

- By 1900, 90% of all African-Americans lived in the South. During the Great Migration, thousands of African Americans moved from southern states to northern states seeking to escape widespread racism and start a new life. Experts estimate that over a million African Americans participated in this mass movement, creating the first large black communities in cities such as Chicago, New York and Cleveland. Students should conduct extensive research and list push-and-pull factors that contributed to the migration, describe the unexpected challenges many African Americans faced after moving to northern cities and investigate the causes of modern population trends that indicate that many African Americans are returning to the South. As an extension, ask students to role-play family members trying to decide whether to move from Montgomery to Chicago during the Great Migration or from New York to Atlanta today. Students may also create Venn diagrams that compare and contrast reasons for migrating at the turn of the century from South to North and today from North to South. More information may be found at the following web site: [www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/cja/greatmigration.html](http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/cja/greatmigration.html)
- Technology has enabled people to live in hazard-prone areas, such as along the San Andreas Fault, but scientists have yet to develop foolproof ways of predicting geologic events such as earthquakes. Ask students to research technologies such as the Global Earthquake Satellite System that are being tested to see if they provide better predictive capability. How does this system work? How confident are scientists that new techniques will be able to determine if an earthquake is imminent? More information may be found at the following web site: [solidearth.jpl.nasa.gov/gess.html](http://solidearth.jpl.nasa.gov/gess.html)
- In 2005, the United States suffered one of its worst natural disasters ever. When Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Central Gulf Coast, the result was human, economic and environmental devastation. Ask students to research predictions that were made by scientists who documented the vulnerability of coastal cities such as New Orleans to this type of tropical storm. Students may map other areas in America that are particularly hurricane-prone. As a follow-up, students may investigate current predictions regarding the increasing severity of hurricanes. What evidence do meteorologists offer to support the theory of an increase in extreme precipitation events? More information may be found at the following web site: [jdm.ou.edu/openblog/weather/C583828718/E343597951/](http://jdm.ou.edu/openblog/weather/C583828718/E343597951/)

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.nps.gov/moja/mojadena.htm](http://www.nps.gov/moja/mojadena.htm)  
The National Park Service's "Mojave National Preserve: North American Deserts" profiles the four desert regions of the continent.
- [users.owt.com/chubbard/gcdam/](http://users.owt.com/chubbard/gcdam/)  
The Grand Coulee Dam's "Columbia Basin Project" provides a historical overview, an extensive photo gallery and information about hydroelectric power generation.
- [history.osu.edu/projects/gilded\\_age/](http://history.osu.edu/projects/gilded_age/)  
Ohio State University offers pictures and texts related to coal mining in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Halpern, Monica. *Railroad Fever: Building the Transcontinental Railroad 1830-1870*. National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.; 2002.
- McKissack, Patricia C. *Color Me Dark: The Diary of Nellie Lee Love, the Great Migration North, Chicago, Illinois, 1919*. Scholastic, Inc., New York, NY; 2000.
- Wepman, Dennis. *Immigration: From the Founding of Virginia to the Closing of Ellis Island*. Facts on File, New York, NY; 2002.

### TEACHER'S GUIDE

Jeffrey W. Litzke, M.Ed.

Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

### TITLES IN THIS SERIES

- ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY
- GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
- HUMAN SYSTEMS
- PHYSICAL SYSTEMS
- PLACES & REGIONS
- THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS

Teacher's Guides Included  
and Available Online at:

800-843-3620



Teacher's Guide and Program Copyright 2006 by Schlessinger Media,

a division of Library Video Company

P.O. Box 580, Wynnewood, PA 19096 • 800-843-3620

Executive Producer: Andrew Schlessinger

Programs produced and directed by JWM Productions, LLC.

All rights reserved.

T0152  
V6292



## GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Grades 5-9

The study of geography brings together various dimensions of Earth, so that we can increase our knowledge of both the physical and human processes that shape the planet. Enhancing geographic literacy with an in-depth analysis of the spatial aspects of human existence provides students with insight into some of the most challenging questions facing Earth. As world population surges past the six billion mark, as globalization intensifies social and economic interconnections and as the physical environment becomes more and more threatened, *Geography for Students* offers students a unique opportunity to grasp their increasingly complex world and gain a better understanding of their place in it.



## Program Summary

Geography is not only about knowing basic facts about an area, it's also about understanding why a place is the way it is. The United States is immense and contains an amazing number of ethnic groups, accents, landscapes and climates. Analyzing regions in the United States such as the Mississippi River Valley, Sunbelt and Pacific Northwest helps geographers to get a better picture of the country as a whole. The human systems of America are constantly changing with the arrival of new immigrants and the blending of cultures. The country's physical systems are also continuously being shaped by processes such as weathering, erosion and natural disasters. Studying these processes and understanding America's regions makes this vast country a much more comprehensible place and allows us to see just how interconnected the people and places of the United States really are.

## Vocabulary

**geography** — The study of the relationship between people and places. Geography includes the landforms, climate, vegetation, population and natural resources of a place.

**formal region** — A geographic area that has common physical characteristics, such as rivers, mountains or crops, or human characteristics, such as a common religion, cultural identity or economic system.

**functional region** — A geographic area that is based on the actions of the people who live within its boundaries and organized around a center or focal point, usually a transportation or communication system, or a shared economy.

**perceptual region** — A geographic area without defined borders that is based on people's feelings and attitudes about a place.

**Great American Desert** — A perceptual region west of the Mississippi River that was considered uninhabitable by European explorers in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**fossil fuels** — Nonrenewable energy resources produced over millions of years by decaying plant and animal remains. Some examples of fossil fuels are coal, oil and natural gas.

**nonrenewable resources** — Materials that are in limited supply or take a very long time to form, such as fossil fuels like coal, oil or natural gas.

**greenhouse gas** — Molecules in Earth's atmosphere that absorb energy from the sun and warm Earth's surface. Important greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, water vapor and methane. Human activities increase the amount of these gases and are thought to contribute to global warming.

**global warming** — An accelerated increase in the surface temperature of Earth. The best scientific explanation for this phenomenon is the buildup of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, due to human activity.

*(Continued)*

**Irish Potato Famine** — A devastating famine that occurred in Ireland from 1845–1849, which was caused by a potato blight epidemic and compounded by British political and economic policies.

**forced migration** — The coerced movement of people away from their indigenous homeland.

**The Trail of Tears** — A term used to describe the brutal, often deadly, forced marches of the Cherokee to lands west of the Mississippi River in the 1830s.

**cultural diffusion** — The spread of cultural traits and ideas from one place to another.

**ethnic enclave** — A geographic area of a city where people of a certain religious, racial or economic background come together.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

- What are the unique physical features of your geographic region? Speculate about how these features are connected to the history, economy and culture of your hometown.
- Brainstorm characteristics and behaviors related to America's "culture of consumption." What motivations and decision strategies do you consider before purchasing something? Describe factors that influence your consumer behavior. Why do you think advertisements directed at young people are so prevalent in American society?
- The population of the United States is characterized by its amazing diversity. Do you consider the population of the United States to be more of a cultural blend — like a "melting pot," or more culturally distinct — like a "salad bowl"?

## Focus Questions

1. In addition to basic facts about a place, what information can geography reveal?
2. Where does the Mississippi River originate? Where does it end?
3. What role did the Mississippi River play in the economic development of the United States?
4. What major cities have developed along the Mississippi River?
5. What is a formal region? Provide an example.
6. What factors influence our perceptions of regions?
7. What was the Great American Desert?
8. How were the Badlands in South Dakota created? The Mississippi Delta?
9. What risks are involved in mining coal?
10. Which nation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the world?

*(Continued)*

11. How much of America's energy is generated by alternative sources such as wind power?
12. Why did many early European immigrants come to America?
13. What is forced migration? Provide an example.
14. What is cultural diffusion?

## Follow-up Discussion

- Throughout American history, waves of immigrants from all over the world have come to the United States in search of a better life. But not all migrations to this country and movements within this country have been by choice. Provide examples of forced migrations from American history and discuss their causes and effects on affected populations.
- The Mississippi River is one of the United States' most prominent physical features. Discuss how the river has affected the physical, cultural and economic development of the country.
- Texas is described as a formal region, a perceptual region and a functional region, all at the same time. What characteristic most defines Texas as a formal region? What are the differences between how the state is perceived by Texans and non-Texans? Provide an example of a functional region within Texas. Discuss other places within the United States that can be considered in this regional context.

## Follow-up Activities

- A term or phrase that is considered bizarre to one person might be the norm to another. Do you call your Aunt "ant" or "ahnt"? When skimming stones, do you toss them into a "creek" or a "crick"? Do you get the attention of your friends by saying "you guys" or "you all"? Ask your class to conduct a "dialect survey" of friends, family and neighbors, determining the way they pronounce various words such as "aunt," "coupon," "pajamas" and "route." As a follow-up, students may research and create fun dictionaries reflecting regional dialects. Dictionaries could be Boston to (standard) English, Chicago to English or Los Angeles to English. Students may speculate about the geographic, historical, social or ethnic factors that helped create these regional dialects.

*(Continued)*