Social Studies

Grade 3 / Week 8

Your Week at a Glance
☐ Area of focus: Geography – Lesson: Physical Features and Landmarks ☐ Area of Focus: Geography – Lesson: North American Landmarks ☐ Area of Focus: Geography – Lesson: Natural Resources ☐ STANDARDS: SS.3.G.2.4 Describe the physical features of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. SS.3.G.2.5 Identify natural and man-made landmarks in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. SS.3.G.3.1 Describe the climate and vegetation in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. SS.3.G.3.2 Describe the natural resources in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the ☐ STATUTES: 1003.42 f, l, m, s

Name

Teacher

Physical Features and Landmarks
(adapted from Florida Studies Weekly Week 10)

Did you know the United States spans (spreads across) the width of the whole North American continent? It also includes the islands of Hawaii and the frozen land west of Canada called Alaska. We share the continent of North America with two other countries, Canada and Mexico. We also share large bodies of water and a few physical features with the islands of the Caribbean. This week we'll learn about some of the physical features on the North American continent and in the Caribbean. We'll also talk about natural and man-made landmarks in the United States.

Let's start with physical features. What are they? Physical features are the natural parts of the Earth's surface. Some examples are lakes, rivers, oceans, mountains, deserts and plains. What are natural landmarks? Natural landmarks are well-known, or famous, geographic features that mark a certain place. Man-made landmarks are also well-known geographic places that identify a location. However, humans created these landmarks and they didn't form naturally.

Major Physical Features

Look at the map of North America. It's such a big place, that most maps can't show Hawaii where it is actually located. Hawaii is really much further out in the Pacific Ocean. Look at a globe to see where it is. Read the information below and use the symbols on the map to learn more about these major physical features. Check off each area you find as you complete this part of your journey.

Physical Features

Alaska Mountain Range: The mountains of Alaska extend from the Alaska Peninsula to the border of the Yukon Territory in Canada.

Sierra Madre Mountains: The Sierra Madre Mountains include two large mountain ranges and one smaller one. They are located in Mexico.

Rocky Mountains: The Rocky Mountains are about 3,000 miles long. They stretch from New Mexico up through the western United States and into British Columbia, Canada.

Appalachian Mountains: The Appalachians are about 1,500 miles long. They spread from central Alabama up through the New England states. They also stretch into the Canadian provinces (areas kind of like states) of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Quebec.

Great Plains: The Great Plains of North America cover the land from just east of the Rockies to the western edges of the Appalachians. The land is mostly flat with large, treeless areas and shallow river valleys.

Mississippi River: The Mississippi is a major river of North America and the United States (over 2,300 miles long). It flows from northwestern Minnesota south to the Gulf of Mexico, just below the city of New Orleans.

Rio Grande: The Rio Grande is also one of the longest rivers in North America (over 1,800 miles long). It begins in southern Colorado and flows south. It flows through New Mexico and forms a natural border between Texas and Mexico. In Mexico, people call it the Rio Bravo del Norte.

The Great Lakes: The Great Lakes include Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie and Lake Superior. (Notice that the first letters of the names spells HOMES!) They are in the northeastern part of our country and form a border between the United States and Canada.

Kilauea Volcano: The Kilauea Volcano is an active volcano on the island of Hawaii. Scientists are recording eruptions of the Kilauea Volcano to this day. OK, now you've explored a few major physical features like mountains, rivers and plains. Let's take a look at a few natural and man-made landmarks. Remember, landmarks are well-known, or famous, geographic features that mark a location.

Landmarks

The Statue of Liberty: The Statue of Liberty is near New York City in the Upper New York Bay. France gave the Statue of Liberty to the United States as a gift in 1886.

Kennedy Space Center: Kennedy Space Center is located just south of Titusville, Florida. John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, Sally Ride and Jim Lovell are just a few of the brave men and women who have launched into space from Kennedy Space Center.

The Everglades: The Everglades are located across the southern part of Florida. This huge watershed has many habitats that provide shelter for plants and wildlife.

Dunn's River Falls: Dunn's River Falls is on the Caribbean island of Jamaica. People climb up the falls and enjoy the cool water splashing on them. They also enjoy swimming in the nearby lagoons (shallow ponds).

Pyramids of Teotihuacán: The Teotihuacán Pyramids are located in the Mexican highlands. The Aztec lived in this area when Spanish explorers arrived. But, the Aztec didn't build these impressive structures. They were about a thousand years old before Aztec society appeared in the area!

Death Valley: Death Valley is in southeastern California and part of Nevada. This desert has many sand dunes, multicolored rock layers and snow-capped mountains. Death Valley also has water-fluted canyons (canyons with grooves carved by water) and wilderness that spreads across three million acres!

Denali (formerly Mount McKinley): Denali is in Alaska. It is the highest mountain in North America. Denali means "The Great One."

Gateway Arch: The Gateway Arch is in St. Louis, Missouri, next to the Mississippi River. The Arch is 630 feet high and is the tallest national monument in the United States.

Think and Review

1. Imagine that you are telling a friend the location of some landmarks and physical features. Why would it help to use the cardinal and intermediate directions (north, south, east, west, northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest)?

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2. You read that there are water-fluted canyons in Death Valley. How do you think water changed the shape of the canyons in Death Valley?

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3. How are the Appalachian Mountains and the Rocky Mountains the same? How are they different?

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4. Why are the Great Plains, the Appalachian Mountains and the Sierra Madre Mountains considered physical features?

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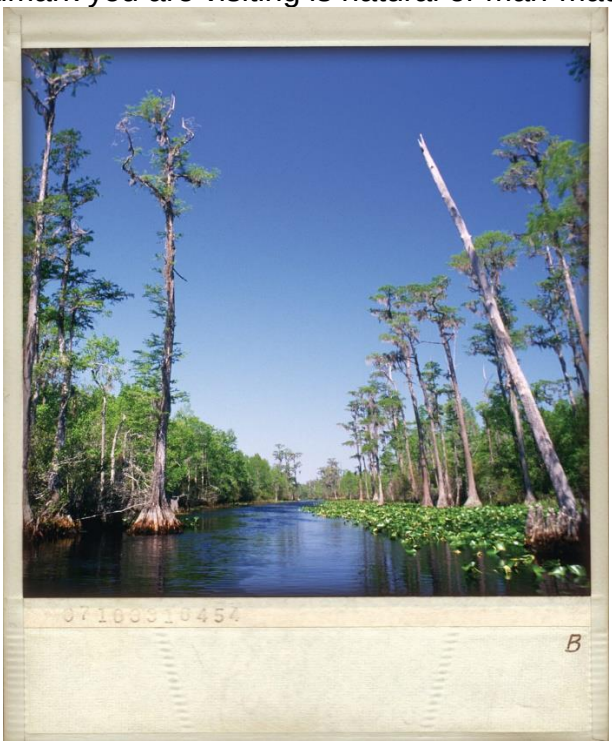
North American Landmarks
(adapted from Florida Studies Weekly Week 11)

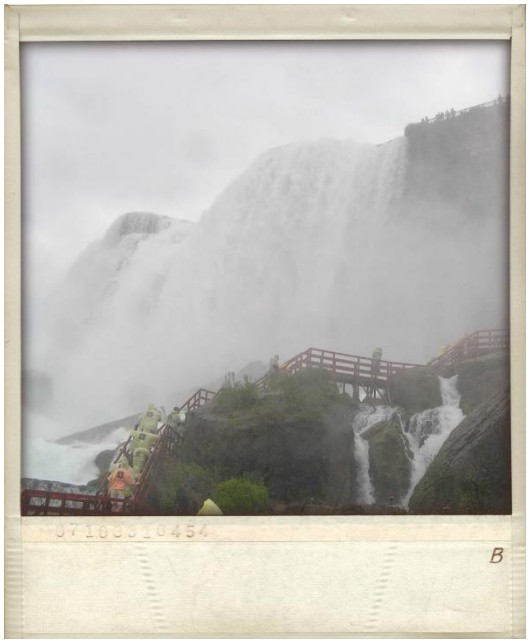
Do you remember the difference between natural and man-made landmarks? Think about whether the landmark you are visiting is natural or man-made.



Okefenokee Swamp

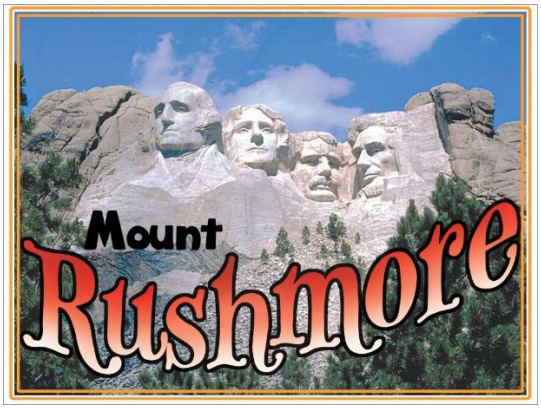
The Okefenokee Swamp is located in southern Georgia and northern Florida. Part of the swamp is a national wildlife refuge. This means it's a place where animals and the land are protected from pollution. It is also protected from people who might want to build homes or offices or stores there. The Okefenokee Swamp is one of the oldest and best-preserved freshwater systems in America. American Indians called it "Owaquaphenoga" ("Land of the Trembling Earth"). The refuge covers almost 402,000 acres of land and water. That's almost 300,000 football fields! In the swamp you'll find cypress forests, marshes, lakes and islands. Some of the animals who live there are alligators, sand hill cranes, red-cockaded woodpeckers, black bears, deer, marsh hawks, otters and over 400 other animal species. There are even carnivorous (meat-eating) plants, like the sundew. The sundew and other plants make up different habitats from dry forests to open wetlands.

Niagara Falls



It's time to travel north. We've got a long way to go before we get to Niagara Falls is on the border between Ontario, Canada and New York in the United States. Scientists estimate that 45 million gallons of water pour over the 167-foot waterfall every minute! Can you imagine the water roaring as it crashes over the waterfall? No wonder the American Indians named it "Niagara," which means "Thunderer of Waters." The falls on the American side are the oldest state park in our country. The falls on the Canadian side are named Horseshoe Falls. We can take a ride on the Maid of the Mist, a boat that gives visitors an up close view of the falls. Keep your eyes open and you might even see people getting married on the shore near the falls.

Mount Rushmore

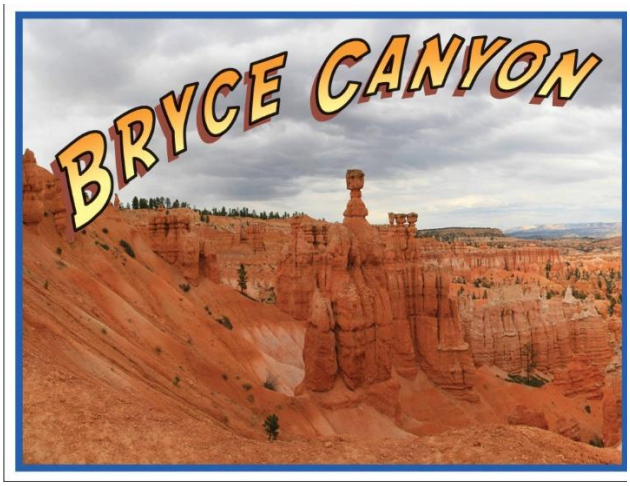


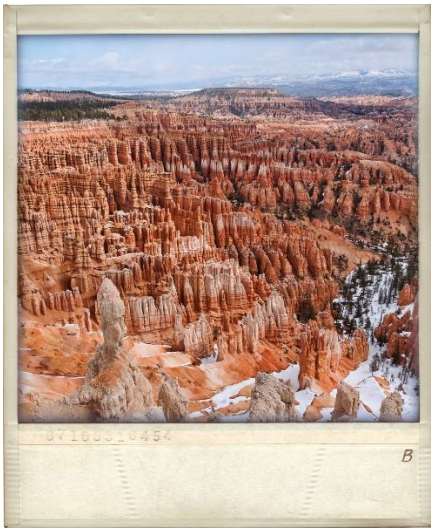
It will take us about 24 hours to drive from Niagara Falls to Mount Rushmore. Mount Rushmore was designed to bring tourists to South Dakota. A state historian named Doane Robinson came up with the idea. He wanted a sculpture carved into the mountain to serve as a monument. Sculptor Gutzon Borglum liked the idea, but he

wanted the monument to symbolize America. He began working on the sculpture on Oct. 4, 1927, and completed it in 1941. Mr. Borglum chose four U.S. presidents and carved their heads into the mountain. The presidents are: George Washington, because he was the first president and he represents the birth of our nation; Thomas Jefferson, because he represents the expansion of our nation; Abraham Lincoln, because he represents the preservation of our nation during the Civil War; and finally Theodore Roosevelt, because he represents the conservation of natural beauty in our nation. Each head is approximately 60 feet tall. While we're there, we can take a guided tour and even a sculpting class.

Stanley Park

Now we're going to head northwest to British Columbia, Canada. We're going to visit a famous place called Stanley Park in the city of Vancouver, which is in British Columbia. In 1888, leaders officially opened the park for the city's citizens. Stanley Park has statues, memorials, gardens, a playground and some things you can't see just anywhere—totem poles and the Klahowya (klah-how-ya) Village. We're taking the Spirit Catcher train to the Village. We'll experience aboriginal songs, dances, art and food. Aboriginal means people or things that have been around since the beginning of a place. We'll also visit the Elders' Area to hear elders (people who are older than you) talk about their life experiences and share their wisdom. Afterward, we'll go to the Story Telling Circle and listen to aboriginal stories.





Bryce Canyon

Bryce Canyon National Park is in Utah. Officials named this area a national park in 1928. The canyons are unique. They have really strange and beautiful geological formations, like horseshoe shapes, narrow walls or hoodoos. Hoodoos are tall columns of colorful rock. The colors range from reds to yellows to orange to white. These famous hoodoos are sometimes like spires, or steeples, which form when ice and rainwater wear away the limestone (a type of rock). Scientists and students love to come here and investigate the rocks, minerals, animals, plants and fossils

National Palace

The National Palace in Mexico City, Mexico is located where the center of government has been since the time of Moctezuma the Second (an Aztec ruler). The Aztec people lived in Mexico when the Spanish explorers arrived. The most interesting part of the palace is in the courtyard, which is an outside area surrounded by buildings. In the courtyard there is a mural, or large painting, on the walls by a famous painter named Diego Rivera. It shows Mexico's history from Aztec times to the country's fight for independence from Spain. The government of Mexico has many offices in the palace and holds important meetings there. Every year about an hour before midnight on Sept. 15, the president of Mexico rings the Freedom Bell at the palace to celebrate Mexico's Independence Day. Do you wonder what it would be like to live in a palace?

Think and Review

1. Explain how you would use map skills to get to each new landmark.

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2. "Mr. Borglum chose four U.S. presidents and carved their heads into the mountain. The presidents are: Washington, because he was the first president and he represents the birth of our nation …" What do you think the word "birth" means in this sentence?

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3. How are Mount Rushmore and Bryce Canyon similar? How are they different?

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Natural Resources
(adapted from Florida Studies Weekly Week 13)

Natural resources are important to everyone and every living thing on Earth. A natural resource is any material from the Earth that people can use. Some examples are trees, coal, oil, natural gas, plants and gold.

All the living things in all the ecosystems on Earth depend on the natural resources around them. People use natural resources to feed themselves, make clothing, heat and cool their homes and for transportation. People depend on natural resources to make electricity. Businesses use them to make things people want and need.

Not all natural resources are the same. Some are renewable and some are nonrenewable. Renewable resources can be replaced over and over. For example, you can plant a tree each time you cut one down, so trees are a renewable resource. We use some natural resources for energy, like the wind or the sun's light and heat. These natural resources do not need to be replaced. Nonrenewable resources cannot be replaced. Once the resource is used up, it's gone forever! For example, if all of the coal is mined out of the Earth and used up, it is gone forever.

We dig for coal and drill oil to power machines and vehicles. We cut down trees to build homes. We raise plants and animals to eat. We use sunlight for warmth and water to drink. But will all those resources last forever? The Earth could run out of some resources if we don't use them wisely. Scientists are working hard to find ways to use natural resources that will help them last longer. Conserving natural resources is important. It will help us to enjoy the world we live in, and leave a lot of world for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Look at the chart to see a list of some of our renewable and nonrenewable natural resources.

It's time to look back at what you wrote about natural resources. Copy the sentence on a piece of paper or in your social studies journal. Add one or two more facts you've learned. Share your information with a friend and you might double your knowledge!

Climate and Vegetation

Part of being a good social studies student is learning all about the world around you. Two important things to know about Florida—or any other place—are the climate and vegetation.

Climate is the average weather or the changes in weather over a long period of time. As you probably know, in Florida it often rains on summer afternoons. Also, during the months of July, August and September, temperatures are likely to be at their highest. Do you have relatives who live in a different part of the United States or a different country? What is the climate like where they live?

Vegetation is the plants or trees growing in a particular area. What kinds of vegetation grow around your school or in your neighborhood? Some plants thrive in the hot, humid climate of Florida, while others cannot stay alive in this heat. The vegetation that will grow in an area depends on the climate.

The world has many types of biomes. A biome is a very large area of the world's vegetation with a special climate and specific types of plants and animals. Some examples are tropical rain forests, deserts and grasslands.

Think and Review

1. Why do you think it is important for students to learn about climate and vegetation?

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2. Why are natural resources important?

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3. Do you think we should conserve our natural resources? Why or why not?

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4. How are renewable resources and nonrenewable resources different?

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