

Section 2

Climate Regions

A Varied Region

- The Far North
 - Tundra and subarctic
 - Long cold winters, brief cool summers
 - Few people
 - Arctic coast- no trees, too cold; further south- dense evergreen forests (waxy coating on needles keep moisture in cold)

A Varied Region

- The Pacific Coast
 - Affected by moist ocean winds
 - AK to northern CA- marine west coast climate- mild year round, lots of rain- evergreen, ferns, mosses
 - Southern CA- Mediterranean climate- warm dry summers, mild wet winters
 - Less rainfall

A Varied Region

- The West
 - Inland west- rain shadow- desert climate- hot summers, mild winters
 - Dry air trapped between Pacific ranges and Rockies
 - Plants have adapted
 - East of Rockies- partly dry steppe climate
 - Droughts (long periods without rainfall) are an issue
 - Increasing population- strain water resources

A Varied Region

- The Great Plains
 - Moist winds from Gulf and Arctic
 - Humid-continental climate
 - Cold snowy winters, hot humid summers
 - 1930s- Dust Bowl- economic ruin
 - Better farming practices since then

A Varied Region

- The East
 - Humid, year-round rain
 - Northeast- humid continental, southeast- humid subtropical
 - Variety of forests; wetlands and swamps in south
 - Similar summer temps, winter temps vary greatly
 - Summer- warm air from south blocks northern Arctic air
 - Winter- north gets Arctic blasts

A Varied Region

- Tropical Areas
 - 2 areas:
 - South Florida- tropical savanna- hot summer, warm winter- rain only during summer
 - Hawaii- above 70 degrees year round- tropical rain forests

Natural Hazards

- Severe Weather
 - Tornado- windstorm in form of a funnel-shaped cloud that often touches the ground
 - Winds can be over 300 mph- damaging
 - Any time of year
 - Central US- “Tornado Alley”
 - Hurricanes- form over the ocean in tropical areas- violent storms, heavy rains, high winds
 - Storm surge- high levels of sea water
 - June-September
 - Usually in the Southeast, can hit Northeast

Natural Hazards

- Blizzards- severe winter storms- high winds + heavy snow
 - “white out” conditions- can’t see
 - Winds can knock out power- dangerous- can stop a city

Natural Hazards

- Earthquakes and Volcanoes
 - Mostly on Pacific coast- various fault lines
 - 1906 San Francisco almost completely destroyed
 - Different building techniques today
 - Volcanoes in Pacific coast mtns, southern Alaska and HI- mostly dormant except HI