

Overview

Summary

Background Information

The West

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The *West* provides an overview of the western region. Using specialized maps and engaging photographs, Alex, our guide, takes us on a tour of the eleven states of the westernmost region of our country. The book describes the land, the economy, and the unique cultural opportunities of the region.

The specialized maps show physical features, manufacturing centers, and land use and help students understand the region's economy. Photographs, many of them showing young residents of the area, put a human face on the region.

The almanac at the end of the book provides a wealth of information about the individual states. Students can use this almanac to compare the same ten features for each state in the region.

The western region of the United States includes Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California, Alaska, and Hawaii. This “guided tour” of the West gives students an overview of the land and the economy, and a sampling of the unique cultures in this region. Land features include volcanoes, deserts, basins, and mountains. Students explore how the varied landscapes influence how people work and play. Businesses use the land for ranching, growing fruits and vegetables, logging, and mining. Silicon Valley is famous for its computer products. For recreation, the West offers many outdoor sports including hiking, biking, skiing, snowboarding, surfing, and dog sledding. The West has a rich and varied culture.

Learning Objectives

Genre/Text Features

- expository
- photographs and captions
- chapter titles and subheads
- contents, glossary, index, and almanac
- maps
- sidebars

Reading Skills

Skill Focus

- distinguish fact and opinion
- use sensory words

Supporting Skills

- identify details
- draw conclusions
- compare and contrast
- use images to aid comprehension

Writing Skills

Writing Focus

- write a poem (descriptive)

Supporting Skills

- prewrite
- conduct research
- respond to others' poems

Speaking and Listening

- give oral presentation

Social Studies Skills

- describe how businesses in the West use natural resources
- describe how the natural environment influences culture
- explain how people interact with the land
- locate and distinguish various landforms
- use maps and atlases

Focus on Reading

Before Reading

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students to think about their region of the country. How would they describe it? Then have students look at the map on page 6 to see the states that make up the western region. Ask students to describe the land in the West. Is it flat or mountainous? What part does the ocean play in the lives of people who live in this region? Has anyone visited this part of the country? What did you do there?

Begin a K-W-L chart on the West. Have small groups of students work to list some facts they already know for the K

column. They can write some things they would like to know in the W column and then write what they learn in the L column.

Preview

Give students time to preview the book by reading the chapter titles, looking at the maps and photographs, and reading a bit of copy in the sidebars. Ask:

How is the book organized?

What kinds of information will you be reading in each chapter?

Who is Alex?

Will you be reading about people in the present or the past? What makes you think as you do?

Set Purpose

Ask students whether this book reminds them of other books they have read. Set a purpose for reading with students.

 **Vocabulary Strategy:**
Use sensory words

Activity Master, Page 140

Read the sidebar on page 8 with students. Ask volunteers to explain what the word in dark type, *geysers*, means. Have the class use the glossary to find the definition, and have a volunteer read the definition aloud. Then ask students to close their eyes and think about what they might see, hear, touch, smell, and taste if they were near a geyser. Explain that many words evoke our senses. Students will complete a similar activity with these words:

iceberg	ore
lava	timberline
orchard	volcano

K (What We Already Know)	W (What We Would Like to Know)	L (What We Learned)

Correlation to National Standards

Language Arts

- read to build an understanding of the cultures of the United States
- apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend and interpret texts
- apply knowledge of figurative language
- use the writing process
- use technological resources to gather information

Social Studies

- culture
- people, places, and environments
- production, distribution, and consumption

Geography

- world in spatial terms (1)
- places and regions (4, 5, 6)
- human systems (11)
- environment and society (14, 15)

State/Local

See Standards Chart on pages 282–287.

During Reading

Read Strategically: Distinguish fact and opinion [Activity Master, Page 141](#)

Assign each chapter of the book as independent reading. Have students use the Activity Master on page 141 as a study guide to help them distinguish facts from opinions. As students read, they write facts and their own opinions about various topics related to the West. Students use details from the book to support their opinions. Remind students that statements of fact can be proven to be true or false. Statements of opinions describe beliefs or feelings. Opinions often begin with phrases such as “I think that...” or “I believe...”

Strategy Tip: Use images to aid comprehension

Students need to remember that illustrations, including photographs and maps, provide information that can aid comprehension. Students can ask questions as they look at illustrations, such as, *What part of the text does this explain? Does the caption provide more information about the subject of the illustration?* Remind students to reread to see how the illustration best fits the text. If they continue having difficulty, students can ask for clarification during the follow-up class discussion.



Meeting Individual Needs

For specific strategies on meeting individual needs, see pages 264–269.

After Reading

Responding

Initiate a class discussion to assess reading comprehension with such questions as:

What is one fact and one opinion about the West?
(fact and opinion)

What are the states in the region? (details)

Which states are not contiguous?
(details)

What is special about the culture? (draw conclusions)

How is the West different from or the same as where you live?
(compare and contrast)



Writing and Research: Write a poem

[Activity Master, Page 142](#)

Have students write a poem using sensory words to describe places they would want to visit in the West. Students can use the Activity Master on page 142 to plan their writing. Remind students that a poem does not need to rhyme, but it does need to give the listener a picture of an idea, a feeling, a place, a person, or a thing. You might want to provide a simple pattern, such as the following:

In the Cascade Mountains,

I see...

I touch...

I hear...

In Death Valley,

I see...

I touch...

I hear...

At a Hawaiian lu'au,

I see...

I taste...

I hear...

Communicating: Speaking/listening

Give oral presentation

In small groups, students can read their poems aloud. They might want to exchange papers and read a classmate's poem instead of their own.

Students reading aloud should

- ✓ speak clearly
- ✓ make eye contact with the listeners
- ✓ adapt speech as appropriate
- ✓ read poetry with appropriate pauses and emphasis

Listeners should

- ✓ identify sensory words
- ✓ listen politely
- ✓ ask questions to clarify ideas

Extend and Assess

Focus on Social Studies

Land Use Poster

Students can create a poster that shows three ways people in the West benefit from the physical environment. Students can create maps, illustrations, and graphs, and use pictures from magazines to communicate their ideas. Posters should have a title, labels, and captions describing images presented.

Students can use the student book, the Internet, and other resources to conduct additional research about the West.

Students' topics might include

- ▶ mining
- ▶ growing food
- ▶ growing trees
- ▶ ranching
- ▶ national parks
- ▶ various sports



Map Activity

Activity Master, Page 143

Students can use the map to label the path of Alex's tour of the West. Students first focus on the landforms and landmarks discussed in Chapter 1 and then use the map to answer questions about the region.

Assessment Options

Use the following assessment options to assess students' understanding of *The West*.

Questions

Ask the following questions during individual conferences or ask students to write the answers independently in their notebooks.

- 1 What are some of the major landforms of the West?
- 2 What do you think are two things that are special about the culture of the West?
- 3 What are three ways businesses in the West use natural resources?
- 4 What are two unique landforms or landmarks in the West? What makes them unique?
- 5 How do people have fun in the West?

Assessment Activity

Students write a book review of *The West*. Remind students that they should support their opinions with details from the book. Students answer the following questions to complete their reviews:

- 1 What is your favorite part of the book? Why?
- 2 What part of the book do you like least? Why?
- 3 Explain three things you learned about the West.
- 4 Do you like the photos overall? Which is your favorite? Explain what it shows and tell why you like it.
- 5 Would you recommend this book to your friends or family? Why or why not?

Reviews should

- ✓ address each of the questions
- ✓ present accurate facts and substantiated opinions
- ✓ include text that presents facts about the location accurately
- ✓ include text that gives reasons people would enjoy visiting the location

Multiple-Choice Test

Use the multiple-choice test in the Assessment Booklet.

Cross-Curricular Connection

Science

In *The West*, students learn about mountains, shorelines, valleys, and other land features. But how have waves, wind, water, and ice helped shape these areas of the Earth? Students can create a simple presentation explaining how weathering and erosion have shaped the land's surface in the West. Students might, for example, describe and illustrate general changes to mountains and shorelines.

Home-School Connection

Students can use the travel section of a newspaper to find out more about the West. With parents, students can discuss places that are considered tourist attractions and determine why these places are popular. Students can then locate these places on a map.

Vocabulary: Use Sensory Words

The words below are from *The West*. What sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and textures does each make you think of? Write the meaning of each word. Then write as many “sense” words as you can for each one. For example, write words that tell how a glacier feels, smells, looks, and sounds. Then write a sentence for each word using some of the “sense” words.

iceberg

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

lava

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

orchard

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

ore

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

timberline

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

volcano

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

Reading: Facts and Opinions

In *The West*, you'll read about the western region of the United States. As you read, think about the unique qualities of the land and how people use it. Read the topics below and then write one fact and one opinion about each one. Use *The West* to find information to write statements of fact and opinions.

Remember that a statement of fact can be proved true or false. An opinion describes feelings or beliefs about something. An opinion cannot be proved true or false, but a valid opinion needs details to support it.

Topic: Unique landforms

Fact _____

Opinion _____

Topic: Land used for business

Fact _____

Opinion _____

Topic: Land used for fun

Fact _____

Opinion _____

Topic: Unique cultures

Fact _____

Opinion _____

Social Studies: Label a Map of the West

Use this topographical map to label landforms and waterways of the West. Use *The West* and other resources to locate and label the places listed below. Then answer the questions that follow.



Label these places



- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Death Valley | Mount St. Helens | Great Salt Lake |
| Mt. McKinley | Rocky Mountains | Mt. Whitney |
| Cascade Mountains | Yellowstone National Park | |

1. In which direction would you travel from Death Valley to Mt. McKinley? _____
2. About how far is it from the Great Salt Lake to Mt. Whitney? _____
3. Write the name of each state capital in the correct place on the map.
4. Write a question of your own and challenge a partner to find the answer.
