateau--These high plains and short mountains are located mainly throughout the states of Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. A slight edge extends into Illinois.
Main Mountain Ranges in the Ozarks:
Ouachita in Arkansas and slightly into Oklahoma
Boston Mountains in Arkansas
4. Coastal Ranges--These mountains stretch from Southern California to northern Washington, near the Pacific Coast.
5. Cascade Range--This range is located in Washington and Oregon.
High peaks in this range:
Mount Ranier in Washington (Highest peak in the Cascades with an altitude of 14,410 feet. It's a dormant volcano.)
Mount St. Helen's in Washington
Crater Lake in Oregon
Mount Shasta
Mount Hood
6. Sierra Nevada--This range is located mainly in California.
7. Brooks Range--This range is located in northern Alaska.
8. Alaska Range--Located in the southern section of Alaska, this range contains MOUNT MCKINLEY, WHICH IS THE HIGHEST PEAK IN NORTH AMERICA, AND THEREFORE, THE HIGHEST PEAK IN THE UNITED STATES. ELEVEN OF THE HIGHEST PEAKS IN AMERICA

ARE LOCATED IN THE STATE OF ALASKA!

BODIES OF WATER

RIVERS:

1. Mississippi River--The largest river (according to its volume of water) in our country. However, the Missouri River and the Mackenzie River are actually longer in length.
Source: Lake Itasca in Minnesota
Mouth: Gulf of Mexico (Louisiana)
The river has about 250 tributaries. Main tributaries:
Missouri River, Ohio River, Red River, Arkansas River

Main Cities on the Mississippi River: Minneapolis, Minnesota--St. Paul, Minnesota--LaCrosse, Wisconsin--Dubuque, Iowa--Keokuk, Iowa--Quincy, Illinois--Hannibal, Missouri--St. Louis, Missouri--Memphis, Tennessee--Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana

2. Missouri River-- Main tributary of the Mississippi River.
Source: Three Forks, Montana, where the Jefferson, Gallatin, and Madison Rivers join.
Mouth: Mississippi River, near St. Louis, Missouri
It flows through Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota to Sioux City, Iowa where it turns south and becomes the boundary between Nebraska and Kansas on the west, and Iowa and Missouri on the east.

Main cities on the Missouri River: Sioux City, Iowa--Omaha, Nebraska--Council Bluffs, Iowa--Kansas City, Missouri--St. Joseph, Missouri

3. Ohio River--Major tributary of the Mississippi River
Source: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where the Allegheny and the Monongahela Rivers join
Mouth: Mississippi River at Cairo, Illinois
It flows westward, forming the boundaries between Ohio, West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky, Indiana and Kentucky, and Illinois and Kentucky.

Tributaries of the Ohio River include the Tennessee River, Wabash, and Kentucky Rivers.

Main Cities on the Ohio River: Cincinnati, Ohio--Evansville, Illinois--Wheeling, West Virginia--Louisville, Kentucky

4. Arkansas River--One of the tributaries of the Mississippi

Source: Sawatch Range of the Rocky Mountains in
Colorado

Mouth: Mississippi River

The Arkansas River carved out the Royal Gorge, in
Colorado, where the highest bridge in our country is located.
It flows through Kansas, Oklahoma, and then merges into
the Mississippi River just above Arkansas City, Arkansas.

5. Colorado River--The longest river west of the Rocky Mountains.

Source: Northern Colorado, just west of the
Continental Divide

Mouth: Gulf of California

It flows through Colorado and into Southeast Utah, where
it joins the Green River, which is its main tributary.
It forms the boundary between Arizona and Nevada and
California. Near Yuma, Arizona, it turns into Mexico,
and then empties into the Gulf of California.

The Colorado River carved out the Grand Canyon in
Arizona.

Main tributaries of the Colorado River: Green River,
Gunnison River in Colorado, San Juan River in Utah,
Little Colorado and Gila Rivers in Arizona.

There are 7 states that are drained by the Colorado River
and its tributaries: Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah,
Arizona, New Mexico, and California

HOOVER DAM--Built on the Colorado River.

Creates Lake Mead, one of the largest
artificial lakes in the world, located
on the Arizona, Nevada border.

6. Rio Grande River--Forms the boundary between Texas and Mexico.

Source: Rocky Mountains of Colorado

Mouth: Gulf of Mexico near Brownsville, Texas.

7. Columbia River--A major river in Northwestern America.

Source: Columbia Lake in British Columbia, Canada.

Mouth: Pacific Ocean

It flows mainly through Washington state, and forms the
boundary between Washington and Oregon.

Main tributary: Snake River (from Idaho)

GRAND COULEE DAM (in Washington) and BONNEVILLE DAM were
built on the Columbia River to provide power and
irrigation.

8. Connecticut River--Longest river in New England

Source: Connecticut Lakes of New Hampshire
Mouth: Long Island Sound
It forms the boundary between New Hampshire and Vermont, and crosses Massachusetts and Connecticut before emptying into Long Island Sound.

9. Niagara River--Located between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The river drops from one lake to the next to form Niagara Falls, a major tourist attraction used as a source of hydroelectric power.
10. Hudson River--Most important river of the Middle Atlantic Region.
Source: Adirondack Mountains
Mouth: New York Bay
This river in New York, was connected to Lake Erie by the Erie Canal in 1825.
11. Potomac River--The river on which Washington, D.C. is located. It empties into Chesapeake Bay.
12. Tennessee River--Important river in the southeast. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) built dams to help control flooding. The river is now navigable from Knoxville, Tennessee to Paducah, Kentucky, where it joins the Ohio River as a tributary.
13. Yukon River--largest river in Alaska

OTHER RIVERS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH MAINLY ONE STATE:

Platte River, Nebraska
Snake River, Idaho
Mohawk River, New York
Humbolt River, Nevada
Sacramento River, California
Willamette River, Oregon
Yellowstone River, Wyoming
Wabash River, Indiana
James River, Virginia

LAKES:

1. Great Salt Lake (near Salt Lake City, Utah)

Located within the Great Basin, this lake has no streams flowing outward from it. It is 23% salt, with the main ingredient being sodium chloride. It is the largest lake in

America, outside of the Great Lakes.

2. The Great Lakes

This group of 5 lakes straddle the border between Canada and the United States, with Lake Michigan being the ONLY GREAT LAKE THAT IS ENTIRELY WITHIN THE BOUNDARY OF THE UNITED STATES. They are jointly controlled by the U.S. and Canada, and they are (when considered collectively) the largest body of fresh water in the world.

From west to east, the lakes are named: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario.

Lake Superior is the largest of the 5 Great Lakes, and is also THE LARGEST FRESH WATER LAKE IN THE WORLD. It is deeper and higher than the other 4 Great Lakes. It borders Ontario, Canada to its north and east. To its south and west it borders the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Duluth, Wisconsin is an important U.S. port on this lake.

Lake Michigan is the third largest of the Great Lakes, and the largest freshwater lake that is located entirely within the borders of the United States. It borders the states of Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Important port cities are Chicago, Illinois, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Lake Huron is the second largest of the Great Lakes, and is located between Ontario, Canada, and Michigan.

Lake Erie is the fourth largest of the Great Lakes. It borders Ontario, Canada to its north, and the states of Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan. Important port cities are Detroit, Michigan, Erie, Pennsylvania, Buffalo, New York, and Cleveland, Ohio.

Lake Ontario is the smallest of the Great Lakes, and has the lowest elevation. It borders Ontario, Canada to the north, and the state of New York to the south. An important port city is Rochester, New York.

3. Crater Lake

Located in Oregon, this is the deepest lake in the United States. It was formed in the crater of a volcano.

4. Lake Champlain

Located between New York and Vermont, it was named after the person who discovered it, Samuel de Champlain.

5. Lake Okeechobee

This large lake in Florida is located at the northern section of the Everglades.

6. Lake Tahoe

This lake is located on the border between California and Nevada.

7. Lake Itasca

This Minnesota lake is the source of the Mississippi River.

STATISTICAL TRIVIA

5 LARGEST STATES (According to land area)

1. Alaska
2. Texas
3. California
4. Montana
5. New Mexico

THE SMALLEST STATE: RHODE ISLAND

THE NEXT TO THE SMALLEST STATE: DELAWARE

STATE #25 IN SIZE (Exactly in the middle) ILLINOIS

5 MOST POPULOUS CITIES IN AMERICA

1. New York City, New York
2. Los Angeles, California
3. Chicago, Illinois
4. Houston, Texas
5. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

NORTHERNMOST POINT IN THE UNITED STATES: Point Barrow, Alaska

EASTERNMOST POINT: West Quoddy Head, Maine

SOUTHERNMOST POINT: Ka Lae (South Cape), Hawaii

WESTERNMOST POINT: Pochnoi Point, Alaska

LOWEST POINT IN THE COUNTRY: Death Valley, California

TALLEST BUILDING: Sear's Tower, Chicago, Illinois

LONGEST BRIDGE: Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, New York

HIGHEST BRIDGE: Royal Gorge, Colorado

OLDEST NATIONAL PARK: Yellowstone (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming)

LARGEST NATIONAL PARK: Wrangell-St. Elias, Alaska

HIGHEST WATERFALL IN AMERICA (And also in all of North America):
Ribbon Falls, Yosemite National Park

STATE HAVING THE MOST LAND OWNED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:
Alaska

STATE WITH THE MOST MILES OF COASTLINE: Alaska

THE STATE CAPITAL HAVING THE LARGEST POPULATION: Phoenix, AZ

OLDEST CITY IN THE COUNTRY: St. Augustine, FL

AMERICA'S LARGEST RIVER GORGE: Grand Canyon, AZ

LARGEST STATE EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER: Georgia

LARGEST CITY ON THE GREAT LAKES: Chicago, Illinois

STATE LOCATED CLOSEST TO THE EQUATOR: Hawaii

5 DESERTS IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST:

1. Mojave--California
2. Great Basin--Nevada
3. Chihuahuan--Arizona
4. Painted Desert--Arizona
5. Sonoran--New Mexico