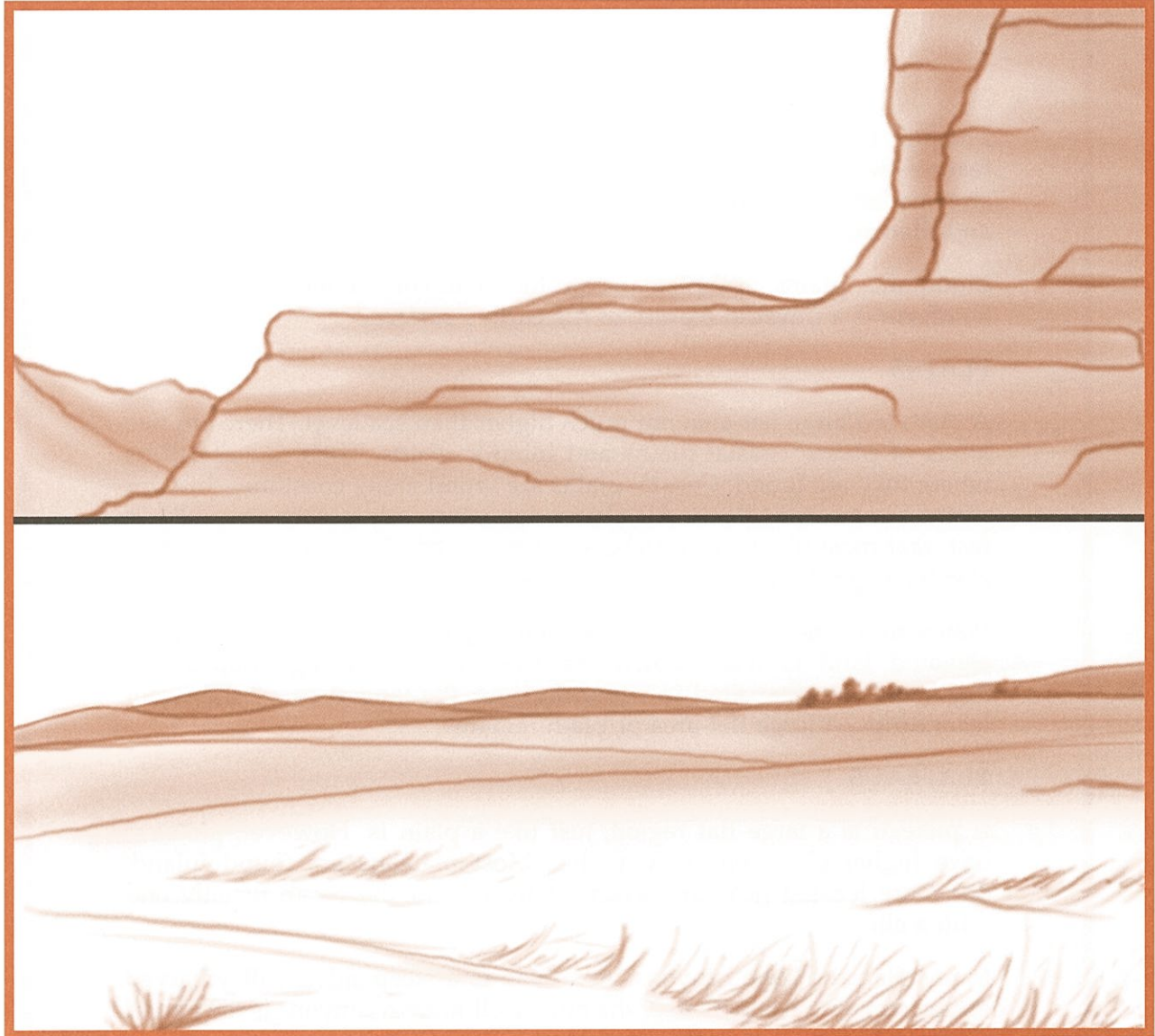


What are plains and plateaus?



KEY TERMS

plain: large flat area not much higher than sea level

plateau: large flat region with higher elevation than a plain

landform: physical feature of the earth's surface

LESSON | What are plains and plateaus?

22

Imagine that you are flying across the United States. What surface features would you see? You would probably see mountains, small swift streams, and dense forests. You also would see large flat areas, **plains** and **plateaus**.

Mountains, plains, and plateaus are the main continental **landforms**. A landform is a physical feature of the earth's surface.

PLAINS

A plain is a large flat area not much higher than sea level. There are two kinds of plains: coastal plains and interior plains. Their names tell us where they are found. Coastal plains are found along coastlines. Interior plains are located inland. All plains slope, but very gently, so gently in fact, that most plains seem to be as even as a bowling alley. Some plains also have gentle rolling hills.

Plains are formed in several ways. One way is through erosion. Uneven elevated land is worn down. Another way is through deposition. Sediments are deposited in water. In time, the land rises, or the water level drops. A large flat area or plain remains.

PLATEAUS

A plateau is a large flat region, just like a plain is. However, plateaus have higher elevations than plains. Most plateaus are found inland. Some are located near the ocean. Plateaus near the ocean usually end with a cliff.

Many plateaus have canyons. A canyon is a steep-sided valley carved out by stream erosion. One of the most well-known canyons is the Grand Canyon. It is located in the southwest United States.

How do plateaus form? Large areas of the earth's crust are moved upward. Or, some plateaus are formed by lava. The lava cools and hardens, forming a large raised area.

LANDFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES

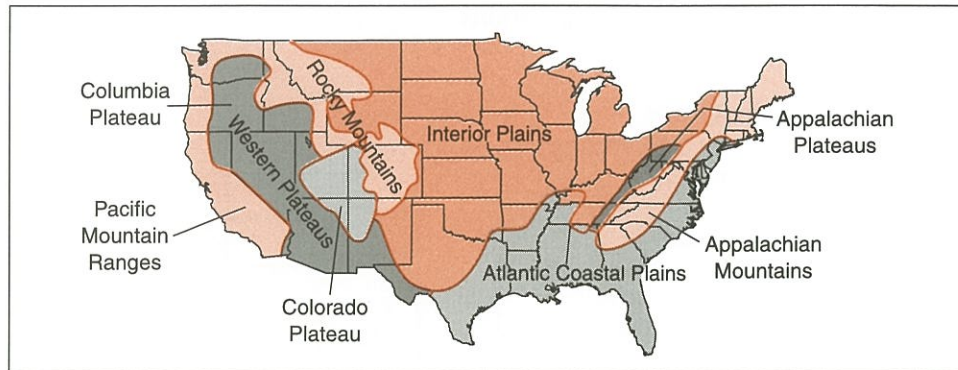


Figure A

Study Figure A, then answer the questions below.

1. Which is the largest landform region of the United States? _____
2. In what landform region do you live? _____
3. What two landforms are found in the western United States? _____



Figure B *The majestic and breathtaking Grand Canyon!*

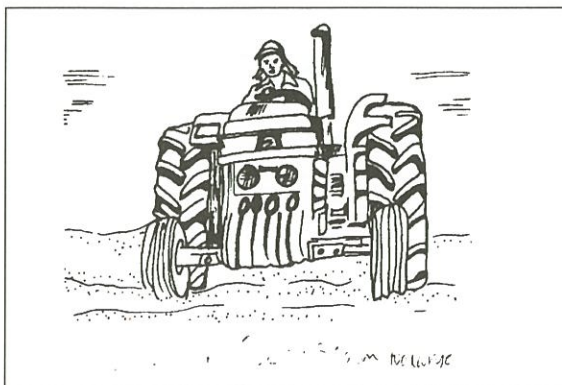


Figure C

4. Upon what kind of landform is the Grand Canyon? _____

5. What formed the Grand Canyon?
(Look back at Lesson 15)

The interior plains of the United States, or the Great Plains as it often is called, has very fertile soil. The soil is very good for farming. This region produces more wheat and corn than any other region of the world.

MORE ABOUT THE GREAT PLAINS

Use the table and the map to answer the questions.

Some States and Their Crops

State	Crop
Idaho	Potatoes
Iowa	Corn
Kansas	Wheat
Wisconsin	Alfalfa



Figure D

- How many states make up the Great Plains? _____
- Name five states that are part of the Great Plains. _____

- Name four crops that are grown in the Great Plains. _____

- The twelve states in the Great Plains are nicknamed the "breadbasket" of the world. Why do you think these states were given this name? _____

MATCHING

Match each term in Column A with its description in Column B. Write the correct letter in the space provided.

Column A	Column B
_____ 1. flat area near a coastline that is not far above sea level	a) landform
_____ 2. steep-sided valley formed by a river	b) coastal plain
_____ 3. flat area located inland that has a low elevation	c) interior plain
_____ 4. large flat area with high elevation	d) plateau
_____ 5. physical feature of the earth's surface	e) canyon

WHAT DO THE PICTURES SHOW?

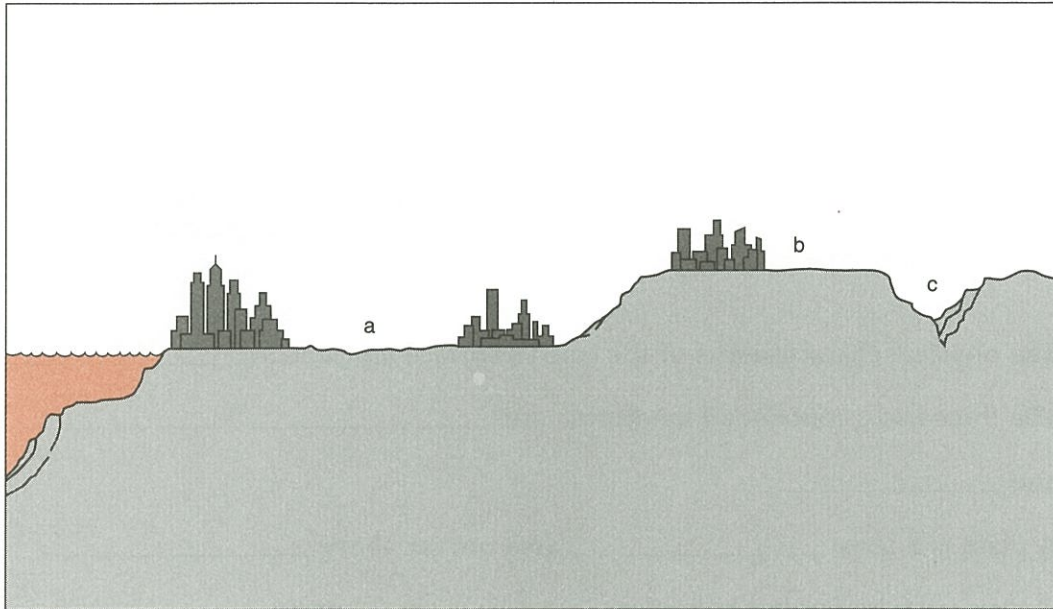


Figure E

Identify features shown on this cross-section.

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

TRUE OF FALSE

In the space provided, write "true" if the sentence is true. Write "false" if the sentence is false.

- _____ 1. All plains slope very gently.
- _____ 2. Lava formed some plains.
- _____ 3. Many plateaus have canyons.
- _____ 4. The Great Plains have very fertile soil.
- _____ 5. The Grand Canyon was formed by lava.
- _____ 6. Plains are higher than plateaus.
- _____ 7. Some plains have rolling hills.
- _____ 8. The western United States has many plains.
- _____ 9. Most plateaus are found inland.
- _____ 10. A plain is not much higher than sea level.

FILL IN THE BLANK

Complete each statement using a term or terms from the list below. Write your answers in the spaces provided. Some words may be used more than once.

mountains
landforms
canyons
erosion
magma

inland
sea level
cliff
plains

flat
higher
plateaus
deposition

1. The physical characteristics of the earth's surface are called _____.
2. The three basic continental landforms are _____, _____, and _____.
3. A plain is a large _____ area not far above _____.
4. A plain may be formed either by _____ or by _____.
5. Plateaus near the ocean usually end with a _____.
6. Plateaus are much _____ in elevation than plains.
7. Some plateaus were formed from _____ that cooled and hardened.
8. A canyon is carved out by stream _____.
9. Most plateaus are located _____.
10. Many plateaus have steep-sided valleys called _____.

WORD SCRAMBLE

Below are several scrambled words you have used in this Lesson. Unscramble the words and write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. MLRAONFD _____
2. SPNAIL _____
3. SCNAONY _____
4. TLFA _____
5. TULAPEA _____