

“Physical Location of North America”

Primary Focus of the Lesson:

Explain how geographic factors influence the development of societies.

Why did it take European explorers so many years to find North America? Because the continent is surrounded by water! The Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans lie to the north, east, and west of North America. The Gulf of Mexico lies to the south. From any direction, North America was difficult to reach. The physical isolation not only kept early settlers away, but also allowed unique species of plants and animals to develop. The Indian Paintbrush, sequoia trees, fragrant sumac, wild yam, and saguaro cactus are all native to North America. Native animals include the buffalo, opossum, wild turkey, bald eagle, manatee, and alligator. The location of North America kept some species of plants and animals from spreading to other continents. The water and distance have been both a barrier and a form of protection for inhabitants of North America. As recently as World War I and World War II, other nations had a difficult time attacking North America across the vast oceans.

TEKS information on the next page.

Social Studies TEKS

Grade 6

(3) Geography. The student uses geographic tools to answer geographic questions. The student is expected to:

(A) pose and answer geographic questions, including: Where is it located? Why is it there? What is significant about its location? How is its location related to the location of other people, places, and environments?;

(4) Geography. The student understands the factors that influence the locations and characteristics of locations of various contemporary societies on maps and globes and uses latitude and longitude to determine absolute locations. The student is expected to:

(D) identify and locate major physical and human geographic features such as landforms, water bodies, and urban center of various places and regions;

Grade 8

(3) Geography. The student understands the physical characteristics of North America and how humans adapted to and modified the environment through the mid-19th century. The student is expected to:

(A) analyze how physical characteristics of the environment influenced population distribution, settlement patterns, and economic activities in the United States during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries;

SOURCE: TEA, 2010.