

# *The Southeast Region of the United States*

## Teacher's Guide

**Grade Level:** 5-8

**Curriculum Focus:** Geography

**Lesson Duration:** Five class periods

### **Program Description**

*The Southeast Region of the United States* – The Southeast Region of the United States is steeped in a rich, sometimes tragic history that lends the region a certain timeless quality. Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Gulf of Mexico to the south, the Southeast is composed of fourteen states and the District of Columbia, providing a wide diversity of landscapes: rugged mountains, tangled wilderness, dense forests, fertile fields, sandy beaches, and low-lying swamps. In this program students will discover how the geography and climate of the Southeast have shaped its history and economic development. They will learn how these elements, together with the region's wealth of natural resources, drew the first European explorers and settlers, contributed to the tremendous agricultural success of the region, and have more recently given rise to centers of industry and financial prosperity.

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### **Discussion Questions**

- Which states in the Southeast Region have coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean? Which share the coast along the Gulf of Mexico? Which states are inland?
  - What mineral is a principal natural resource of the Southeast states? How is it used?
  - Why is water a major natural resource in the Southeast? How has its power been harnessed? Who benefits from the hydroelectricity that is generated?
  - What are the principal crops grown in the Southeast? In the past, how was the agricultural success of the region linked to slavery? What was the outcome of this economic dependency on slaves?
  - A growing section of the region's economy is based on lumber. What products are being produced from lumber? What steps are people taking to conserve the region's timber resources?
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### **Lesson Plan**

#### *Student Objectives*

- Identify the states in the Southeast Region.
- Describe the geography and climate of the region.
- Learn about the history of the region.

- Understand how climate, geography, and natural resources have influenced the settlement and development of the Southeast.
- Identify major regional businesses and industries.
- Research George Washington Carver and his contributions to science, agriculture, and industry.
- Make an oral presentation of a Jack tale.
- Prepare a report on a selected state in the Southeast Region.

### ***Materials***

- *The Southeast Region of the United States* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player, or access to the program in downloadable or streaming format online
- Computer with Internet access
- Large map of the United States
- Print resources about the geography, history, landmarks, and agricultural and industrial development of the Southeast Region
- Print resources about George Washington Carver and his contributions to science and agriculture

### ***Procedures***

1. Before students view the program, ask them to locate the following on a large map of the United States: Maryland, Delaware, the District of Columbia, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and Mississippi. Explain that these mark the region of the United States referred to as the Southeast. Ask the following: What do students know about this region of the United States? What can they tell about the geography of the Southeast by looking at the map? What predictions can students make about aspects of the region such as climate, weather, natural resources, and industry?
2. After students view the program, use a map to review the states that make up the Southeast Region and the geographical features (mountains, piedmont, and rivers) that define the region. Review the natural resources (rich soil of the piedmont area, mineral deposits, and water sources) that characterize the Southeast. Discuss how location, geography, and natural resources influenced the settlement of the region and led to the development of agriculture and major industries in the area.
3. Mystery Tour – The Southeast is an intriguing part of the country. Send students on a mystery tour of the region. Ask them to use print and Web resources to locate and learn about places listed below. (All are easily found online.) Students will report back to class with the map location and at least two interesting facts about each item on the list and share their information with the rest of the class in a general discussion. (Extra credit for additional facts.) Have students work alone or in teams.

- “Crab Capitol of the World”
  - Paw Paw Tunnel
  - Vietnam Veterans Memorial
  - Lincoln Memorial
  - Droop Mountain (hint: in the only state born of the Civil War)
  - Luray Caverns
  - Appalachian Trail
  - Colonial National Historical Park
  - Henry House, Henry Hill, Manassas
  - Wilderness Road
  - Dover Hotel (Kentucky)
  - Fort Raleigh National Historic Site
  - Fort Sumter
  - Okefenokee Swamp
  - Everglades National Park
  - Nocalula Waterfall
  - Marshall Space Flight Center
  - Natchez Trace Parkway
  - Winterville Mounds (state park)
  - Acadiana
4. Crop rotation as proposed by George Washington Carver (that is, alternating the cotton crop with others such as the peanut) revolutionized Southern agriculture. The peanut itself became a valuable cash crop. Ask students to brainstorm a list of uses for peanuts. Add the following to their list: paper, instant coffee, and ink. Do these peanut products surprise them? Have students use print and Web resources to further research George Washington Carver’s life and contributions to science and agriculture as well as uses for the peanut. The following Web sites are good places to begin:
- George Washington Carver  
<http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/carver.html>
  - George Washington Carver (links to other good sites as well)  
<http://www.ideafinder.com/history/inventors/carver.htm>
  - Peanut Products  
<http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/washington/web03/person/Peanutproducts.html>

- How to Grow the Peanut and 105 Ways of Preparing it for Human Consumption (by George Carver)  
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/recipes/peanutrecipes.html>
  - George Washington Carver  
<http://www.vision.org/jrnl/0003/carver.html>
5. Once students have completed their research, lead a discussion about Carver and his contributions. Ask the following: Why did the peanut make a good rotational crop? What threat was there to the cotton crops of the South other than depleted soil? What impact did Carver's work have on African Americans? The farmers and economy of the South? The country as a whole? How did leaders throughout the world perceive Carver? Carver was born a slave near the end of (or just following) the Civil War. Ask students to consider what might have happened to Carver, his discoveries and advancements, the Southern cotton industry, and the economic health of the South if the Confederacy had won the war and seceded from the Union. What lessons can be learned from the life and achievements of George Washington Carver?
6. Jack Tales of Appalachia—Once upon a time, oral storytelling was the medium through which people learned their history, settled their arguments, and made sense of the phenomena of their world. Jack tales feature prominently in the oral tradition of Appalachia. Ask students if they are familiar with the story "Jack and the Beanstalk." Ask them to recall highlights of the story. Have they heard of "Jack and the Varmints" or "Soldier Jack"? Explain that Jack has a long history in the folktale tradition, from the ancient Celts to the storytellers of the American Appalachians. Discuss how stories like these came to America. Ask students to use print and Web resources to research Jack tales and find one to tell (not read) to the rest of the class. For longer stories, students may wish to team up, each telling a part of the tale. (Teachers may find it helpful to model the telling of a story.) The following Web site is a good source of Jack tales:
- Jack Tales and Folklore  
<http://www.ibiblio.org/bawdy/folklore/tales.html>
7. Have students use print and Web resources to research a state of their choice in the Southeast. Research should cover history highlights, Native American populations, climate, geography, agriculture, industry, unique features, and places of interest. When students have completed their research, have them prepare reports on their selected states. Required length and complexity of the reports should be based on student age/grade level.

## Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions and conducted all required research; presented a well-prepared Jack tale; produced a complete, insightful report demonstrating thorough research and understanding of the topic.
- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions and conducted most required research; made a satisfactory Jack tale presentation; produced an acceptable report demonstrating sufficient research and general understanding of the topic.

- 1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions and conducted little required research; presented a poorly prepared Jack tale; produced an unsatisfactory report demonstrating inadequate research and poor understanding of the topic.

## Vocabulary

### agriculture

*Definition:* Farming; the occupation, business, or science of cultivating the land, producing crops, and raising livestock

*Context:* In recent decades, manufacturing has begun to replace agriculture as a dominant force in the economy of the Southeastern states.

### conservation

*Definition:* The preservation and careful management of the environment and of natural resources

*Context:* Because the economy of the Southeast is so dependent on natural resources, conservation is an important concern.

### hydroelectricity

*Definition:* Electricity produced by waterpower

*Context:* The Tennessee Valley Authority is one of the biggest producers of hydroelectricity in the Southeast.

### piedmont

*Definition:* In the United States, the plateau between the coastal plain and the Appalachian Mountains, including parts of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama

*Context:* Vegetables, fruit trees, and tobacco are grown in the piedmont area of the Southeast.

### plantation

*Definition:* A large estate or farm, especially in a hot country or region, where crops such as cotton, coffee, tea, or rubber trees are grown

*Context:* Prior to the Civil War, plantations in the Southeast depended on slave labor.

### port

*Definition:* A place (seaport or airport) where people and merchandise can enter or leave a country

*Context:* The port of New Orleans is the busiest port facility in the United States.

### textiles

*Definition:* Artifact made by weaving, felting, knitting or crocheting natural or synthetic fibers

*Context:* The manufacture of textiles, paper, and furniture has replaced agriculture as a dominant force in the economy of the Southeast.

## Academic Standards

### National Council for Geographic Education

The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) provides 18 national geography standards that the geographically informed person knows and understands. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncge.org/publications/tutorial/standards/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following NCGE standards:

- The World in Spatial Terms: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information; How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments
- Places and Regions: The physical and human characteristics of places; That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity
- Human Systems: The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface; The process, patterns, and functions of human settlement
- Environment and Society: How human actions modify the physical environment; How physical systems affect human systems; The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources
- The Uses of Geography: How to apply geography to interpret the past

### Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Geography – The World in Spatial Terms: Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies; Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment
- Geography – Places and Regions: Understands the physical and human characteristics of place; Understands the concept of region
- Geography – Human Systems: Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on Earth's surface; Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes
- Geography – Environment and Society: Understands how human actions modify the physical environment; Understands how physical systems affect human systems; Understands the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources
- Geography – Uses of Geography: Understands how geography is used to interpret the past; Understands global development and environmental issues

- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

### **National Academy of Sciences**

The National Academy of Sciences provides guidelines for teaching science in grades K-12 to promote scientific literacy. To view the standards, visit this Web site:

<http://books.nap.edu/html/nses/html/overview.html#content>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Populations, resources, and environments; Science and technology in society

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### **Support Materials**

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the DiscoverySchool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

<http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>.

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### *Credit*

Patricia A. Peirson, freelance writer; former elementary school and adult ESL educator