

# The United States

## Section 3



### MAIN IDEAS

1. The United States has four regions—the Northeast, South, Midwest, and West.
2. The United States has a strong economy and a powerful military but is facing the challenge of world terrorism.

## Key Terms and Places

**megalopolis** a string of large cities that have grown together

**Washington, D.C.** the United States capital

**Detroit** located in Michigan and is the nation’s leading automobile producer

**Chicago** the third-largest city in the United States and one of the busiest shipping ports on the Great Lakes

**Seattle** Washington’s largest city and home of a major software company

**terrorism** violent attacks that cause fear

## Section Summary

### REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

Geographers often divide the United States into four main regions. These are the Northeast, the South, the Midwest, and the West.

The Northeast is the smallest region in the United States, as well as the most densely populated. Natural resources in the Northeast include rich farmland, coal, and fishing. Major seaports make it possible to ship products to markets around the world.

The Northeast is covered by a string of large cities called a **megalopolis**. It stretches from Boston to **Washington, D.C.** Other major cities are New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

The South includes coastlines along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. The coastal plains provide farmers with rich soils for growing cotton, tobacco, and citrus fruits.

Technology, education, and oil are also important industries in the South. Warm weather and beautiful beaches make tourism an important part of the South’s economy.

**What are the four main regions of the United States?**

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**List 5 cities that make up the megalopolis in the Northeast.**

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**Underline the sentences that describe the industries that contribute to the South’s economy.**

**Section 3, continued**

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The Midwest is one of the world's most productive farming regions. Rich soils deposited by the region's rivers are perfect for raising livestock and producing corn, dairy products, and soybeans.

Most of the major cities in the Midwest, such as **Chicago** and **Detroit**, are located on rivers or the Great Lakes. This makes it easier to transport farm products, coal, and iron ore.

The West is the largest region. California's mild climate and wealth of resources make it home to more than 10 percent of the country's population.

Ranching, farming, coal, oil, gold, silver, copper, forestry, and fishing are important industries in the West. **Seattle**, Washington's largest city, is home to many of these industries.

**CHANGES IN THE NATION**

The United States has faced many challenges in recent years. Trade, technology, and an abundance of natural resources have helped make the U.S. economy strong. However, by the end of 2007, the United States faced a recession, or a sharp decrease in economic activity. The housing market collapsed, some banks and businesses failed, and millions of jobs were lost.

**Terrorism** continued to threaten the nation's safety. After the deadliest terrorist attack in U.S. history on September 11, 2001, the United States and other world leaders began working together to combat terrorism.

In 2008, in the highest voter turnout for any election in U.S. history, Barack Obama was elected president. He became the nation's first African American president.

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences** Think about the physical features, climates, natural resources, industries, and economies of the regions in the United States. Choose the region you would most like to live in and explain why.

**Where are the major cities of the Midwest located?**

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**What is the largest region in the United States?**

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**What are two major issues the United States has faced in recent years?**

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**Section 3, *continued***

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Chicago	Detroit	megalopolis	terrorism
Seattle	strip mining	Washington, D.C.	

**DIRECTIONS** On the line provided before each statement, write **T** if a statement is true and **F** if a statement is false. If the statement is false, write the term from the word bank that would make the statement correct on the line after each sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Seattle and New York are part of a megalopolis in the northeastern region of the United States.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Most major cities in the Midwest, such as Detroit and Chicago, are located on rivers or the Great Lakes.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Because strip mining leads to soil erosion and other problems in the West, laws have been passed to protect the land there.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Terrorist acts in the United States have encouraged leaders around the world to work together to combat the problem of terrorism.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Forestry and fishing are two important economic activities in the Detroit area.

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**DIRECTIONS** Choose four of the terms from the word bank. On a separate sheet of paper use these terms to write a description of the United States.