

The Southeast



The History

The Southeast region had many different Native American tribes living there for thousands of years. Some of the notable tribes were the Mississippian mound builders, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole. There were many other tribes that flourished in the Southeast as well, prior to the arrival of the European explorers. Juan Ponce de León was the first European to arrive in the Southeast when he landed in Florida in 1513. During the 1500s, many more European explorers arrived by ship in the Southeast. Those early explorers were looking for gold, other riches and even for the mythical *fountain of youth*. Soon after, European settlers followed their path across the ocean. The settlers planned to set up colonies and call the new lands their home. In the 1500s, many of the new colonies failed due to disease, starvation, fighting with Native Americans and even fighting with other European colonists. Eventually, many English, French and Spanish colonies succeeded in the Southeast region.

Climate

Twelve states make up the Southeast region. In all twelve, the summer is hot and humid. The winter is mild. In some Southeastern states, such as tropical Florida, the winter can actually be warm. The Southeast region gets a fairly large amount of precipitation all year long. Precipitation is rain (or snow in northern areas). An especially large amount of rain can fall in the summer. The long warm summers, combined with lots of precipitation, makes a very favorable growing season for the Southeastern farmers. That means that the farmers get a lot of days each year to grow their crops. Hurricane season is from June – November.

During this time the coastal states can have hurricanes

come ashore. Hurricanes are strong, spinning storms that form over the water. When they move over land they are very dangerous and can cause a lot of damage.



A view from above as a hurricane makes landfall.

The Southeast Region

The Land

The Southeast region borders the Southwest, Midwest and Northeast regions. To the East it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. Its southern border is the Gulf of Mexico. The land in all the Southeastern states is green and lush. The large amounts of rainfall received



Fertile North Carolina land.

in the Southeast allows for the land to be very fertile. The Southeast is famous for growing crops such as cotton, tobacco, peaches, melons, soybeans, peanuts, oranges and rice.

The physical geography in the Southeast varies by state. A lot of the land in the Southeast is flat, fertile farmland. However, some of the inland areas have rocky hills and mountains. The Appalachian Mountains start in the Southeast region and extend northward. Most of the states that border the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean have smooth, sandy beaches.

Economy

In rural areas many people work in the farming and livestock industries. In the past, the Southeastern economy was based largely on growing crops. However, in the late 1900s larger cities in the Southeast began to bring in a lot of new businesses and job opportunities. Many large companies have moved their operations to big Southeastern cities such as Atlanta, Georgia and Memphis, Tennessee. They relocated their businesses to the Southeast region because the cost of living is lower when compared to many places in the Northeast and West regions. In this region, people now work in many different areas such as manufacturing, tourism, government, science and fishing industries. Several auto manufacturers have opened factories to build cars in the Southeast region. Tourism is important to the coastal areas from Virginia all the way south to Florida and its neighboring gulf coast states. Many government jobs are found in Virginia because it is located very close to Washington, D.C. In addition, very important scientific research is done in North Carolina in an area known as the Research Triangle.

The Southeast Region

Natural Resources

Natural resources are materials that are found in the environment, not made by humans. Humans can then use the natural resources to make other helpful things.

In the Southeast, several states have coal mines. The coal is taken out of the ground and turned into an energy source. Some states in this region have oil underground. There are even oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico where oil is pumped out of the ground from under the water. The oil is then used for energy and turned into products such as gasoline. Many other natural resources can also be found in the ground of the Southeast. Natural gas, stones, clays and sands are all mined from the ground. We can even find diamonds in Arkansas!



Old picture showing a West Virginia coal mine.

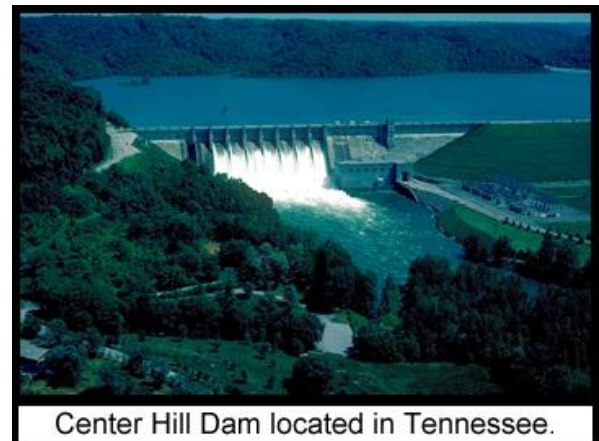
There are many forests in the Southeast that provide timber which can be made into a lot of different things. Did you know that paper is made from trees? When trees are cut down, they can be stripped of their bark and shaped into flat pieces of wood. This



North Carolina Christmas Tree Farm

wood, called lumber, is an essential building material. Lumber is used to build houses and many other things that we use in our lives daily. In North Carolina, there are farms that grow only Christmas trees.

Did you know that the water around us is also a natural resource? In Tennessee and many other states, dams have been built to harness the power that results from the force of falling or fast moving water. Hydropower (water power) can be used to create electricity for people to use in their homes and businesses. This is a great way to create energy and it is not bad for the environment.



Center Hill Dam located in Tennessee.

The dams use the water's power without creating dangerous pollution. Plus, it is a *renewable* resource. Renewable means that we won't run out of it.

The Southeast Region

Landmarks

Landmarks are important places. They can be man-made things such as a monument. They can be historical locations that help to remind us of important events that happened there. They can also be things created by nature that are unique in some way. There are many landmarks in the twelve states that make up the Southeast region. Here, we will take a look at just a few of them.



Kennedy Space Center (Florida)

The John F. Kennedy Space Center is an important piece of space exploration history. It is located on Florida's east coast. Since 1968, Kennedy Space Center has been the primary launch site for human spaceflight. The Apollo program – the first space mission to ever land on the Moon – was launched from Kennedy Space Center. Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were the first people to walk on the surface of the moon. Over the years, there have been six different Space Shuttles that have launched from the Space Center: Enterprise, Challenger, Columbia, Discovery, Atlantis, and Endeavour. The astronaut Hall of Fame is also located here.

Wright Brothers National Memorial (Kitty Hawk, NC)

Wilbur and Orville Wright were pioneers of modern flight. From 1900 – 1903, the brothers conducted a series of experiments that resulted in the world's first heavier than air, powered controlled flight. The airplane was called the Wright Flyer. The brothers used their scientific and mechanical skills to experiment with different ways to achieve powered flight. Finally, in 1903, they achieved success. Orville manned their flyer and it flew for 12 seconds under the power of its engine. In 1932, a memorial was dedicated to mark this historic event in aviation history.



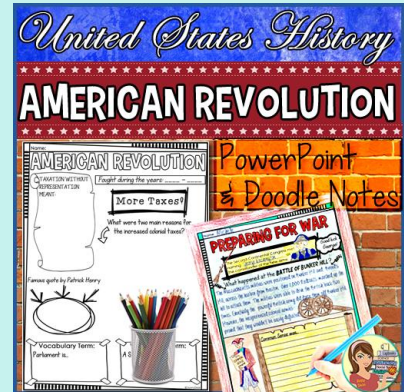
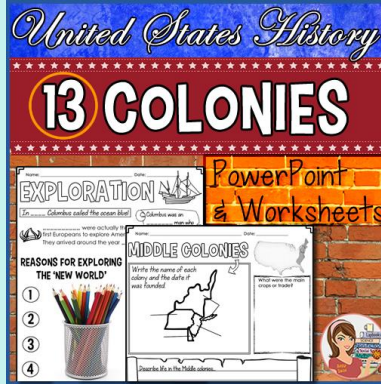
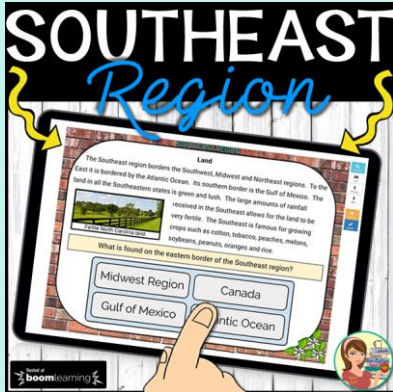
Cumberland Gap (Kentucky – Virginia border)

The Cumberland Gap is a narrow pass through the Appalachian Mountains. The path had been used by Native Americans long before the settlers arrived. It is famous in American history for providing settlers an easier path to move west into Kentucky and Tennessee. In 1775, Daniel Boone and a group of men explored the path and widened it so that the pioneers' wagons could get through. It is now part of the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.



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