

# GEOGRAPHY STUDY GUIDE

**Geography** - the study of the earth and the way people live on it and use it

**Continent** - large body of land that is surrounded by water

There are seven continents.

1. North America
2. South America
3. Europe
4. Asia
5. Australia
6. Africa
7. Antarctica

**Ocean** - large body of water that separates the continents

There are four oceans.

1. Atlantic
  - a. served as the highway for explorers, early settlers, and immigrants
  - b. located east of the United States
  - c. has provided access to other areas of the world
2. Pacific
  - a. an early exploration route
  - b. located west of the United States
  - c. has provided access to other areas of the world
3. Indian
4. Arctic

**River** - large stream of water that empties into an ocean or lake or another river

There are several rivers in the United States. Here are a few.

1. Mississippi River
  - a. transportation artery for farm and industrial products
  - b. links to ports and other parts of the world
  - c. flows through the Interior Lowlands into the Gulf of Mexico
  - d. longest and most important river system
2. Missouri River
  - a. transportation artery for farm and industrial products
  - b. links to ports and other parts of the world
  - c. flows through the Great Plains, the Interior Lowlands into the Mississippi River
  - d. longest and most important river system
3. Ohio River
  - a. was the Gateway to the west
  - b. flows into the Mississippi River

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4. Columbia River
  - a. explored by Lewis and Clark
  - b.
5. Colorado River
  - a. explored by the Spanish
  - b.
6. Rio Grande River
  - a. forms the border with Mexico
  - b. .

**Lake** - body of water surrounded by land

There are many lakes in the United States.

The **Great Lakes** are significant to the United States.

- a. there are five Great Lakes
- b. inland port cities grew in the Midwest along the Great Lakes
- c. form part of the border between the United States and Canada

**Gulf** - arm of an ocean or sea that is partly enclosed by land, usually larger than a bay

**Gulf of Mexico** is significant to the United States

- a. provided the French and Spanish with exploration routes to Mexico and other parts of America

**Landforms** - shapes of the Earth's surface

1. **Basin** - low-lying land area that is surrounded by land of higher elevation; land area that is drained by a river system
2. **Canyon** - deep, narrow valley with high, steep sides
3. **Desert** - area that has little or no moisture or vegetation
4. **Hill** - area of raised land that is lower and more rounded than a mountain
5. **Mountain** - high, steep, rugged land that rises sharply above the surrounding land
6. **Mountain range** - chain of connected mountains
7. **Plain** - broad area of fairly level land that is generally close to sea level
8. **Plateau** - large area of high, flat, or gently rolling land
9. **Tributary** - stream or small river that flows into a larger stream or river
10. **Valley** - land that lies between hills or mountains

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**Region** - an area of the world that has similar, unifying characteristics

The United States has eight Regions.

1. Coastal Range
  - a. tall, rugged mountains along the Pacific Coast that stretch from Canada to California
  - b. contains fertile valleys
2. Basin and Range
  - a. located east of the Sierra Nevadas and the Cascades and west of the Rocky Mountains
  - b. area of varying elevations (mountain peaks, plateaus, canyons, and deserts) containing isolated mountain ranges and Death Valley, the lowest point in North America
3. Rocky Mountains
  - a. located east of the Basin and Range and west of the Great Plains
  - b. rugged mountains stretching from Alaska to Mexico; high elevations
  - c. contains the Continental Divide, which determines the directional flow of rivers (rivers east of it flow into the Mississippi River and then into the Gulf of Mexico, while rivers west flow into the Pacific Ocean)
  - d. serious barrier for Europeans - crossing the Rockies posed great hardship
4. Great Plains
  - a. located east of the Rocky Mountains and west of the Interior Lowlands
  - b. flat land that gradually increases in elevation westward; grasslands
5. Interior Lowlands
  - a. located east of the Great Plains and west of the Appalachian Mountains
  - b. rolling flatlands with many rivers, broad river valleys and grassy hills
6. Canadian Shield
  - a. wrapped around the Hudson Bay in a horseshoe shape - most of it is located in Canada
  - b. hills worn by erosion and hundreds of lakes carved by glaciers
  - c. holds some of the oldest rock formations in North America
7. Appalachian Mountains
  - a. located west of the Coastal Plains extending from Canada to western Alabama
  - b. old, eroded mountains (oldest mountain range in North America)
  - c. lower and less rugged than the Rockies
8. Coastal Plain
  - a. located along the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico
  - b. broad lowland providing many excellent harbors