



The Diverse American West

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Geography

Grades: 4-6

Background: Although the history of the West often includes every state between the Mississippi River and the Pacific, the geographic region known as "the West" is a 13-state area that contains two subregions, the Pacific and Mountain West.

Objectives: Students will identify the regions of the West and describe their landscape and climate. They will also predict the reasons settlers moved to the West and the problems they faced.

Source: April Smith's Technology Class and Britannica Kids

What's Included?

- Link to original lesson <https://www.aprilsmith.org/lesson-12-the-west-states.html>
- Vocabulary of western geography
- Geography of the West PowerPoint (available on the CILC Maker Space)
- Worksheet pack

Terms to Know

- **border:** a line separating one state or region from another
- **climate:** the usual weather conditions in a particular place or region
- **geometric regions:** regions that connect to each other by straight lines like the Four Corners States of Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico
- **landform:** a natural feature of the Earth's surface
- **physical features:** the types of landforms, bodies of water, climate, trees, plants, soil, and animals in a region
- **subregions:** regions within a larger region
- **basin:** a dip in the surface of the land or ocean floor
- **butte:** a single, flat-topped hill with steep rock walls and the land that surrounds it is level or flat
- **deserts:** a very dry area that gets very little rain and has very few natural water sources
- **cliff:** a steep face of rock and soil
- **flood:** a large amount of water covering an area of land that is usually dry
- **landslide:** a large mass of rocks and earth that suddenly and quickly moves down the side of a mountain or hill
- **lava:** Earth's magma once it has broken the Earth's surface made up of gas, steam, stones, ashes, and melted rock
- **mesa:** high, wide, flat mountains with steep, rock walls that are smaller than plateaus
- **mountains:** a very tall high, natural place on Earth - higher than a hill
- **plateau:** large, flat area of land that is higher than the surrounding land
- **ranges:** a chain of mountains and/or high elevations
- **river:** a large, flowing body of water that usually empties into a sea or ocean
- **sea level:** the level of the surface of the sea that is used to measure how high or low different land forms on Earth are
- **valley:** a low, flat place between mountains
- **volcano:** openings in the Earth's surface where lava is forced through

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Part 1: West Geography Terms

Directions: Define each term below.

border:	climate:
geometric region:	landform:
physical feature:	subregions:
flood:	landslide:
lava:	sea level:

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Part 2: West Landforms

Directions: Define each land form below in the small top box. Draw a picture of the landform in the larger box underneath. Color the landform with colored pencils.

basin:	butte:
desert:	mesa:
plateau:	ranges:

Name: _____

Date: _____

valley:	volcano:

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Part 3: Political Regions

Directions: Political regions are how the nation is divided into states. Label all of the Western States on the map below. Then use a colored pencil to color all of the Mountain West States - green and all of the Pacific West States - orange.

Alaska	Arizona	California	Colorado
Hawaii	Idaho	Montana	Nevada
New Mexico	Oregon	Utah	Washington
Wyoming			

United States of America



Name: _____

Date: _____

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Part 4: Geographical Regions

Directions: Geographical regions are the way a nation is divided into regions that have the same geography and climate. Color each region a different color and label all of the Western Regions, Waters, and Rivers on the map below.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Pacific West | Mountain West | Death Valley | Rocky Mountains |
| Pacific Coast Range | Cascades | Sierra Nevadas | The Great Basin |
| The Grand Canyon | Colorado River | Columbia River | Colorado Plateau |
| Central Valley | Willamette Valley | Mojave Desert | |
- Four Corners States - (*Outline in black marker*)



Name: _____

Date: _____

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Part 5: Reading Maps of the West

Directions: In the following activity, you will use the maps provided to answer questions about the Mountain States Region of the West.



Name: _____

Date: _____

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Questions about the Mountain States

1.) What country borders the Mountain States on the South?

2.) What country borders the Mountain States on the North?

3.) Which Mountain State is farthest south?

4.) Which Mountain State is farthest east?

5.) Which Mountain State is farthest west?

6.) Which two Mountain States are farthest north?

_____, _____,

7.) Which Mountain State borders South Dakota and Nebraska?

8.) Which Mountain State borders Texas, Oklahoma, and Mexico?

9.) Which Mountain State borders only other Mountain States?

10.) What is the name of the mountain range that runs through the Mountain States?

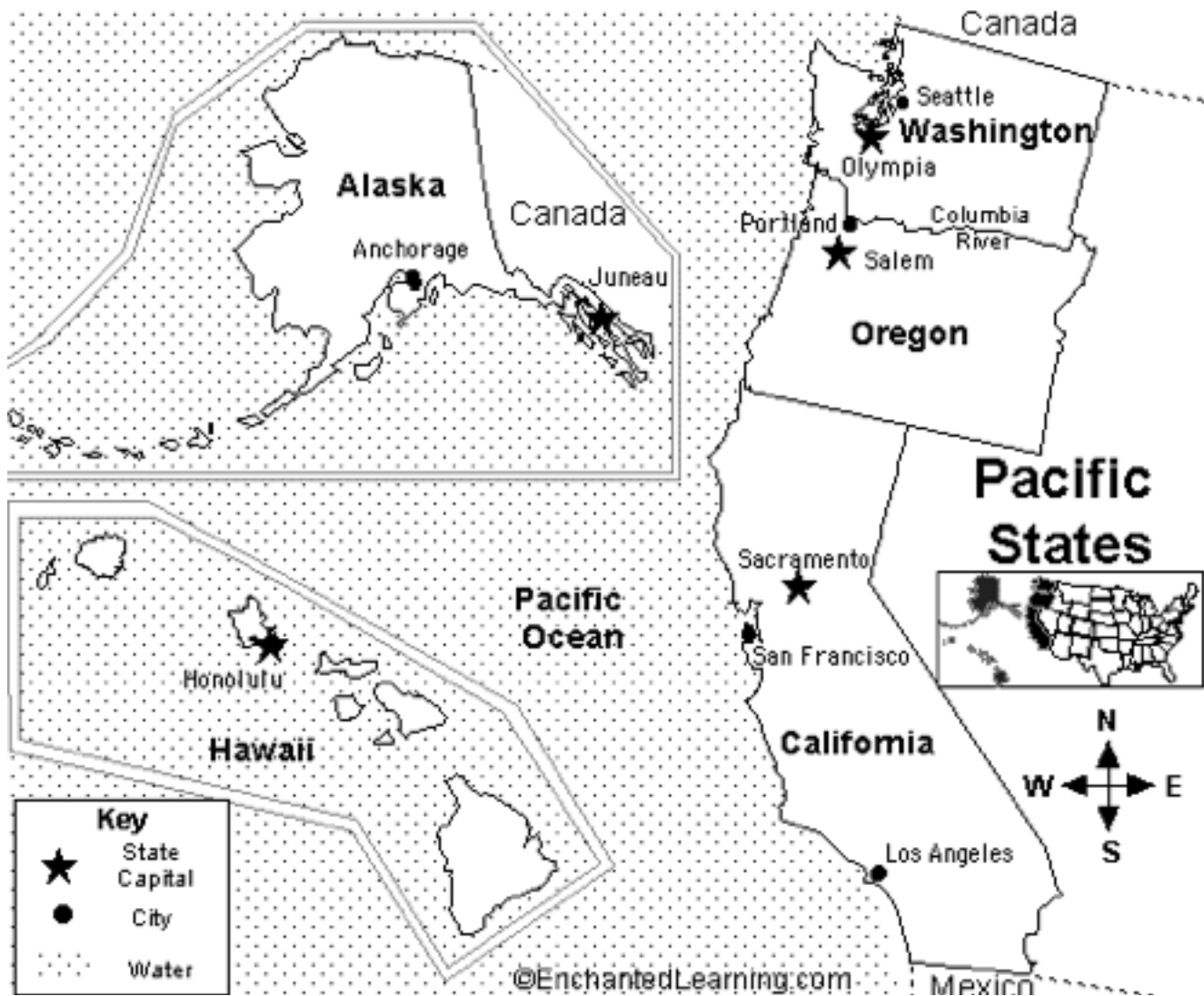
Name: _____

Date: _____

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Part 5 Continued: Reading Maps of the West

Directions: In the following activity, you will use the maps provided to answer questions about the Pacific States Region of the West.



Name: _____

Date: _____

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Questions about the Pacific States

1.) What large body of water do all of the Pacific states border?

2.) What country is north of Washington (and east of Alaska)?

3.) What country is south of California?

4.) What state is composed only of islands?

5.) If you crossed the Columbia River from Washington, what state would you be in?

6.) In which state is the city of San Francisco?

7.) Which state borders Canada but does not border any US states?

8.) In which state is the city of Seattle?

9.) Is Oregon north or south of California?

10.) Is Anchorage southeast or northwest of Juneau?

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Part 6: Geographical Regions

Directions: You have now learned about the West's geography and climate. Use what you have learned to answer the following questions in PQA format.

- 1.) Based on the geography and climate of the West, why do you think people moved there in the 1800s and early 1900s?

- 2.) How do you think the environment affected the everyday lives of the people who moved there? For example: What kinds of jobs did people have? What did they do for fun? How did they use the land to make things?

- 3.) What hardships do you think settlers faced because of the environment, landscape, and climate? Why?
