Montana Today: A Geographical Study Lesson Plan

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.
Montana Historical Society

Grade Level: 4–6

Enduring Understandings

Geography shapes our lives. Montana Indians are important to our state.

Objectives

Students will

- Create, explore, and interpret maps of Montana to gather information.
- Use inquiry to understand more about the state.
- Use maps and other sources to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their environmental characteristics.
- Explore how environmental and cultural characteristics influence population distribution.
- Learn about Montana's three regions.
- Learn about Montana's tribal nations.
- Practice summarizing information.
- Read to answer questions.

Time: 10-15 days

Teaching Notes: If you teach fourth grade and need to save time, consider skipping Mapping Montana, A-Z (Part 4 of this unit).

If you teach sixth grade or advanced readers, the readings included with this unit may be too basic for your students. If so, you may want to substitute the following sections of *Montana: Stories of the Land* for the readings included with this lesson:

Chapter 1, pp. 11-17 ("The Three Ecological Regions of Montana" through the end of the chapter)

Chapter 22, pp. 440-42 ("Who We Are" and "Our Population Is Aging"), pp. 443-44 ("The Challenges We Face" and "In Butte: A 90-year Boom Ends"), pp. 448-52 ("Rebuilding Montana's Economy" and "Conflict and Compromise over the Land"), and pp. 454-55 ("Modern Montana in Indian Country").

You can find PDFs of the chapters at our website. Chapter 1 is at https://mhs.mt.gov/education/StoriesOfTheLand/Part1/Chapter1 and Chapter 22 is at https://mhs.mt.gov/education/StoriesOfTheLand/Part4/Chapter22. If you do have students read from *Montana: Stories of the Land,* have them make their own Take Away bookmarks by using the subheads of each section they read. You can also download the Take Away bookmarks we created for the textbook from the chapters' For Educators: Resources pages.

Content Standards

Common Core ELA Standards, Montana Social Studies Standards, and Essential Understandings regarding Montana Indians:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively ...
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.10 Write routinely...
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions...
- MCSS 3.1 Analyze and use various

representations of the Earth … to gather and compare information about a place.
- MSSS 3.2 Locate on a map or globe physical features…
- EU1 There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana…
- EU4 Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not "given" to them.

C3 Framework:

- D2.Geo.1.3-5 Construct maps and other graphic representations of both familiar and unfamiliar places.
- D2.Geo.2.3-5 Use maps … to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their environmental characteristics
- D2.Geo.6.3-5 Describe how environmental and cultural characteristics influence population distribution in specific places or regions.
- D2.Geo.7.3-5 Explain how cultural and environmental characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people, goods, and ideas.
- D2.Geo.8.3-5 Explain how human settlements and movements relate to the locations and use of various natural resources.

Materials

For Part 1: Exploring Montana Today through Population Data

- An outline map showing Montana counties, one map per student or outline maps of counties by region (see below)
- Analyze the Map Worksheet (see below)
- County population data: Download information from http://ceic.mt.gov/Data (if link is broken, search "Montana population by county" or the CEIC website)
- Projector
- Colored pencils
- Pens, pencils, paper
- Timer

For Part 2: Reading to Learn about Montana

- Copies of reading and Take Away bookmarks or Reading Worksheet (choose the format you think will work best for your students). One per student, below
- Pens or pencils

For Part 3: Montana Reservations and Tribal Nations

- Copies of reading and Take Away bookmarks or worksheet
- Internet access and computers (one computer for every two students)
- Projector
- Maps students created in Part 1

Optional:

- Contemporary American Indians in Montana footlocker and/or online user guide. Footlocker can be borrowed through the MHS Outreach and Interpretation Department, https://mhs.mt.gov/education/Footlocker.

For Part 4: Mapping Montana, A-Z

- A Montana State Highway map for each student or team of students. These can be ordered by calling (406) 841-2870 or (800) 847-4868 (press 2).
- Mapping Montana, A to Z, Lesson Plan, http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/education/docs/PlaceNamesLessonPlans.pdf and copies of the worksheets from the lesson plan, one per student or student group
- A ruler and/or string, three colored highlighters, pencil
- Four copies of *Montana Place Names: from Alzada to Zortman, A Montana Historical Society Guide* (Helena, 2009) and/or access to the Montana Place Names Companion website: http://mtplacenames.org/. Books can be purchased through the Montana Historical Society Museum Store (1-800-243-9900) or borrowed from the MHS Outreach and Interpretation Department: request the Montana Place Names Mini Footlocker.

- Calculators and small prizes (optional)

• For Part 5: Wrap-up

- Copies of reading and Take Away bookmarks or worksheet
- The students' "Write Your Way In" free writes
- Pens or pencils
- Timer

Pre-unit Preparation

- Review the entire lesson and order Montana State Highway maps.
- Decide if you want to order either the Montana Place Names Mini Footlocker or the Contemporary American Indians in Montana Footlocker from the Montana Historical Society and complete your order.

Part 1: Exploring Montana Today through Population Data

Time: 2 days

Pre-Lesson Preparation

- Review the lesson plan and gather the materials listed above in the "Materials" section.
- Decide if each student will create his or her own map, if you will have two students working on one map, or if you will have students working in groups of three.
- Print out and make copies of the Outline Map of Montana Counties. If student will be working in pairs, enlarge the map by 120 percent and print it on legal size paper. If students are working in groups of three, print and make copies of the Counties by Region maps. Precut the maps so the counties will join together while leaving any margin that doesn't abut another county.
- Download and prepare to project county population data.

Procedure

Step 1: "Write Your Way In" (5 minutes)

1. Ask students to take out a pencil and their writing journals, or a sheet of paper, and date it. Let them know that they will be thinking hard and writing for five minutes nonstop, as soon as you say, "Go!" You will be using a timer and they must keep on going, not lifting their pencils until the five minutes are up. If they are stuck for what to write next, encourage them to write, "I am thinking!" until they think of more to say. Remind them they can use their imaginations! Create a sense of urgency! For this exercise, they should not be concerned with their spelling, etc. They should just think and pour out their thoughts on paper.

2. Provide students with the following prompt: "What do you know about Montana?"

3. When the timer goes off at the end of five minutes, tell students to draw a line where they stopped. (Make sure they save their "Write Their Way Ins".)

Step 2: Create Maps

1. Provide each student (or pair of students) an Outline Map of Montana Counties and project a chart showing population. (If students are working in groups, assign groups of three and give each member of the group a different region.)

2. Review the instructions:

   a. Color all the counties with 50,000 or more people blue.

   b. Color all the counties with between 10,000 and 49,999 people green.

   c. Color all the counties with between 5,000 and 9,999 people light brown or tan.

   d. Color all the counties with more than 1,500 and 4,999 yellow.

   e. Leave all the counties with less than 1,500 white.

3. If students worked with the Counties by Region

maps, have them join their maps together after they finish coloring. (Have students put scrap paper behind their maps before taping the front of the map. Then tape the scrap paper to the back of the map to reinforce the join.)

Step 3: Analyze Maps

1. Project or distribute the Analyzing the Map worksheet.

2. Have students work individually, in pairs, in small groups, or as a whole class to complete the worksheet.

   a. Circulate and help students as needed. If students are working independently or in pairs or small groups, pause after they've answered the first two questions and have them share their answers.

   b. Help students find your county before they answer Question 3.

   c. Review students' answers to questions 3-6.

   d. As a class, discuss the questions labeled "For Group Discussion." (Don't give students the answers but let them know that these are the big questions they will continue to explore throughout the unit.)

3. Make sure that students save their maps.

Part 2: Reading to Learn about Montana

Time: 2-3 days

Pre-lesson Preparation

- Review the lesson plan.
- Make copies of reading (below).
- Print and cut out Take Away bookmarks or Reading Worksheet (choose the graphic organizer you think will work best for your students), below.

Procedure

1. Establish the purpose for reading (write on board): How does Montana's climate, geology, and geography affect the lives of Montanans?

2. Distribute the Take Away bookmarks or worksheets. Tell students that these are a tool to help them learn to summarize information. After they read each section, they are going to write the gist—or most important ideas—on their bookmark or worksheet. Remind them that they don't have much room, so they'll need to think before they write down their "take away."

3. Have students read the first four sections: "Welcome to Montana," "The Continental Divide," "Montana's Three Regions," and "Montana's Climate."

   a. Every fifteen minutes have students stop and pair/share for two minutes, so they can discuss what they think are the most interesting and important things they've read so far and any insights they've gained on the guiding question.

   b. After students read each section have them complete that section's space on their Take Away bookmark or worksheet. Make sure they save this (and the reading).

4. Discuss as a class: How does Montana's climate, geology, and geography affect your life?

Part 3: Montana Reservations and Tribal Nations

Time: 1-2 days

Teaching note: You can expand your exploration of Montana's tribes and reservations further, using material from Contemporary American Indians in Montana footlocker.

Pre-lesson Preparation

- Review the lesson plan.
- Review EU4 in *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians* to prepare yourself to lead a discussion on reservations. (This document is posted on the Montana Office of Public Instruction's Indian Education Division website, http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education.)
- Arrange for students to retrieve their Take Away bookmarks or worksheets, copies of the readings, and the maps they made.
- Arrange for computers with internet access (one per every two students).
- Check URL for Montana Tribes Learning Activities https://montanatribes.org/learning-activities/ (if link is broken, search "Montana Tribes Learning Activities")
- Arrange to project *Introducing the First Nations of Montana to the World,* https://vimeo.com/49771618 (if link is broken, search the title and Montana Office of Tourism)

Procedure:

1. Establish the purpose for reading (write on board): What tribal nations live in Montana?

2. Have students read "Montana's Reservations and Tribal Nations" (the next section of the reading, below) and complete that square on their Take Away bookmark.

3. Discuss the concept of "reservation."

    a. What does it mean that "Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not 'given' to them" (EU4)?

    b. Why is this an important concept?

    c. What is the implication of this understanding?

4. Have students work in pairs to do the Montana Tribes Learning Activities—activities to learn tribal names and locations.

5. Watch the eight-minute video *Introducing the First Nations of Montana to the World* on Vimeo.

Part 4: Mapping Montana, A-Z

Time: 3-5 days

Pre-lesson Preparation

Review the lesson plan and gather the materials listed above in the "Materials" section.

Procedure

Have students complete the Mapping Montana, A to Z lesson plan, modifying the lesson to make it shorter by having each student (or small group of students) map only five letters (assign letters so as to get through the entire alphabet as a class).

Part 5: Wrap-up

Time: 1 day

Pre-lesson Preparation

- Review the lesson plan.
- Arrange for students to retrieve their Take Away bookmarks, copies of the readings, and the maps they made and their map worksheets.

Procedure

Step 1: Read to Find Out

1. Establish the purpose for reading (write on board): How does Montana's geography and geology affect its economy?

2. Have students read the last two sections: "Montana's Economy" and "Montana: Land and People" and complete the "Montana's Economy" space on the Take Away bookmark or Reading Worksheet.

Step 2: Discuss

1. Return to the population maps students made at the beginning of the unit and the list of questions they made during the initial discussion (when you asked them what the patterns made them wonder.)

2. Now that they've read the chapter, can they answer any of these questions?

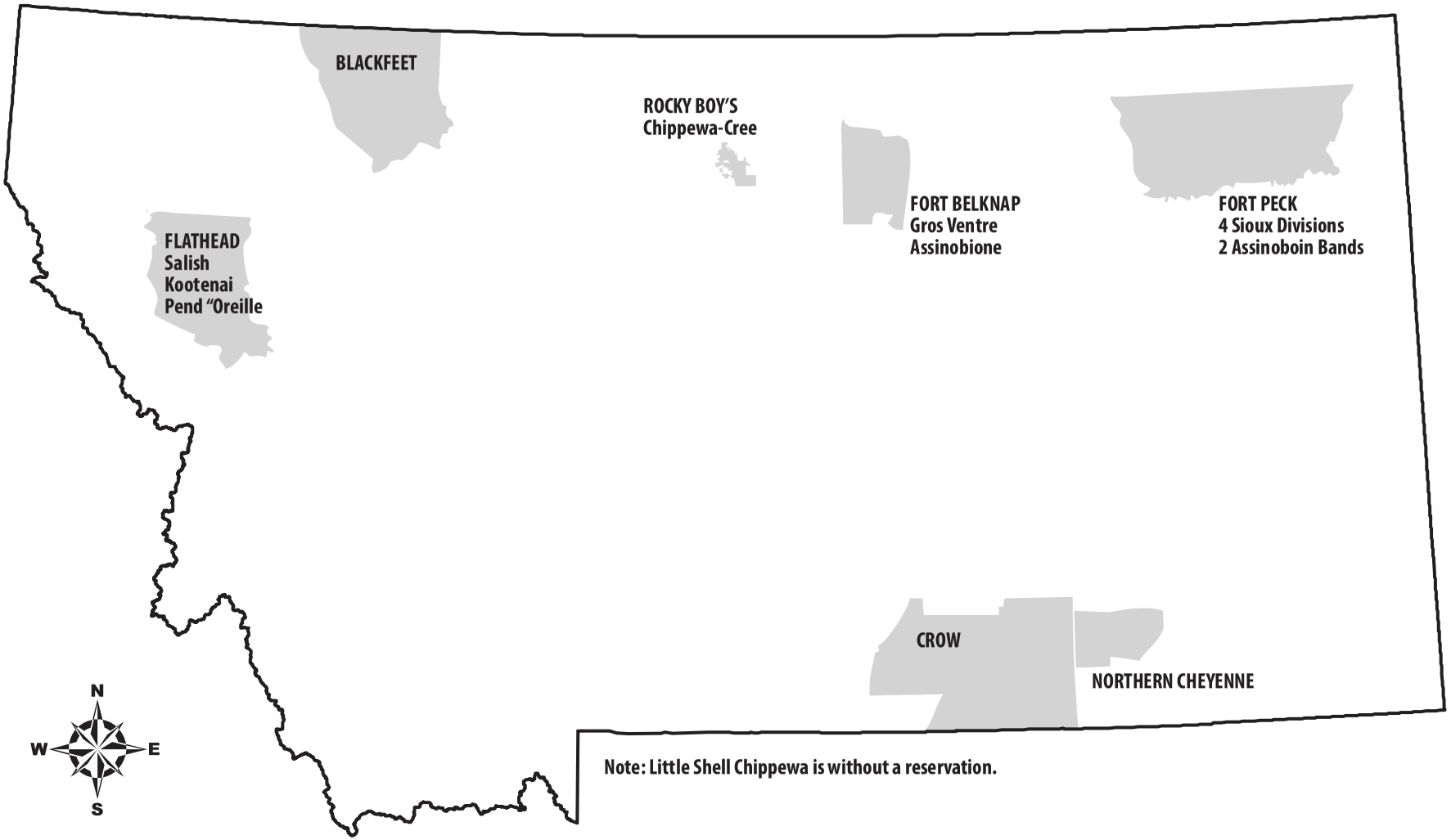
Step 3: Reflect with a "Write Your Way Out"

1. Ask students to retrieve their "Write Your Way In" free writes. Tell them they will be writing below the line they drew earlier for this next three-minute nonstop writing period.

2. Tell students that they are going to do another quick write, writing nonstop from the moment you say "Go!" until the timer goes off. Remind them of the procedure: they must write the entire time. They do not need to worry about spelling, grammar, or punctuation. If they are stuck for what to write next, encourage them to write, "I am thinking!" until they think of more to say. Create a sense of urgency!

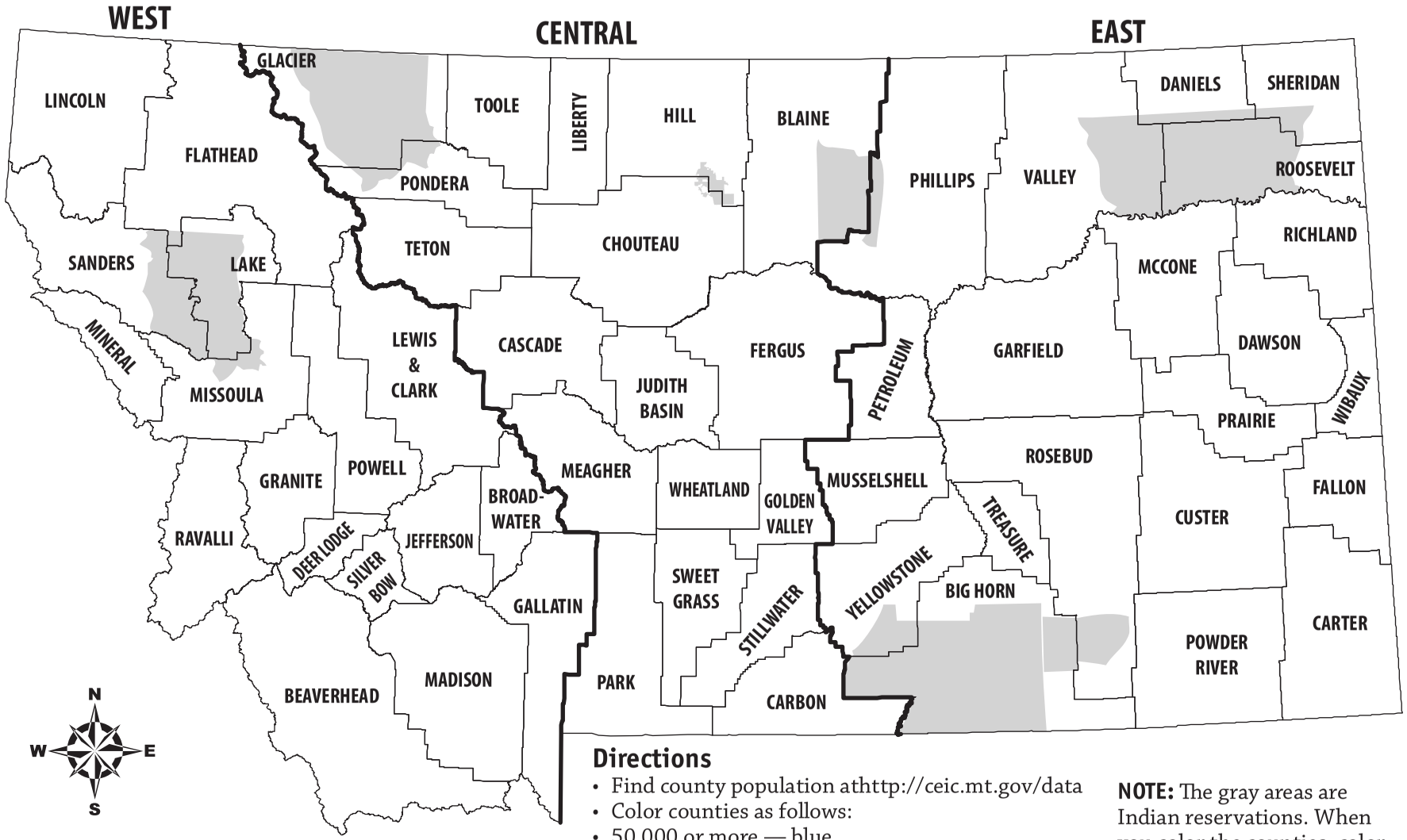
3. Set the timer and provide the prompt: "Now what do you know about Montana?"

Seven Montana Reservations/Twelve Tribal Nations



Note: Little Shell Chippewa is without a reservation.

Name: _____



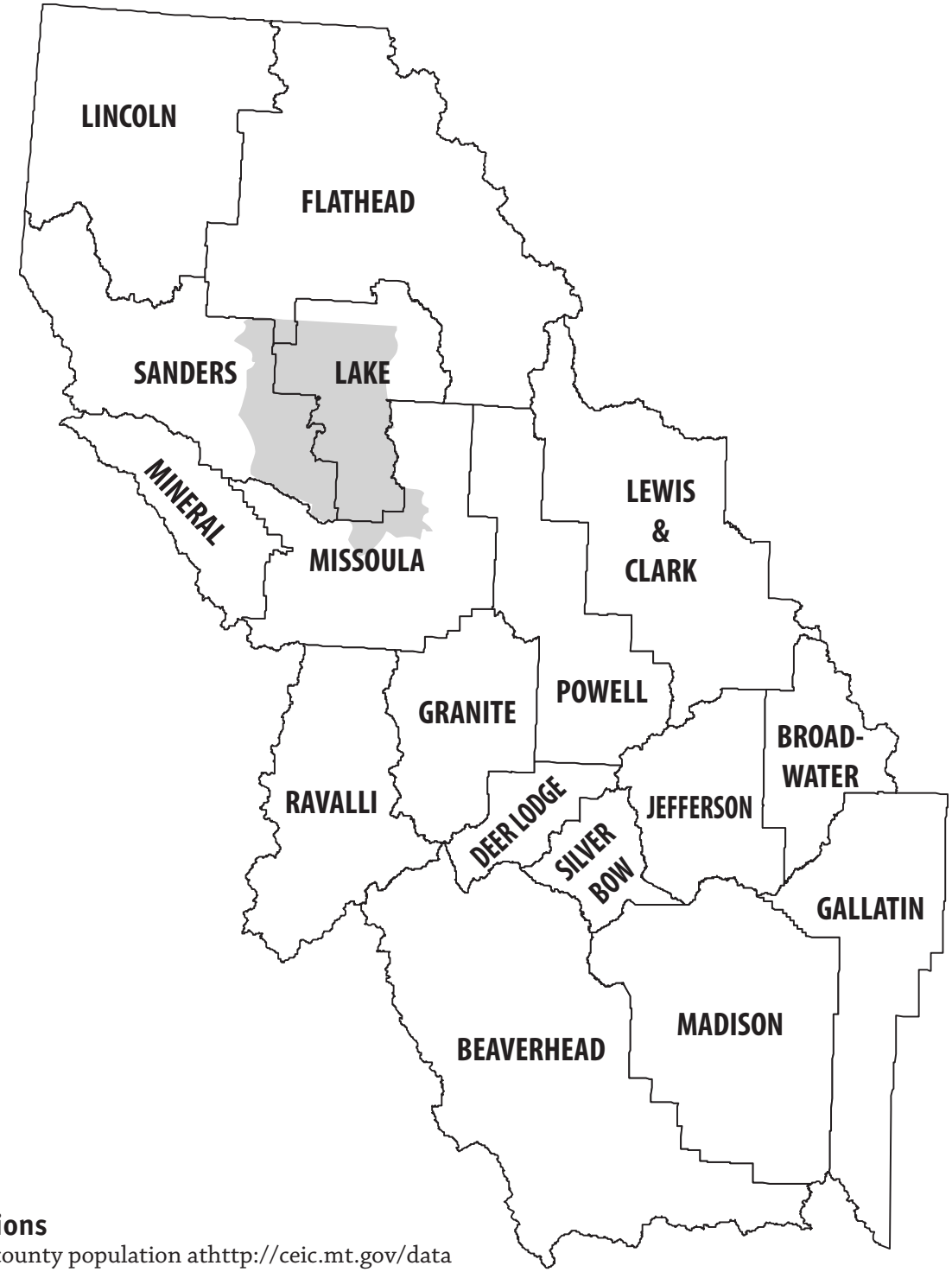
Directions

- Find county population athttp://ceic.mt.gov/data
- Color counties as follows:
- 50,000 or more — blue
- 10,000 to 49,999 — green
- 5,000 to 9,999 — light brown
- 1,500 to 4,999 — yellow
- 0 to 1,499 — white

NOTE: The gray areas are Indian reservations. When you color the counties, color over the reservations, but make sure to let the gray show through.

Western

Name: _____



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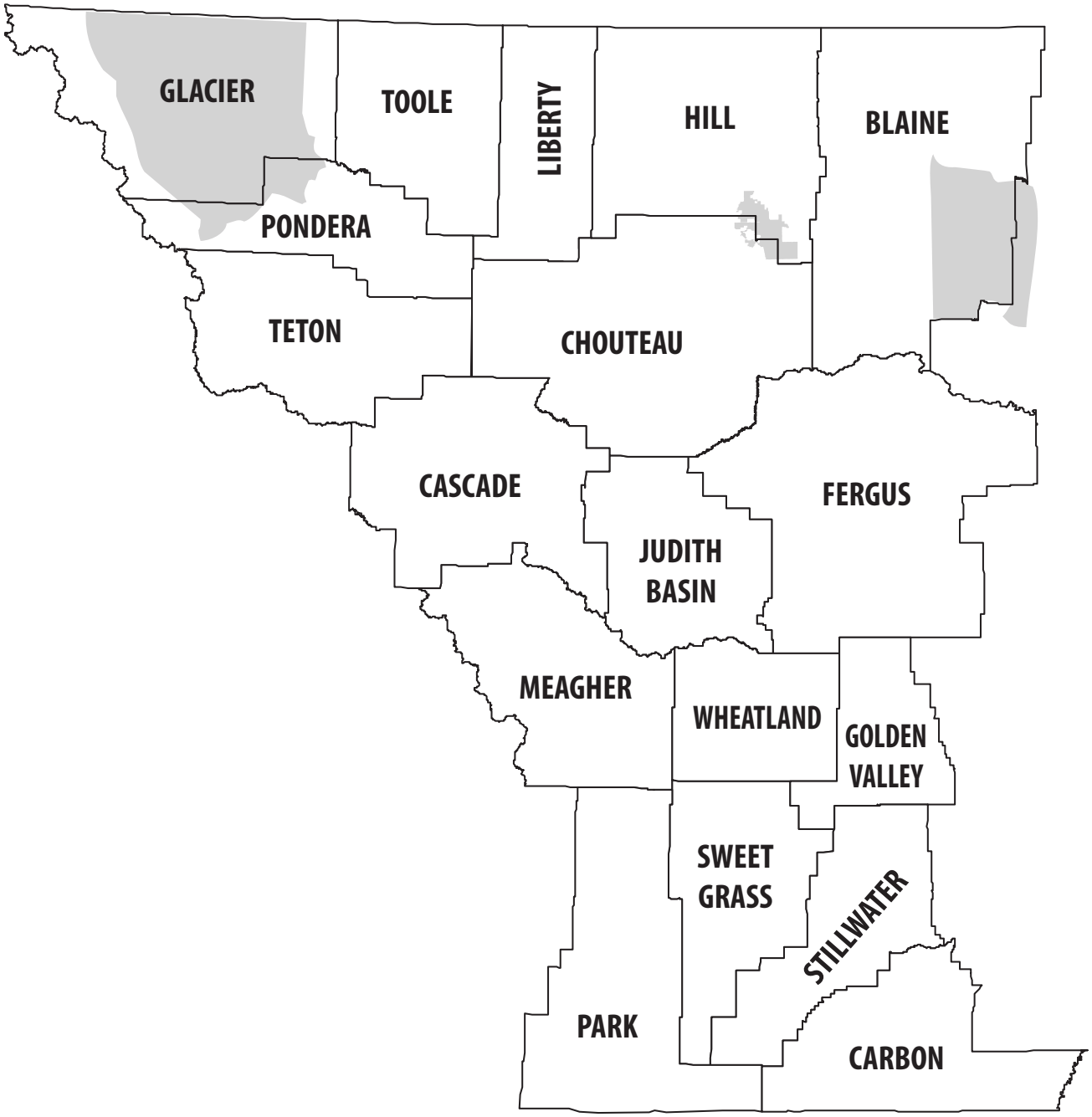
Central

Name: _____



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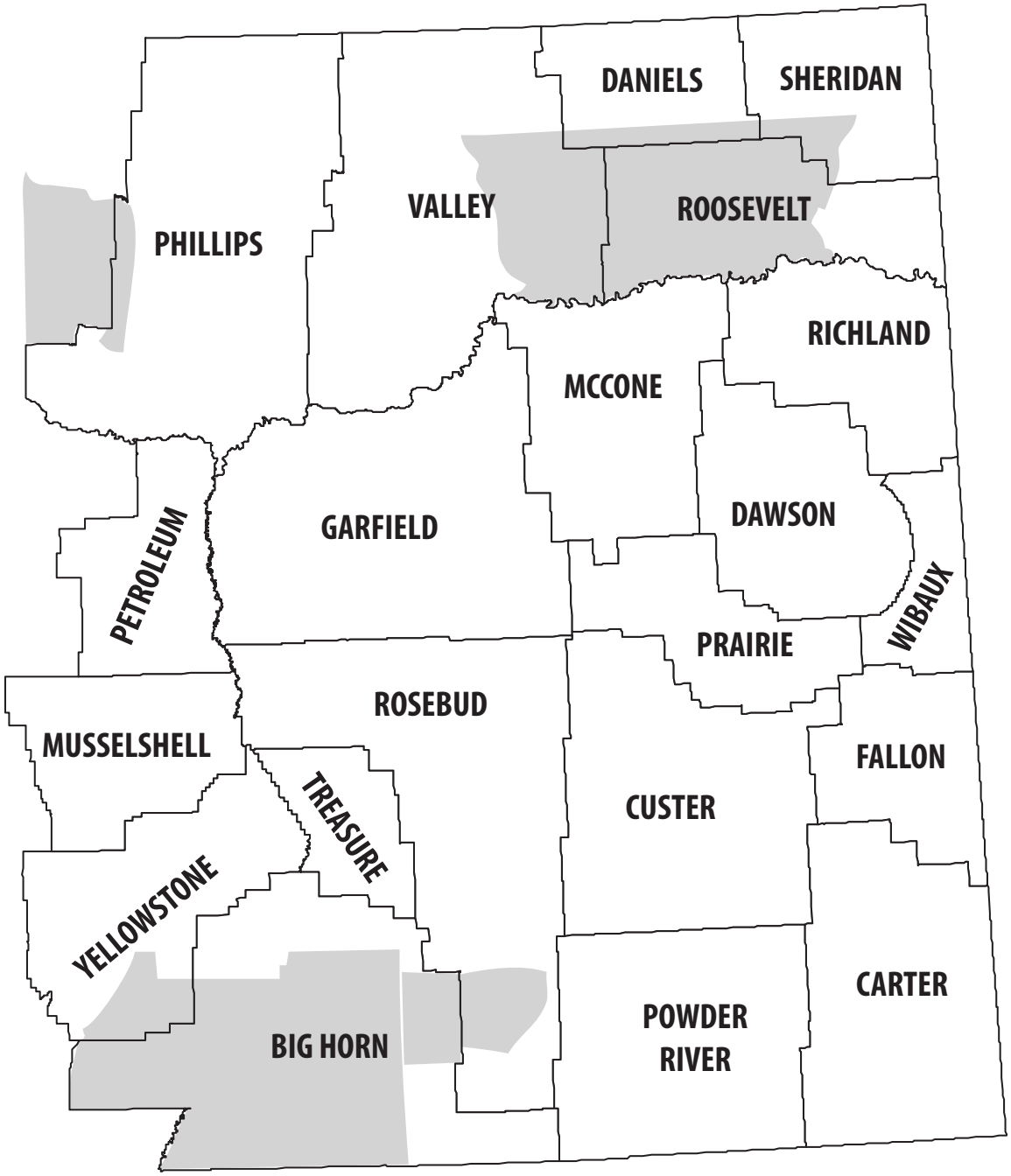
NOTE: The gray areas are Indian reservations. When you color the counties, color over the reservations, but make sure to let the gray show through.

Eastern

Name: _____



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- 0 to 1,499 — white

NOTE: The gray areas are Indian reservations. When you color the counties, color over the reservations, but make sure to let the gray show through.

Name: _____

Analyzing the Map

1. Now that you have colored the map, you see any patterns? What do those patterns make you wonder?

2. Where are the most populated counties (west, central, east)? The least populated?

3. Find your county. What region is it in? What color is it? Is it the same or different from nearby counties?

4. Write the reservation name and the names of the tribes who live there on the sides of your map. Draw a line from the names to the reservation.

5. Place dots in the counties that contain Montana's ten largest cities. Label each dot with the city's name (or if there isn't room, the first letter of the city's name).

Billings: Yellowstone County	Butte: Silver Bow County	Havre: Hill County
Great Falls: Cascade County	Helena: Lewis and Clark County	Miles City: Custer County
Missoula: Missoula County	Kalispell: Flathead County	
Bozeman: Gallatin County	Belgrade: Gallatin County	

6. What relationship do you see between county population and the locations of Montana's largest cities?

For group discussion: Why do you think the highest population centers (cities) are where they are? What does this map suggest about ways that Montana's climate, geology, and geography affect the lives of Montanans?

Take Away!

Write the most important ideas from each section as you read.

Welcome to Montana

The Continental Divide

Montana's Three Regions

Take Away!

Write the most important ideas from each section as you read.

Welcome to Montana

The Continental Divide

Montana's Three Regions

Take Away!

Write the most important ideas from each section as you read.

Welcome to Montana

The Continental Divide

Montana's Three Regions

Make two sided copies and cut out the bookmarks (each student should get only one Take Away)

Make two sided copies and cut out the bookmarks (each student should get only one Take Away)

Take Away!

Write the most important ideas from each section as you read.

Montana's Climate

Montana's Reservations and Tribal Nations

Montana's Economy

Take Away!

Write the most important ideas from each section as you read.

Montana's Climate

Montana's Reservations and Tribal Nations

Montana's Economy

Take Away!

Write the most important ideas from each section as you read.

Montana's Climate

Montana's Reservations and Tribal Nations

Montana's Economy

Name: _____

This Is Montana Notetaking Worksheet

Instructions: Summarize each section as you read it. Remember: you don't have room to write about everything in the section so just choose the most important ideas.

Welcome to Montana

The Continental Divide

Montana's Three Regions

Montana's Climate

Montana's Reservations and Tribal Nations

Montana's Economy

THIS IS MONTANA

What is Montana like?

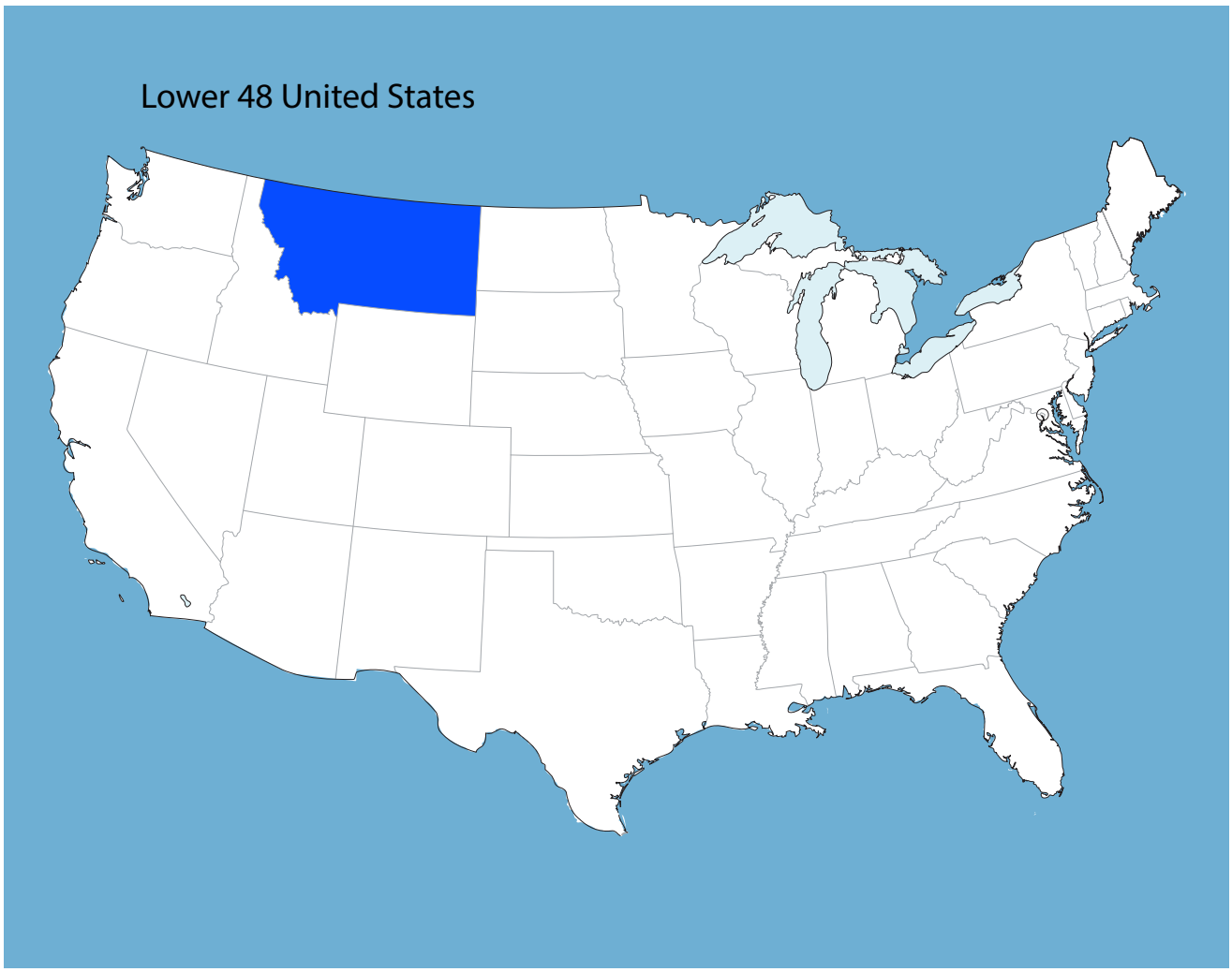
- How does its climate, geography, and geology affect its people?

Above Timberline, by R. E. DeCamp, 1928

WELCOME TO MONTANA

Montana is the fourth-largest state in the United States. It contains 147,042 square miles. Only Alaska, Texas, and California have more land. However, compared to most states, not very many people live here. In 2016, about one million people lived in Montana. That sounds like a big number, but it isn't when you compare it with other places. For example, New York City has over 8.5 million people all living in 302 square miles.

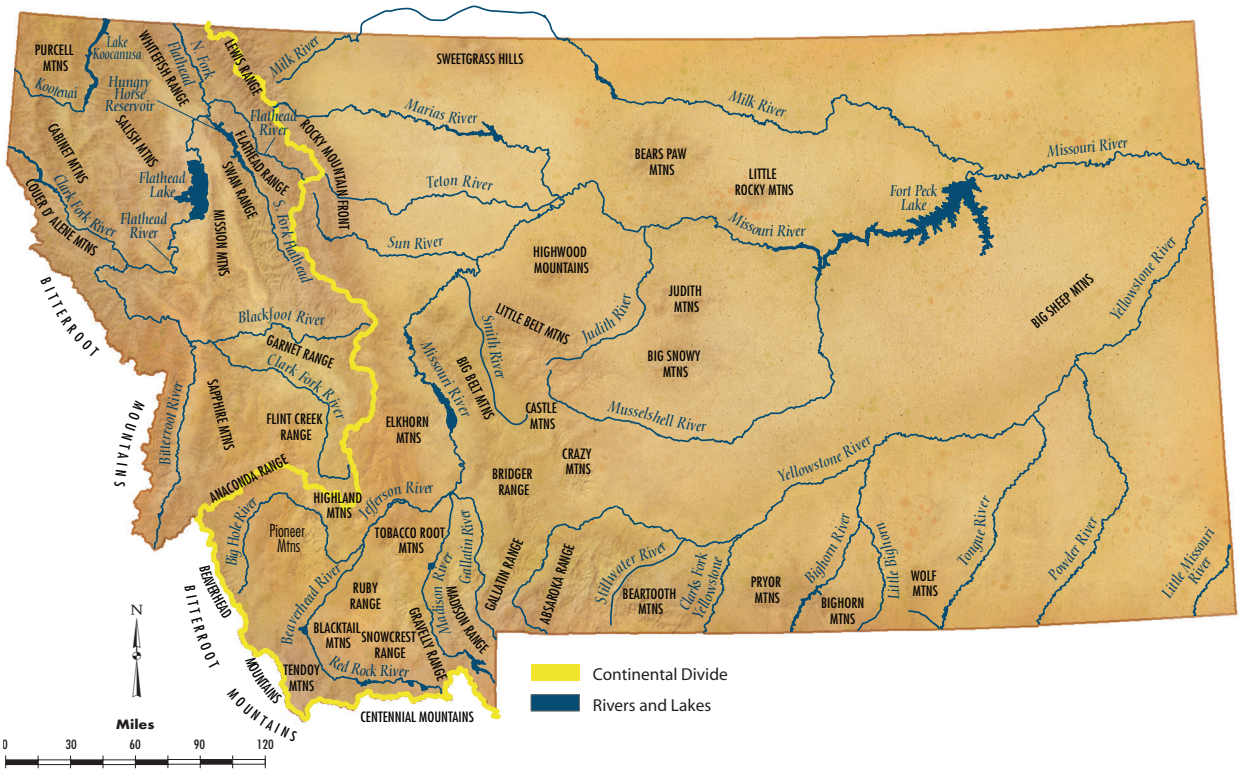
Montana is in the northwestern region of the United States. It borders three Canadian provinces on the north. To the west, it borders Idaho. To the south, it borders Wyoming, and to the east it borders North and South Dakota.



Montana is known for its natural beauty and wildlife. If you drive across Montana, you will see mountains, **foothills** (hills at the edge of a mountain range), **badlands** (an area of rocks and hills with little vegetation created by **erosion**), and **prairies** (flat grasslands). It is hard to believe one state can contain so many different landscapes.

THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

The **Continental Divide** (a mountain ridge that separates North America) runs through Montana. On the west side of the Continental Divide, rivers drain into the Pacific Ocean. On the east side of the divide, rivers drain into the Atlantic Ocean.



Montana is home to Triple Divide Peak. That's where the Continental Divide and the Northern Divide meet. (The Northern Divide separates waters that flow north from waters that flow south. Waters north of the Northern Divide flow into the Arctic Ocean.) A raindrop that falls on Triple Divide Peak, in Glacier National Park, can flow into either the Pacific, Atlantic, or Arctic Oceans.

MONTANA'S THREE REGIONS

Montana has three **distinct** (separate) regions with very different **climates** (typical weather conditions) and **natural resources** (things found in nature and used by people). Because each region's geography is different, each region's history is also different.

Western Montana

Flathead Lake is the largest natural freshwater body west of the Great Lakes.

Western Montana has tall mountains, winding rivers, and thick forests. Western Montana sees more rain than any other part of the state. Between the mountains are wide, **fertile** (good for growing things) valleys. Western Montana's mountains are rich in gold, silver, and copper.

The Flathead, by R. E. DeCamp, is a painting of western Montana's largest lake.

Central Montana

Central Montana spreads east from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Its small, scattered mountain ranges rise above gently rolling **plains** (flat land). Both the Missouri River and the Yellowstone River begin in central Montana. These are Montana's two largest rivers.

Crazy Mountains, near Lennep, in central Montana

Eastern Montana

Eastern Montana is a land of rolling plains and endless sky. It is dry and windy. Temperatures here are often colder in winter and hotter in summer than in the rest of the state. It is rich in coal and natural

gas. The grass that grows here is very good for grazing animals, including buffalo, cattle, and sheep.

Sunset east of Miles City, in eastern Montana.

MONTANA'S CLIMATE

Montana is known as a "state of extremes." It can get very cold. In the winter of 1954, on Rogers Pass, the temperature dropped to a record low: -79° F! But it can get very hot, too. In the summer of 1893, in Glendive, temperatures rose to 117° F.

Montana's mountains affect its climate. West of the Continental Divide, winters are generally milder and summers are cooler. There is also more **precipitation** (rain and snow).

Central Montana is known for its **chinooks**. Chinooks are warm winds that blow down the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. These winds melt the snow and bring warm weather in the middle of winter. However, soon the temperature drops again. On January 15, 1972, Loma, Montana, experienced a chinook. In one day, the temperature rose from -54° F to 48° F. How many degrees total is that?

Eastern Montana is drier and hotter than western Montana, but it can get very cold there, too!

MONTANA'S RESERVATIONS AND TRIBAL NATIONS

Richard Dionne, a middle school counselor from the Fort Peck Reservation, is one of many Montana tribal members "Making Montana Proud."

Montana is home to seven reservations and twelve tribal nations. Tribal people were in Montana long before Europeans came to this **continent** (one of the main areas of land on earth). Today members of Montana Indian tribes live in every Montana city as well as on reservations. **Reservations** are tribal land that the tribes **reserved** (held back) for themselves when they made **treaties** (agreements between nations) with the U.S. government. Here is a list of Montana's reservations and tribes:

Blackfeet Reservation: Home to the Blackfeet tribe, also known as the Niitsitapi (Pikuni)

Crow Reservation: Home to the Crow tribe, also known as the Apsaalooke

Flathead Reservation: Home to the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille tribes, also known as the Sélish, Ktunaxa, and Qíispé

Fort Belknap Reservation: Home to the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre tribes, also known as the Nakoda and A'aninin (White Clay)

Fort Peck Reservation: Home to the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes, also known as the Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota

Northern Cheyenne Reservation: Home to the Northern Cheyenne tribe, also known as the Tsetsêhesêstâhase/So'taahe

Rocky Boy's Reservation: Home to the Chippewa Cree tribe, also known as the Annishinabe Ne-i-yah-wahk

The Little Shell Chippewa tribe (Annishinabe and Métis) do not have a reservation. Its headquarters is in Great Falls.

MONTANA'S ECONOMY

Agriculture is an important part of Montana's economy.

Montana's **economy** (businesses and jobs) has a lot to do with its **geography** (where it is on a map) and its **geology** (minerals, rocks, and soil). Montana is a large, rural state, far from the ocean and major population centers, so it does not have many big factories. It would cost too much to get the things the factories made to people who want to buy them. Instead of working in factories, many Montanans work in service jobs. A service job is anything that helps other people. Service workers include doctors and

nurses, cooks and teachers, store clerks and car mechanics.

Montana's size also means that many people work in transportation. It takes a lot of workers to keep the roads in good shape, to run the railroads, and to drive the trucks that carry things in and out of the state.

Montana's largest industries are agriculture, tourism, timber, and mining. All of these industries rely on the state's natural resources. Tourists visit Montana to enjoy its natural beauty. You can't log without trees, and you can't mine without rich deposits of coal, oil, gas, copper, silver, or gold. To raise cattle or grow crops, you need fertile soil and clean water.

MONTANA: LAND AND PEOPLE

Montana's climate, geology, and geography have shaped the state's history. They continue to shape the lives of Montanans today. How have these factors affected your life?

VOCABULARY

badlands: an area of rocks and hills with little vegetation created by erosion

chinook: a warm wind that blows down the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains

climate: typical weather conditions

continent: one of the main areas of land on earth

Continental Divide: a mountain ridge that separates North America and determines whether water flows east to the Atlantic Ocean or west to the Pacific Ocean

distinct: separate

economy: businesses and jobs

erosion: the process by which rock or soil is gradually taken away by wind, rain, or water

fertile: good for growing things

foothills: hills at the edge of a mountain range

geography: where things are, the study of particular places

geology: minerals, rocks, and soil and the study of these things

natural resources: things found in nature and used by people

plains: flat land

prairies: flat grasslands

precipitation: rain and snow

reservations: tribal land that the tribes reserved (held back) by treaty

treaty: agreement between nations

IMAGE CREDITS

Fig. 1 *Above Timberline,* R. E. DeCamp, 1928, Capitol Art Collection, Montana Historical Society (MHS) Museum, photo by Don Beatty

Fig. 2 Map of the United States, MHS

Fig. 3 Map of Montana's Rivers and Mountains, Montana Historical Society

Fig. 4 *The Flathead,* R. E. DeCamp, 1928, Capitol Art Collection, MHS Museum, photo by Don Beatty

Fig. 5 Crazy Mountains near Lennep, photo by Donnie Sexton, Travel Montana

Fig. 6 Sunset east Miles City, photo by Tom Ferris

Fig. 7 "Richard Dionne, Making Montana Proud," poster by Montana Office of Public Instruction

Fig. 8 Moving cattle near Lima, Montana, photo by Tom Ferris