

Manifest Mountains

Purpose

Students will explain the importance of the major mountain ranges and the major river systems in the development of the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; they will also analyze geographic factors that have influenced migration and settlement patterns and relate them to the economic development of the United States.

Materials

For each student: copy of Black Line Master (BLM) *Newsflash*, pencil
For the class: wall map of the United States, information resources on the history of different regions of the United States

Activity

A. Locating Important Features

1. Ask students to identify some major mountain ranges and river systems in the United States. Pull down the wall map and point out the locations of these features.
2. Ask students to think about the different ways in which these mountains and rivers influenced the development of the United States. Discuss students' responses.

B. Mountains

1. Describe the ways in which mountain ranges slowed or restricted development and migration. Mention how mountain ranges kept settlements near coasts in early America.
2. Explain that mountains slowed the progress of settlers moving westward, as well as the construction of roads and railroads.
3. Tell students that population density remained low in mountainous regions due to lack of level ground for development, poor farmland, and transportation difficulties.
4. Explain that mineral resources, such as coal in the Appalachians and gold in the Rockies, have influenced the development and economy of these regions.
5. Describe how, especially recently, people have been going to mountainous areas for recreational reasons.

C. Rivers

1. Tell students that rivers have had a tremendous influence on the settlement patterns and economy of the United States.

(continued)



INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY

Obtain a camcorder and have students videotape their peers' newscasts. Have them use editing software to produce a newscast incorporating all the reports and broadcast it to the whole school.



connecting across the curriculum

Science

Have students research the formation of gold and coal and answer the following questions: "What are gold and silver made of? Where are they found? What forces created them? How long ago did they form? How are they mined?"

Standards Links
8.3.5, 8.3.8, 8.3.9

Activity (continued)

2. Explain that in early America, rivers were the superior form of transportation, allowing easier transport of larger quantities of goods than the rough roads and trails of that time.
3. Describe how the fertile soil along rivers attracted farmers and the use of flatboats eased the task of sending goods to market.
4. Explain how rivers helped industry develop by providing transportation routes and power to early industrial mills located along rivers.
5. Name some ways rivers slowed progress, such as flood damage and the need for bridges and dams.
6. Tell students that rivers are still important for transportation and hydroelectric power, as well as a water supply to many cities.

D. News Flash

1. Divide students into small groups and give each group a copy of the BLM *Newsflash*.
2. Assign each group to one of the five areas listed on the BLM.
3. Read the BLM directions aloud and answer any questions.
4. After groups have completed their research and prepared their information, allow each group to air its newscast for the class.

Questions for Review

Basic Concepts and Processes

As part of a wrap-up discussion, ask students questions such as:

 Do rivers and mountains have more or less influence on people today than they did in the past?

 How have the uses of rivers and mountains changed since the early years of the United States?

 How will rivers and mountains influence our country in the future?

 Name a renewable resource found in rivers and mountains.

 Name a nonrenewable resource found in rivers and mountains.

 How are some renewable resources becoming nonrenewable?

Name: _____

Newsflash

Directions: Your group is a team of news reporters doing a story on the history of the area you have been assigned to cover. Your report briefly covers the area from the time the first white settlers arrived until the present. Research the area and prepare your newscast. Everyone in the group must give part of the report. Once your report is prepared, you will present it to the rest of the class.

Group One: You are investigating how the Ohio River has influenced the development of southern Indiana.

Group Two: You are investigating how the Appalachian Mountains have influenced the development of West Virginia.

Group Three: You are investigating how the Mississippi River has influenced New Orleans, Louisiana.

Group Four: You are investigating how the Rocky Mountains have influenced the development of western Colorado.

Group Five: You are investigating how the Columbia River has influenced the development of northern Oregon.



Newsflash

Teacher Directions

Divide students into small groups and give each group a copy of the BLM *Newsflash*. Assign each group to one of the five areas listed on the BLM. Read the BLM directions aloud and answer any questions. Allow groups to do their research. After groups have completed their research and prepared their information, allow each group to air its newscast for the class.

Answer Key

Not applicable.