

# Lesson 10

## A Tour of the Southwest

*How have geography and history shaped life in the Southwest?*



## Introduction

Welcome to the Southwest. This region is known for its dry desert climate and rock formations. Already, you can see this region's beautiful landscapes. It's no wonder many moviemakers come here to film!

On this tour, you will visit nine stops. You will stop at big cities and small towns. You will sweat in one of the country's hottest cities and marvel at architectural innovations. This region also has some incredible sights, both manufactured and natural. As you travel, look out for breathtaking views of deserts, canyons, and caves.

The Southwest region is also full of history. You will visit some places that are important to the country's past, and learn about the people who lived here. Have you heard the saying, "Remember the Alamo"? You will learn the history behind this phrase. You will also learn why Oklahoma is nicknamed the "Sooner State."

Get ready to explore your first stop on the tour. Try to stay cool as you visit Arizona.

Canyonlands National Park in Utah is known for its dramatic rock formations shaped by the Colorado River.

## Vocabulary

adapt

aqueduct

border

canyon

capital

cavern

dam

desert

mesa

mission

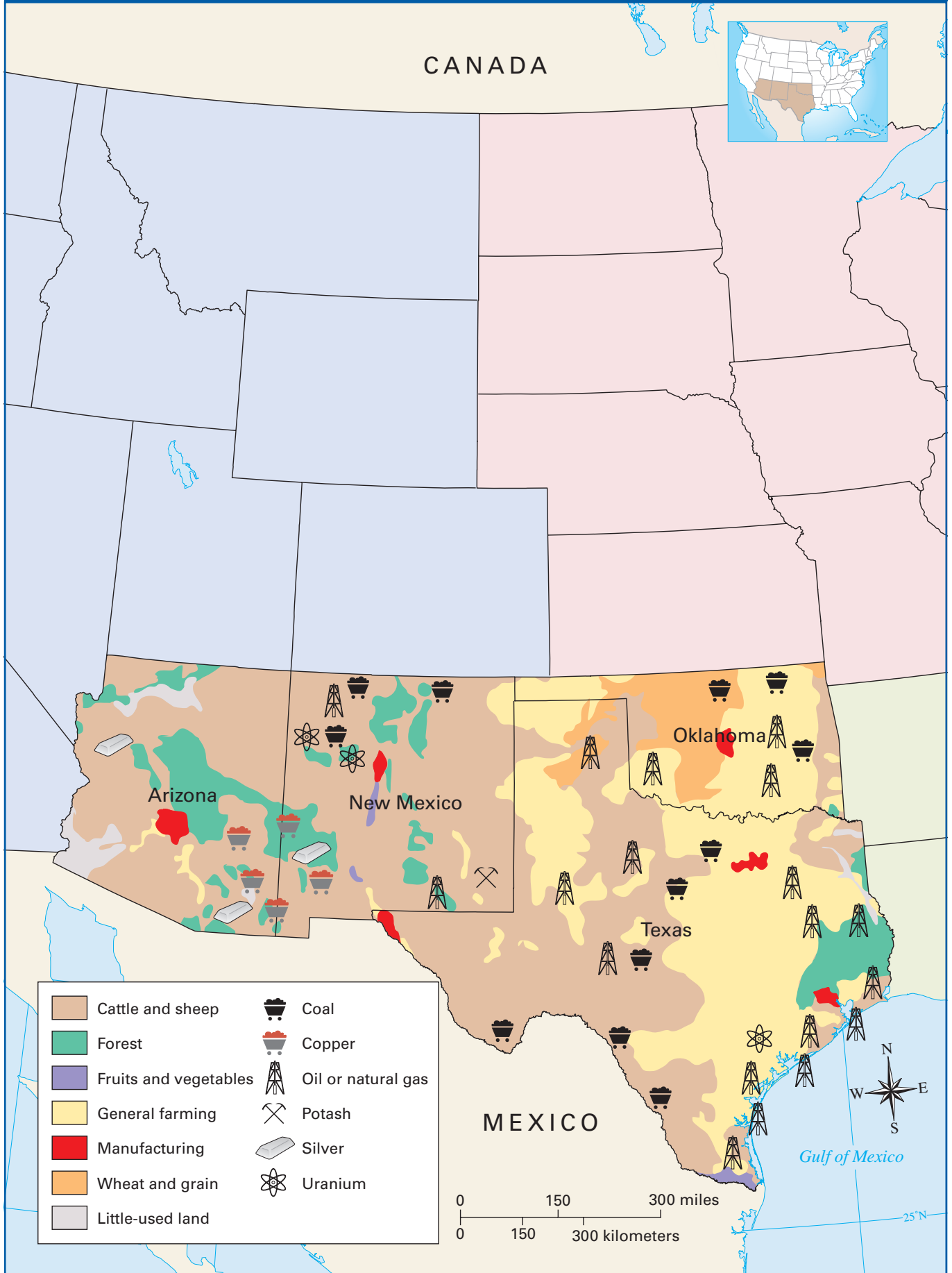
rebellion



# The Southwest Region



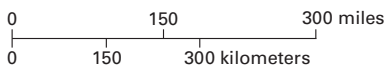
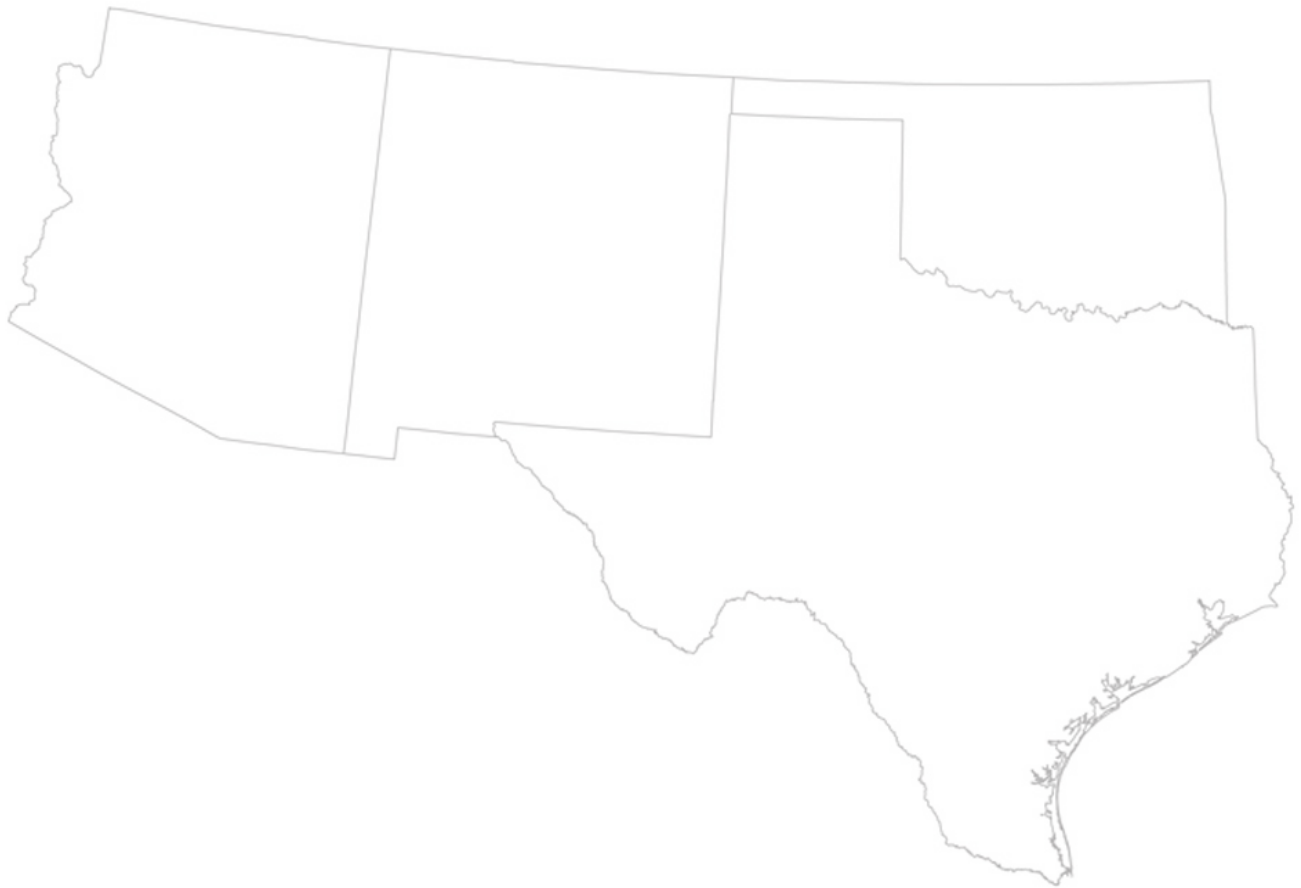
# Land Use and Resources in the Southwest



## Preview Activity

Activity  
Online

Label this map of the Southwest with the answers to the Geography Challenge questions. Include the number of the Geography Challenge in front of each label.



## Vocabulary Activity

Activity  
Online

Complete the sentences with the correct vocabulary words from the box below.

### Vocabulary Word Bank

adapt  
capital  
mesas

aqueducts  
caverns  
mission

border  
Dam  
rebellion

canyons  
desert



The Hoover \_\_\_\_\_ is on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Arizona and Nevada. It provides water to inhabitants of the surrounding \_\_\_\_\_ areas, where there is little rainfall. Water stored behind the dam flows through \_\_\_\_\_ to farms and cities.

The Alamo is the most famous \_\_\_\_\_ in the state of Texas. It was built in the 1700s by Spanish colonists. After Texas became part of Mexico, a \_\_\_\_\_, or armed fight against the government, occurred between Mexican soldiers and Americans living in Texas.



There are 119 \_\_\_\_\_, or large caves, that lie beneath Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Animals such as bats are able to \_\_\_\_\_ to life in caves by using sound waves to find food and move safely. The caves formed when sulfuric acid dissolved limestone, leaving behind caverns of all sizes.

The Grand Canyon is a national park in Arizona, about a three-hour drive from the \_\_\_\_\_ city of Phoenix. It is made up of three major \_\_\_\_\_ with deep, narrow valleys and steep sides. There are \_\_\_\_\_, or flat-topped hills, that dot the landscape.





Construct a shoebox diorama that will act as one of nine tour stops in the Southwest. Share your diorama and the perspectives of three inhabitants on the geography and history of the area.

### Directions: Creating Dioramas for a Tour of the Southwest

- 1. Get into groups of four.** Each group member will be assigned a role.
- 2. Review your role.** Read about your responsibilities in the Activity Notes.
- 3. Follow the steps to complete your diorama:**
  - Explore your tour stop by reading a section of your text.
  - Learn about the three inhabitants at your tour stop.
  - Construct your diorama.

### Directions: Diorama Tour of the Southwest

- 1. Prepare to present your diorama.** Follow the steps in your Activity Notes to prepare with your group.
- 2. Present your diorama.** Remember your role as your group presents.
- 3. Take notes in your travel journal in your Activity Notes as you visit the other stops.** Enjoy listening and learning from your classmates!



## 1. Monument Valley: Home of the Navajos

Let's begin our tour at Monument Valley. It is part of the Navajo Indian Reservation. This is the largest reservation in the United States.

The Southwest is home to a large number of Native Americans, more than most of the other regions of the country. Many Native Americans live and work on reservations. Others live in towns and cities.

Moviemakers love Monument Valley for its setting. Many western movies and television commercials are filmed here. Its iconic terrain and sparse landscape make it a memorable background in films.

Look closely at this landscape. Do you see those flat-topped hills? They are called **mesas**. Notice how bare the mesas are. Not enough rain falls in Monument Valley for forests to grow. Much of the Southwest is **desert**. A desert gets less than 10 inches of rain a year.

Over time, plants, animals, and people have all **adapted** to living in this dry land. To adapt means to change in order to survive. The Navajos, for example, learned how to grow corn and raise sheep, even with little rainfall.

Throughout this tour, look for other ways that people have adapted to living in the desert.

People, plants, and animals have adapted to living in the dry land of Monument Valley. Flat-topped mesas dot the landscape.



## 2. Phoenix, Arizona: The Hottest U.S. City

This is Phoenix, Arizona, America's hottest large city. During July, temperatures here can soar above 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

A hundred years ago, Phoenix was a small town. Not many people wanted to move to Arizona in those days. Some folks said that it was too hot, dry, and lonely here. The three "A's" changed their minds.

The first "A" was air conditioners, which use electricity to cool the air in a room. Air-conditioning allows people to live in comfort, no matter how hot it is outside.

The second "A" was **aqueducts**. An aqueduct is a large pipe or canal that moves water over a long distance. Aqueducts are used in the Southwest to move water from lakes and rivers to farms and cities. Aqueducts make it possible for people to have regular showers and green lawns in Phoenix.

The third "A" was automobiles. Travel in the Southwest used to be hard, and even dangerous. A traveler stuck in the desert could die of thirst.

Cars, along with good roads, made travel safer and easier. People began to come to the Phoenix area as tourists. Some liked the hot, dry weather so much that they came back here to live. Since 1940, Phoenix has grown at an amazing rate.

Air conditioners, a water supply, and automobiles helped make Phoenix a place where people want to live. Phoenix is now the fifth-largest city in the United States, and its population continues to grow.



### 3. Hoover Dam: A Concrete Marvel

You are looking at one of America's greatest manufactured structures, Hoover Dam. A **dam** is a wall built across a river to stop the water from flowing.

Hoover Dam was built for two main reasons. The first reason was to control flooding on the Colorado River. The dam slows the rush of water down the river during flood times. The second reason was to store water. Water stored behind Hoover Dam flows through aqueducts to farms and cities.

Hoover Dam was built more than 70 years ago. At that time, nobody had ever built such a huge dam. Many people said it couldn't be done. Some said the Colorado River could never be stopped long enough to build a dam. Other people did not think a dam could be made strong enough to hold back so much water. The critics were proven wrong when Hoover Dam opened in 1936.

Building the dam was no small feat, and it took many resources. The lake behind the dam holds enough water to flood the entire state of Pennsylvania with one foot of water. To hold the water in, the dam uses a lot of concrete. In fact, there is enough concrete in the dam to pave a road from California to New York!

Hoover Dam helps control flooding of the Colorado River. The dam also stores water and creates electricity for use by cities and farms.



## 4. The Grand Canyon: Arizona's World-Famous Wonder

Wow—what a view! You are looking into the Grand Canyon, the most famous natural feature in the United States.

A **canyon** is a deep, narrow valley with steep sides. There are many canyons in the Southwest, but this one is the grandest of them all.

The Grand Canyon is about 277 miles long and one mile deep. It is so deep that the canyon's top and bottom have different weather. It can be cold here on top and hot down below. It is so deep that if you stand on the rim, you can sometimes see eagles flying below you.

The Native American tribe known as the Havasupais lives at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. According to Havasupai legend, the canyon was formed when a flood covered the world. To end the flood, a god dug a hole in the earth. The floodwater rushed down the hole, carving out the Grand Canyon as it went.

Scientists tell a different story. They say the Grand Canyon began to form anywhere from 6 to 17 million years ago. It has been carved slowly out of the earth by water and wind. The Grand Canyon is still growing today, even while we are here looking at it.



Water and wind formed the Grand Canyon. Its walls are so high that the weather is different at the top and bottom.



Visitors look small in the Big Room of Carlsbad Caverns. This national park is entirely underground.

## 5. Carlsbad Caverns: Big Rooms and Bats in New Mexico

At most national parks, the big attractions are found above the ground. Not here! At Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico, the show takes place underground. About 100 caves and **caverns** lie beneath this park. A cave is a natural hole found in the earth, and a cavern is a large cave.

According to local legend, some cowboys, including one named Jim White, found Carlsbad Caverns. One evening, they saw what looked like a plume of smoke rising into the sky. That plume of smoke turned out to be a big cloud of bats flying out of a cave entrance.

A bat looks like a mouse with wings. Hundreds of thousands of bats sleep in the caverns during the day. At night, the bats leave in a great, whirring cloud to hunt for food. If you come to the entrance at sunset, you may see them take flight. It's a very pretty sight.

More than half a million visitors tour Carlsbad Caverns each year. One of the most popular stops is a huge chamber known as the Big Room. The Big Room is about 25 stories high and a third of a mile wide. It could hold six football fields and still have space left over. Can you see the tourist in this Big Room photo?

## 6. El Paso and Ciudad Juárez: Two Cities, Two Countries, One Border

You are at the **border** between the United States and Mexico. A border is a line that people agree on as a boundary to separate two places. The border between the United States and Mexico is a river called the Rio Grande.

The Rio Grande separates two countries and divides two busy cities. El Paso, Texas, an American city, lies north of the border. Ciudad Juárez, a Mexican city, lies south of the border.

Forty years ago, El Paso and Juárez were sleepy little border towns with few people or trucks. Today, a total of about 2 million people live in the two cities. And the area is crawling with trucks.

The reason for this change is simple. American businesses have built hundreds of factories in Juárez. Americans build factories across the border because Mexican workers will work for much lower pay than American workers. This reduces the cost of doing business. These factories, called *maquiladoras* (mah-kee-luh-DOHR-uhs), assemble all kinds of goods. The goods are then trucked across the border for sale in the United States. Many Mexicans move close to the border to take *maquiladora* jobs.

The Rio Grande forms part of the border between the United States (left) and Mexico (right). The river begins in Colorado.



## 7. San Antonio, Texas: Home of the Alamo

Welcome to San Antonio, Texas. San Antonio is a city famous for its Spanish **missions**. A mission is a Spanish settlement where priests once taught Native Americans the Christian religion.

San Antonio's missions were built in the early 1700s. At that time, Texas was a colony of Spain. Later on, Texas became part of Mexico.

The Alamo is San Antonio's most famous mission. More than 2.5 million people visit the Alamo every year. They come to see where a small band of men fought and died so that Texas might be free.

In 1836, Americans living in Texas declared their independence from Mexican rule. A Mexican general named Antonio López de Santa Anna led 2,000 troops to Texas to crush this **rebellion**. A rebellion is an armed fight against one's government.

A band of 183 Texas freedom fighters gathered at the Alamo. Their goal was to stop the Mexican army there. Instead, the Mexican forces captured the mission and killed every one of its defenders.

News of the killings at the Alamo outraged Americans. Hundreds picked up their guns and headed to Texas to join the rebellion. Their battle cry was "Remember the Alamo!"

Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836. For nine years, Texas was a free nation. Then, in 1845, Texas joined the United States as the 28th state.

The Alamo is one of many missions built in San Antonio. It is a symbol of Texas independence.





## 8. Austin: The Capital of Texas

The government of Texas is in Austin, the **capital** of the state. A capital is a city where the government of a country or state is located.

Like the national government, state governments have three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative branch is the state legislature. The Texas legislature meets in the building you see here with the large dome on top.

State legislatures make laws for all the people in a state. Most of the traffic laws in each state are passed by the state legislature. The state legislature may also pass laws about what you learn in school.

State legislatures decide how much people must pay in taxes to the state. They also decide how that money will be spent.

The executive branch is headed by the state governor. It's the governor's job to make sure that all the laws passed by the state legislature are carried out.

State courts make up the judicial branch. State courts judge people who are accused of breaking state laws. If a person is found guilty of breaking a law, the courts decide how that person should be punished.

Austin is the seat of the Texas government. The capitol building is where the state legislature meets to make laws for the people.

## 9. Guthrie, Oklahoma: Center of the Land Rush

Most of the Southwest was settled slowly, over time. Guthrie, Oklahoma, was settled in one day.

For many years, the U.S. government kept Oklahoma closed to everyone but Native Americans. Then, in 1889, the government decided to open 2 million acres of land to new settlement. This area was to be given away in a one-day land rush. The first person to reach and claim a piece of land on that day could keep it.

On April 22, 1889, between 50,000 and 100,000 people gathered at the starting line for the land rush. Most were European Americans. Some were African Americans. Black or White, everyone wanted the same thing—free land.

At noon, a bugler blew some notes on his horn. The rush was on! People raced off in wagons, on horses, and on foot. In a few hours, every inch of land was taken.

Most of the Southwest was settled slowly. However, settlers raced to grab land in Oklahoma during a one-day land rush in 1889.







Not everyone waited for the land rush to begin. Some settlers cheated and entered the area sooner than the government allowed. One of these “sooners” was found tending a garden full of vegetables. Oklahoma’s soil was so rich, he claimed, that the plants had all sprouted up that day.

Guthrie, Oklahoma, was born during the land rush. At noon, Guthrie wasn’t much more than a patch of grass. Six hours later, the town had a population of 10,000 people.

Today, the town of Guthrie still has about 10,000 people living there. Most of the downtown buildings in Guthrie still look like they did in the late 1800s.

Like Guthrie, Oklahoma City got its start during the land rush of 1889. But today, it is the largest city in the state. Oklahoma City and nearby towns form a community of more than one million people. The city is the capital of Oklahoma, which is nicknamed the Sooner State.

Guthrie, Oklahoma, was settled in a hurry. It sprang up during the land rush of 1889. Today, many beautiful buildings that went up soon after the land rush can still be seen.





## Hands-On Activity Notes

Activity  
Online

Complete these steps to create your diorama. Your teacher will initial each completed step.

### \_\_\_\_ Step 1: Review your role.

Write your name under your role. Write the names of the others in your group under their roles.

Role	Description
<b>Diorama Educator</b> _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During Step 2, you will lead the group in a discussion about your assigned stop.</li><li>• You will also share the perspective of Inhabitant A.</li></ul>
<b>Tour Director</b> _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During Step 3, you will help all group members discuss and note information about the three inhabitants at your stop.</li></ul>
<b>Diorama Designer</b> _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During Step 4, you will encourage all group members to lend a hand in the design and construction of your diorama.</li><li>• You will also share the perspective of Inhabitant B.</li></ul>
<b>Task Manager</b> _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During Step 5, you will make sure each group member prepares for their assigned part of the presentation.</li><li>• You will also share the perspective of Inhabitant C.</li></ul>

### \_\_\_\_ Step 2: Learn about your tour stop.



Take turns reading aloud the section about your assigned tour stop. When you finish reading, the **Diorama Educator** will lead a discussion to answer these questions:

1. Where on the map of the Southwest is your tour stop located?
2. How has geography shaped life at your tour stop?
3. How has history shaped life at your tour stop?

— Step 3: Read about inhabitant perspectives.



On the back of your Activity Card, read about the perspectives of the three inhabitants at your tour stop. The **Tour Director** will lead a discussion to uncover three things you learned about each inhabitant:

**Inhabitant A's Perspective:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Inhabitant B's Perspective:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Inhabitant C's Perspective:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## \_\_\_\_ Step 4: Construct your diorama.



The **Diorama Designer** will lead your group in the construction of the diorama. Use the background and the inhabitants from the Activity Card for your stop. You will need to complete the following steps. Check off each one when it is complete:

- Attach the background to the inside of a shoebox.
- Use the lid of the shoebox to assemble additional materials to make your diorama feel real.
- Place your inhabitants in the diorama.
- Label your diorama to include your location.

## \_\_\_\_ Step 5: Prepare to present your diorama.



During a tour of the Southwest, you will have visitors that will want to learn about your stop. The **Task Manager** will assure that each group member is prepared.

- The **Tour Director** will welcome the visitors to your diorama, point out where the stop is on the map of the Southwest, and give a short introduction to what visitors will learn about.
- The **Diorama Educator** will play the role of Inhabitant A. Introduce yourself and tell about the history or geography of your stop from that inhabitant's perspective.
- The **Diorama Designer** will play the role of Inhabitant B.
- The **Task Manager** will play the role of Inhabitant C.
- Finally, the **Tour Director** will answer any questions the visitors have.

## \_\_\_\_ Step 6: Present your diorama.

Tips for giving a successful presentation:

- Be friendly and welcoming to visitors who come to your stop.
- Stand and face your visitors during the entire presentation.
- Speak carefully and clearly so all can hear.
- Invite questions with an open and caring attitude.

## Hands-On Activity Notes

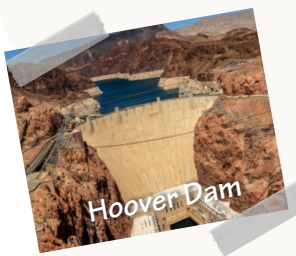
Activity  
Online

Complete this travel journal as you visit each diorama on your tour of the Southwest. Write three key ideas you learned from each stop or even just a few words to help you remember something about it.



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## Summary

On this tour of the Southwest, you visited nine stops and passed through the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma.

The Southwest is filled with many beautiful landforms. The caverns, canyons, and rock formations you saw are some examples. Much of the Southwest is desert. Plants, animals, and people all have to adapt to its hot, dry climate to survive.

You saw manufactured structures, such as the Hoover Dam and the state capitol building of Texas. You also visited the border between the United States and Mexico.

Finally, you learned about the Southwest's history. You found out about how the Havasupais lived in the Grand Canyon. You also explored the Alamo and Guthrie. The next time you hear someone call Oklahoma the "Sooner State," you will know how the state got its nickname!

## Show What You Know

This big rig driver drives all over the Southwest, collecting stickers wherever she stops. Match the nine stops to their corresponding stickers by placing the letter in its correct circle.

Activity  
Online



Flip the  
page →

- A. Austin, Texas
- B. Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico
- C. El Paso, Texas
- D. Grand Canyon, Arizona
- E. Guthrie, Oklahoma
- F. Hoover Dam, Nevada
- G. Monument Valley, Navajo Reservation
- H. Phoenix, Arizona
- I. San Antonio, Texas





## STUDY YOUR STATE

# Researching a City in Your State

You just read about different cities in the Southwest and the landforms in these areas. How do landforms and resources affect where cities are located? To answer questions like this one, you can learn more about the settlers who established a city. This can help you understand why cities are located in some places but not others.

### Researching Landforms in a City

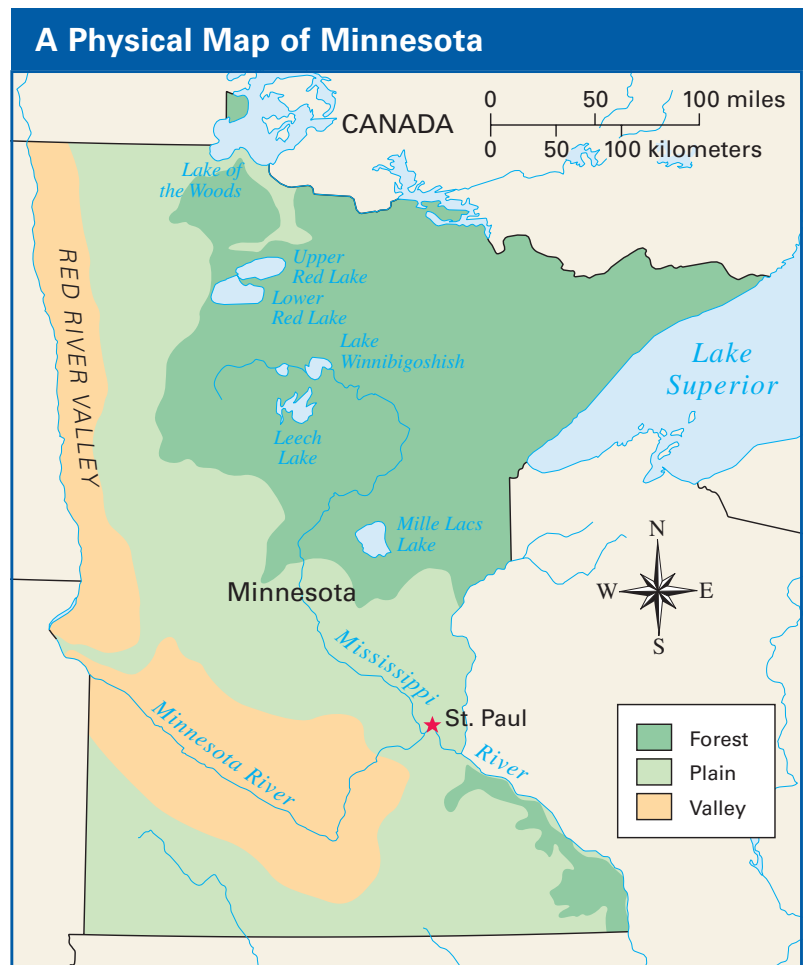
Most states have several large cities. To learn why a city in your state is located where it is, you can research that city. First, you need to choose a city to research. For example, if you live in Minnesota, you might choose to learn more about the city of Minneapolis.

Landforms can affect where people establish cities. A valley might attract more settlers than a place with lots of mountains. A desert that is hot and dry might attract fewer settlers than a plain with healthy soil.

To find what landforms are near a city, first make a map of that state, like this one of Minnesota.

Place the city on the map. Use the internet or an atlas to research the landforms that are near the city. Make a map key for these landforms. For instance, in this map, dark green areas contain forests. Mark the landforms on the map. Which landforms are near the city you chose?

To learn why an area attracted settlers, you can research a city's landforms and resources. This map of Minnesota shows the features near the city of Minneapolis.





## Writing an Explanation About a City

Now, it's time to observe the map you made. Based on your observations, write an explanation about why you think the city is located where it is. For instance, based on the Minnesota map, an explanation might be that people settled in Minneapolis because the Mississippi River runs through it and people could use the water. There are also no mountains there, which makes it easy to access.

When you have written down your explanation, you can research the city's history. Use sources from the internet or library to learn about why settlers lived there. You can also research the resources from that area that the settlers used. How did landforms and resources influence settlement?

The settlement of the Minneapolis area began in 1849, and it became a city in 1867. There is a waterfall there that helped the city flourish by providing power. With this resource, Minneapolis had a thriving flour and lumber industry that attracted people.

Revise your explanation based on your research, and then share it with a partner. Have your partner answer these questions: Does your evidence support your explanation? How could your explanation be improved?

Minneapolis is on flat land located near the Mississippi River and waterfalls. These features attracted settlers.