

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The United States has four regions—the Northeast, South, Midwest, and West.
2. The United States has a strong economy and a powerful military but is facing the challenge of world terrorism.

The Big Idea

The United States has four main regions and faces opportunities and challenges.

Key Terms and Places

megapolis, p. 265
 Washington, D.C., p. 265
 Detroit, p. 267
 Chicago, p. 267
 Seattle, p. 268
 terrorism, p. 270

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on the United States today. Organize your notes in a chart like the one below.

Regions	Economy, Military, and Terrorism

The United States Today

If YOU lived there...

You and your family run a small resort hotel in Fort Lauderdale, on the east coast of Florida. You love the sunny weather and the beaches there. Now your family is thinking about moving the business to another region where the tourist industry is important. They have looked at ski lodges in Colorado, lake cottages in Michigan, and hotels on the coast of Maine.

How will you decide among these different regions?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Geography, history, climate, and population give each region of the United States its own style. Some differences between the regions are more visible than others. For example, people in each region speak with different accents and have their favorite foods. Even with some differences, however, Americans are linked by a sense of unity in confronting important issues.

Regions of the United States

Because the United States is such a large country, geographers often divide it into four main regions. These are the Northeast, South, Midwest, and the West. You can see the four regions on the map on the next page. Find the region where you live. You probably know more about your own region than you do the three others. The population, resources, and economies of the four regions are similar in some ways and unique in others.

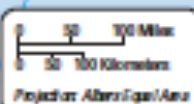
The Northeast

The Northeast shares a border with Canada. The economy in this region is heavily dependent on banks, investment firms, and insurance companies. Education also contributes to the economy. The area's respected universities include Harvard and Yale.



Interactive Map

Regions of the United States



Geography Skills

Regions The United States has four geographic and economic regions.

1. **Locate** What region is located on the Pacific Ocean?
2. **Analyze** What region does not border Canada?

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KEYWORD: SJ7 CH11

Some natural resources of the Northeast states include rich farmland and huge pockets of coal. Used in the steelmaking process, coal remains very important to the region's economy. The steel industry helped make Pittsburgh, in western Pennsylvania, the largest industrial city in the Appalachians.

Today fishing remains an important industry in the Northeast. Major seaports allow companies to ship their products to markets around the world. Cool, shallow waters off the Atlantic coast are good fishing areas. Cod and shellfish such as lobster are the most valuable seafood.

The Northeast is the most densely populated region of the United States. Much of the Northeast is a **megalopolis**, a string of large cities that have grown together. This area stretches along the Atlantic coast from Boston to Washington, D.C. The three other major cities in the megalopolis are New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.



THE WORLD ALMANAC

Facts about Countries

Population of Major U.S. Cities

	City	Population
1	New York	8,143,197
2	Los Angeles	3,844,829
3	Chicago	2,842,518
4	Houston	2,016,582
5	Philadelphia	1,463,281

New York, New York



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KEYWORD: SJ7 CH11

United States: Land Use and Resources



Human-Environment Interaction This map shows the major land uses and resources of the United States that affect the daily lives of Americans.

1. **Identify** What major natural resource is found in Pennsylvania?
2. **Contrast** How is land use in the Northeast different from land use in the West?

go.hrw.com KEYWORD: 5.7 CHI

At least 40 million people live in this urban area. All of these cities were founded during the colonial era. They grew because they were important seaports. Today these cities are industrial and financial centers.

The South

The South is a region that includes long coastlines along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Along the coastal plains rich soils provide farmers with abundant crops of cotton, tobacco, and citrus fruit.

In recent years, the South has become more urban and industrial and is one of the country's fastest-growing regions. The

South's cities, such as Atlanta, have grown along with the economy. The Atlanta metropolitan area has grown from a population of only about 1 million in 1960 to more than 4 million today.

Other places in the South have also experienced growth in population and industry. The Research Triangle in North Carolina is an area of high-tech companies and several large universities. The Texas Gulf Coast and the lower Mississippi River area have huge oil refineries and petrochemical plants. Their products, which include gasoline, are mostly shipped from the ports of Houston and New Orleans.



1 Farms with fertile soils like this one in Wisconsin cover much of the rural Midwest.



2 Large white containers, shown here at the Port of Houston, store oil from the Gulf Coast.

Millions of Americans vacation in the South, which makes the travel industry profitable in the region. Warm weather and beautiful beaches draw many vacationers to resorts in the South. You may not think of weather and beaches when you think about industry, but you should. Resort areas are an industry because they provide jobs and help local economies grow.

Many cities in the South trade goods and services with Mexico and countries in Central and South America. This trade is possible because several of the southern states are located near these countries. For example, Miami is an important trading port and travel connection with Caribbean countries, Mexico, and South America. Atlanta, Houston, and Dallas are also major transportation centers.

The Midwest

The Midwest is one of the most productive farming regions in the world. The Mississippi River and many of its tributaries carry materials that help create the region's rich soils, which are good for farming. Midwestern farmers grow mostly corn, wheat, and soybeans. Farmers in the region also raise livestock such as dairy cows.

The core of the Midwest's corn-growing region stretches from Ohio to Nebraska. Much of the corn is used to feed livestock, such as beef cattle and hogs.

To the north of the corn-growing region is an area of dairy farms. States with dairy farms are major producers of milk, cheese, and other dairy products. This area includes Wisconsin and most of Michigan and Minnesota. Much of the dairy farm region is pasture, but farmers also grow crops to feed dairy cows.

Many of the Midwest's farm and factory products are shipped to markets by water routes, such as those along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. The other is through the Great Lakes and the Saint Lawrence Seaway to the Atlantic Ocean.

Most major cities in the Midwest are located on rivers or the Great Lakes. As a result, they are important transportation centers. Farm products, coal, and iron ore are easily shipped to these cities from nearby farms and mines. These natural resources support industries such as automobile manufacturing. For example, **Detroit**, Michigan, is the country's leading automobile producer.

One of the busiest shipping ports on the Great Lakes is **Chicago**, Illinois. The city also has one of the world's busiest airports. Chicago's industries attracted many immigrants in the late 1800s. People moved here to work in the city's steel mills. Today Chicago is the nation's third-largest city.

FOCUS ON READING

As you read about the Midwest, sort the details into three categories.

The West

The West is the largest region in the United States. Many western states have large open spaces with few people. The West is not all open spaces, however. Many large cities are on the Pacific coast.

One state on the coast, California, is home to more than 10 percent of the U.S. population. California's mild climate and wealth of resources attract people to the state. Most Californians live in Los Angeles, San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay area. The center of the country's entertainment industry, Hollywood, is in Los Angeles. Farming and the technology industry are also important to California's economy.

The economy of other states in the West is dependent on ranching and growing wheat. Wheat is grown mostly in Montana, Idaho, and Washington.

Much of the farmland in the West must be irrigated, or watered. One method of irrigation uses long sprinkler systems mounted on huge wheels. The wheels

rotate slowly. This sprinkler system waters the area within a circle. From the air, parts of the irrigated Great Plains resemble a series of green circles.

The West also has rich deposits of coal, oil, gold, silver, copper, and other minerals. However, mining these minerals can cause problems. For example, coal miners in parts of the Great Plains use a process called strip mining, which strips away soil and rock. This kind of mining leads to soil erosion and other problems. Today laws require miners to restore mined areas.

In Oregon and Washington, forestry and fishing are two of the most important economic activities. **Seattle** is Washington's largest city. The Seattle area is home to many important industries, including a major computer software company. More than half of the people in Oregon live in and around Portland.

Alaska's economy is largely based on oil, forests, and fish. As in Washington and Oregon, people debate over developing

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

process a series of steps by which a task is accomplished



Olympic National Park

One of the largest sections of coastal wilderness in the United States, shown here, stretches along the Pacific coast in Washington's Olympic National Park.

these resources. For example, some people want to limit oil drilling in wild areas of Alaska. Others want to expand drilling to produce more oil.

Hawaii's natural beauty, mild climate, and fertile soils are its most important resources. The islands' major crops are sugarcane and pineapples. Millions of tourists visit the islands each year.

READING CHECK **Comparing** How is the economy of the West different from the economy of the South?

Economy, Military, and Terrorism

The United States is the world's only superpower. It has both the largest economy and the most powerful military in the world. Those two strengths bring great opportunities to the United States. However, they also bring great challenges.

Economic and Military Power

The United States has many valuable natural resources. Modern technology and plentiful jobs make the United States a land of opportunity. With so many opportunities, the United States can support itself without relying on other countries. This independence has helped make the United States the world's largest economy.

Even with a strong economy, the United States benefits by trading with other countries. Major trading partners include Canada, Mexico, China, Japan, and Europe. The United States trades mostly with its neighbors, Canada and Mexico. In 1992 the United States, Mexico, and Canada signed the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. This agreement made trade easier and cheaper between the three countries.

Rebirth in New York

This artist's sketch shows the new building that will stand where the World Trade Center once stood in New York.



With so much wealth, the United States can afford a powerful military. The main job of the U.S. armed forces is to protect our country. The U.S. military also has the opportunity to help other countries defend themselves.

Terrorism

On September 11, 2001, the United States suffered the deadliest terrorist attack in the country's history. Terrorists hijacked four American jets. They crashed two into the World Trade Center and one into the Pentagon. These attacks were a violent reminder that some people do not want the United States to be strong.

They want to disrupt our country's economy with **terrorism**, or violent attacks that cause fear.

In response to the terrorist attacks, U.S. President George W. Bush declared war on terrorism. He sent forces to Afghanistan, to kill or capture members of a terrorist group called al Qaeda. The United States also helped a new democratic government take power in Afghanistan. The United States then turned its attention to Iraq. President Bush believed that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was another threat to Americans. In 2003 Bush ordered U.S. troops to invade Iraq and remove Saddam from power.

Today world leaders are working with the United States to combat terrorism. In the United States, the Department of Homeland Security, a government agency, coordinates efforts to protect the country from any other terrorist attacks. Many other countries have increased security within their borders, especially at international airports.

Many Americans will never forget the people who lost their lives on September 11. In New York, a permanent memorial and building will stand at the former World Trade Center site. The main building, Freedom Tower, will be 70 stories tall. When completed in 2009, the tower will serve as a symbol of hope for New York and the country as a whole.

READING CHECK Making Connections What is the connection between the military and economic strength of the United States and the threat of terrorism?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW In this section, you learned about the landscapes and economic activities of the different regions of the United States. You also learned that trade and terrorism are important issues in the country. In the next chapter, you will learn about Canada, our neighbor to the north of the United States.

Section 3 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SJ7 HPT

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- Define** What is a **megapolis**? What major cities are part of the largest megapolis in the United States?
 - Compare and Contrast** How is land use in the Midwest similar to and different from land use in the South?
 - Elaborate** How are the regions of the United States different from one another?
- Define** What is **terrorism**? What terrorist attack occurred in September 2001?
 - Explain** What makes the United States a superpower?
 - Elaborate** What steps are the United States and other countries taking in an attempt to combat world terrorism?

Critical Thinking

- Finding Main Ideas** Use your notes to help you list at least one main idea about the population, resources, and economy of each region.

	Northeast	South	Midwest	West
Population				
Resources				
Economy				

FOCUS ON VIEWING

- Thinking about the United States Today** You have read about the regions of the United States, as well as issues facing the country today. What key words, images, and objects might represent what you have learned?