

# Unit 1: Annotated Student Text

## CHAPTER 1

# THIS IS MONTANA

- What is Montana like?
- How does its climate, geography, and geology affect its people?



Montanans live in many different types of places. Some people live in the mountains while others live on the prairie.

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 created by **erosion** of rocks and hills with little vegetation), and **prairies** (flat grasslands). It is hard to believe one state can contain so many different landscapes.

*Teach Part 1, Lesson 1: Exploring Montana Today through Population Data before reading the chapter (p. 13).*

*Strategy: Create a Word Wall for vocabulary.*

## FAST FACTS

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 2020, a little more than 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 about 8.3 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.



*Teach Part 1, Lesson 2:  
Reading to Learn about  
Montana (p. 21).*



## 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.



Chief Mountain near Glacier National Park in Western Montana is an important landmark to many Montanans.

*Did you know? Most geographers (and Montanans) agree that the state contains three regions, but people disagree about where each region's borders should be.*

*Did you know? Montana has 28 important mountain ranges and about a third of the state is mountainous. Mountains influence climate, vegetation, and wildlife.*

### 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 longest rivers.



*The Missouri River flows through Central Montana. It is important not only to people, but to wildlife as well.*

### 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

*Did you know?*

*Montana is actually home to the headwaters of three major river systems: the Columbia River system, which flows into the Pacific Ocean; the Missouri River system, which flows into the Mississippi River and eventually into the Gulf of Mexico; and the Saskatchewan River system, which begins as St. Mary's River in Glacier National Park and flows northeast into Hudson's Bay.*



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



Winter weather can make life hard for people and animals living 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:  $-70^{\circ}\text{F}$ ! It can get very hot, too. In the summer of 1893, in Glendive, temperatures rose to  $117^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

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).

*Strategy: Project this picture and have students analyze it using Visual Thinking Strategies (see p. 300).*

*Did you know? Weather and climate are not the same things. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, "Weather refers to short term atmospheric conditions while climate is the weather of a specific region averaged over a long period of time."*

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



Photographer Adam Sings in the Timber (Apsáalooke) is one of many Montana tribal members "Making Montana Proud."

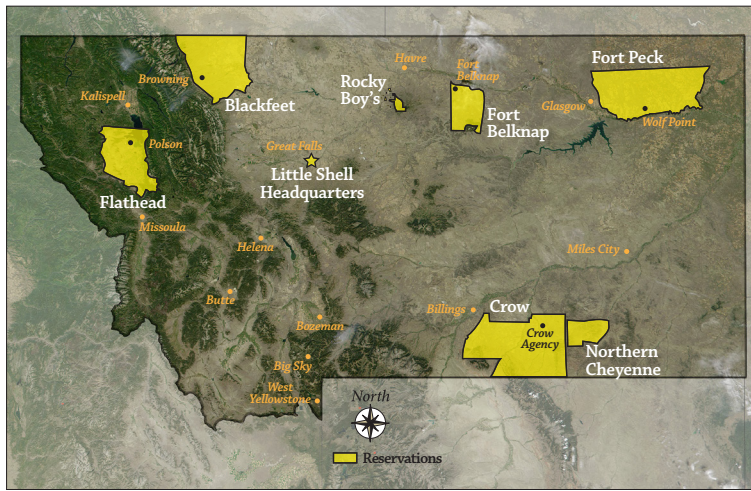
*Teach the Part 3 Lesson:  
Mapping Montana, A-Z  
(p. 22).*

*Teach the Part 2 Lesson:  
Montana Reservations  
and Tribal Nations  
(p. 21).*

*Tip: You can find  
many more resources  
for teaching about  
Montana tribes on  
the Indian Education  
Division of the  
Montana Office of  
Public Instruction's  
[website](#).*

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** (kept) for their own use when they made **treaties** (agreements between nations) with the U.S. government.

*Did you know?  
Montana is the only  
state whose constitution  
mandates teaching  
about Montana's tribal  
nations.*



Here is a list of Montana's reservations and tribes:

**Blackfeet Reservation:** Home to the Blackfeet tribe, also known as the Piikuni

**Crow Reservation:** Home to the Crow tribe, also known as the Apsáalooke



**Flathead Reservation:** Home to the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille tribes, also known as the Séliš, Ksanka (Ktunaxa), and Qíispé

**Fort Belknap Reservation:** Home to the Assiniboiné and Gros Ventre tribes, also known as the Nakoda and Aaniiihnen (White Clay)

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

**Northern Cheyenne Reservation:** Home to the Northern Cheyenne tribe, also known as the Tsétséhéstáhesé naa Suhtaio

**Rocky Boy's Reservation:** Home to the Chippewa and Cree tribes, also known as the Anishinaabe and Neyiowahk

**The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana** (Anishinaabe and Métis) do not have a reservation. Its headquarters is in Great Falls.

## 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. It does not have any huge factories because it would cost too much to get the things large factories make to the people who want to buy them. Instead of

*Background: There is often more than one way to spell tribal names. That's why you will see it spelled differently in different places. For more on this, see p. 22.*

*Teach the Part 4 Lesson: Montana's Economy (p. 28).*



*Animals like cattle and sheep play an important role in Montana's economy. Even some dogs have a job to do!*

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. Many other Montanans work in construction, building everything from houses to hospitals.

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.

Some of the most important parts of Montana's economy are agriculture, tourism, and mining. All of these **industries** (types of businesses) rely on the state's natural resources. Tourists

*Background:  
Historically, Montana's  
economy relied on  
resource extraction.  
Today the state's  
economy is much more  
diversified.*

visit Montana to enjoy its natural beauty, 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.

Even though agriculture and mining are very important to our state, they are not as important as they were fifty or one hundred years ago. Unlike many states that rely on a few big industries to provide most of their jobs, Montana is home to many different types of businesses. Montanans work in banks and law offices, sell real estate, design software, conduct scientific experiments, clean up abandoned mines, create art, and build furniture. This **diversity** (variety) is one of Montana's greatest economic strengths.

### 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?

*Teach the Part 5 Lesson:  
Wrap-up (p. 35).*