

Alabama: Our Beautiful Home

A photograph of the Alabama State Capitol building in Montgomery, Alabama. The building is a grand, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent central dome and a portico supported by tall columns. A clock face is visible on the dome. The building is surrounded by lush green trees and a well-maintained lawn with flower beds. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds.

Chapter 2: The Land We Call
Alabama

STUDY PRESENTATION



Section 1: [Regions](#)

Section 2: [Mineral, Energy, and Water Resources](#)

Section 3: [Weather, Climate, and Natural Hazards](#)

Section 4: [Natural Vegetation and Wildlife](#)

Section 5: [Culture](#)



Section 1: Regions

- Essential Question: How are Alabama's regions different?



Section 1: Regions

- What terms do I need to know?
 - pioneer
 - geology
 - mineral



Choosing Where to Settle

- **Pioneers** came to Alabama looking for good farmland.
- Five main kinds of land were found.
- Some settlers brought black slaves as workers.
- Some free blacks came too, along with shopkeepers, miners, builders, and laborers.
- Farming was better in some regions than others.



Land Regions of Alabama

- **Geology** helps us understand Alabama's regions.
- The regions are very large and cross into other states.
- The regions in Alabama are the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont, the Ridge and Valley, the Appalachian Plateau, and the Interior Plateau.

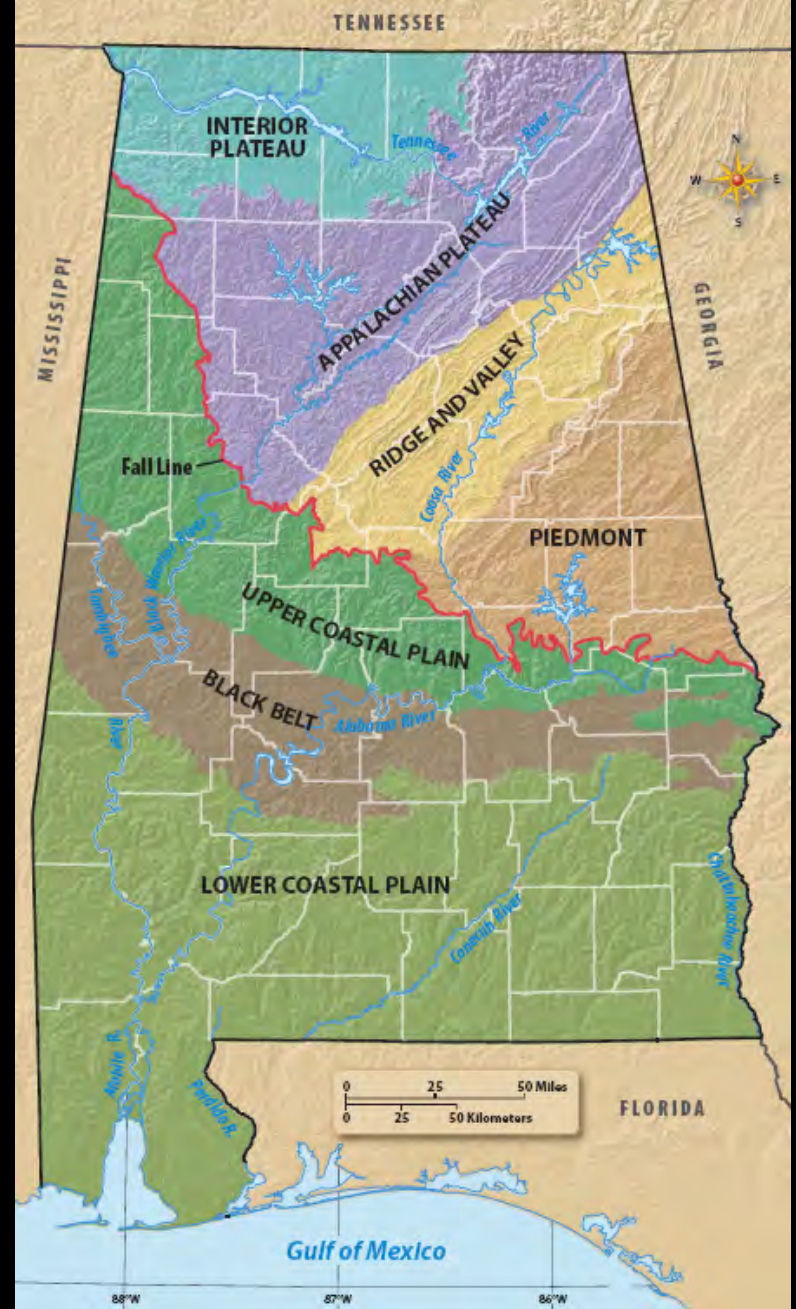
[Click for Alabama Regions Map](#)



Land Regions of Alabama



Land Regions of Alabama



The Coastal Plain

- This region of southern Alabama is mostly flat. It stretches from Texas to New Jersey.
- Rivers here run to the ocean.
- More than half of the state is in this region.
- Travel in this region was easier for settlers.
- The Fall Line is at the northern edge of the Coastal Plain. Waterfalls or rapids are usually found here. Settlements grew at the Fall Line.
- The Black Belt is at the northern part of the Coastal Plain. Settlers liked the dark, rich soil because crops grew better there.



The Piedmont

- The Piedmont stretches from Alabama to New Jersey and has low hills and broad valleys.
- Settlers found good farmland here. As farmers moved in, villages and towns grew to supply their needs.
- Settlers found marble, too. It was cut out of the ground (quarried) and sold to make buildings and monuments.



The Ridge and Valley

- This region begins near Birmingham and stretches to Pennsylvania and has long mountain ridges separated by valleys.
- Settlers traveled through the valleys and some farmed near the rich soil around the rivers. Cotton became an important crop.
- **Minerals**, iron ore, coal, and natural gas were found here, too.



The Appalachian Plateau and the Interior Plateau

- Plateaus have fairly level, high ground.
- The Appalachian Plateau stretches from Alabama to New York. Coal is found here.
- The Interior Plateau goes from Alabama to Ohio and Indiana and is sometimes called the Highland Rim.
- Settlers grew crops like cotton in the river valleys and later worked in coal mines and stone quarries.



Section 2: Mineral, Energy, and Water Resources

- Essential Question: Which natural resources attracted settlers to Alabama?

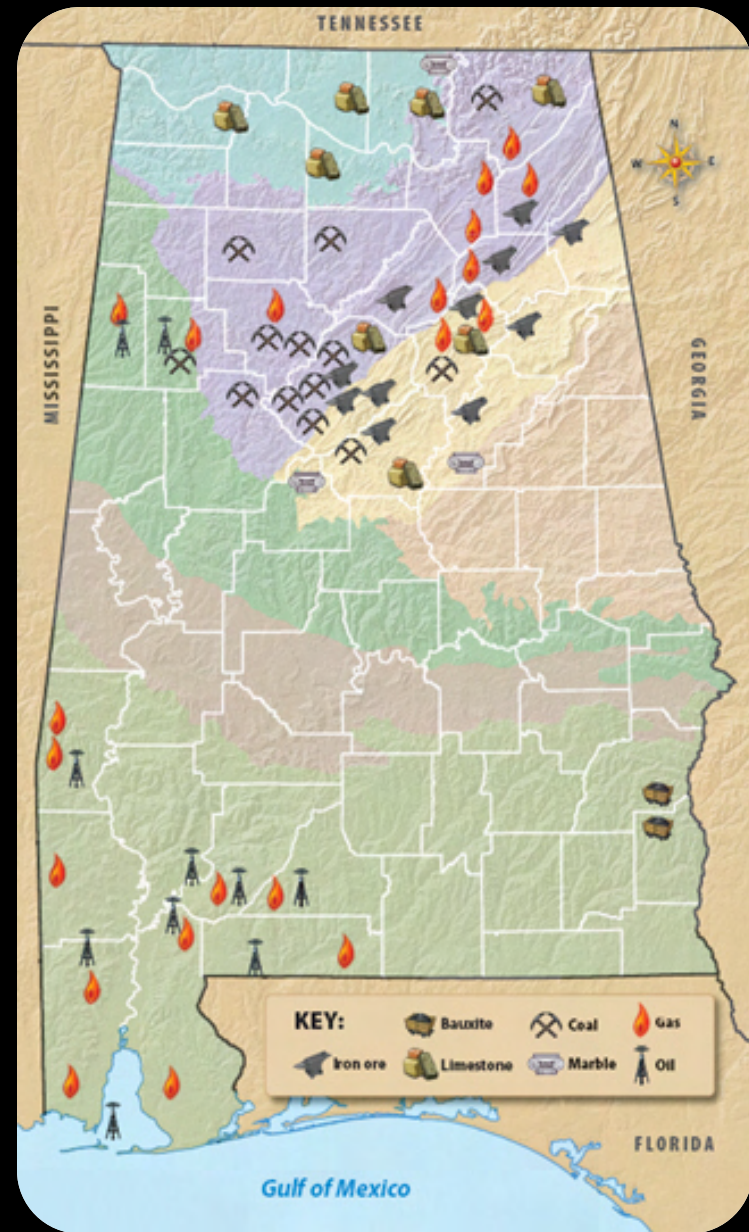


Section 2: Mineral, Energy, and Water Resources

- What terms do I need to know?
 - swamp
 - fertile
 - aquifer
 - groundwater
 - surface water
 - wetland
 - waterway



Mineral and Energy Resources



Soil

- Soil is made from minerals from broken down rocks and decayed plant and animal material.
- Some soil is very **fertile**, but some is not so good for growing plants.



Water Resources



- Fresh water was important to settlers.
- Alabama's fresh water is on the surface and underground.



Aquifers

- A great amount of water is stored beneath the earth's surface.
- Some rain soaks into the earth in layers called **aquifers**. Water stored here is called **groundwater**.
- When groundwater seeps from the ground, it forms springs.
- Settlers needed the water for themselves, their livestock, and their crops.
- Water came from wells, springs, creeks, and rivers.



Surface Water

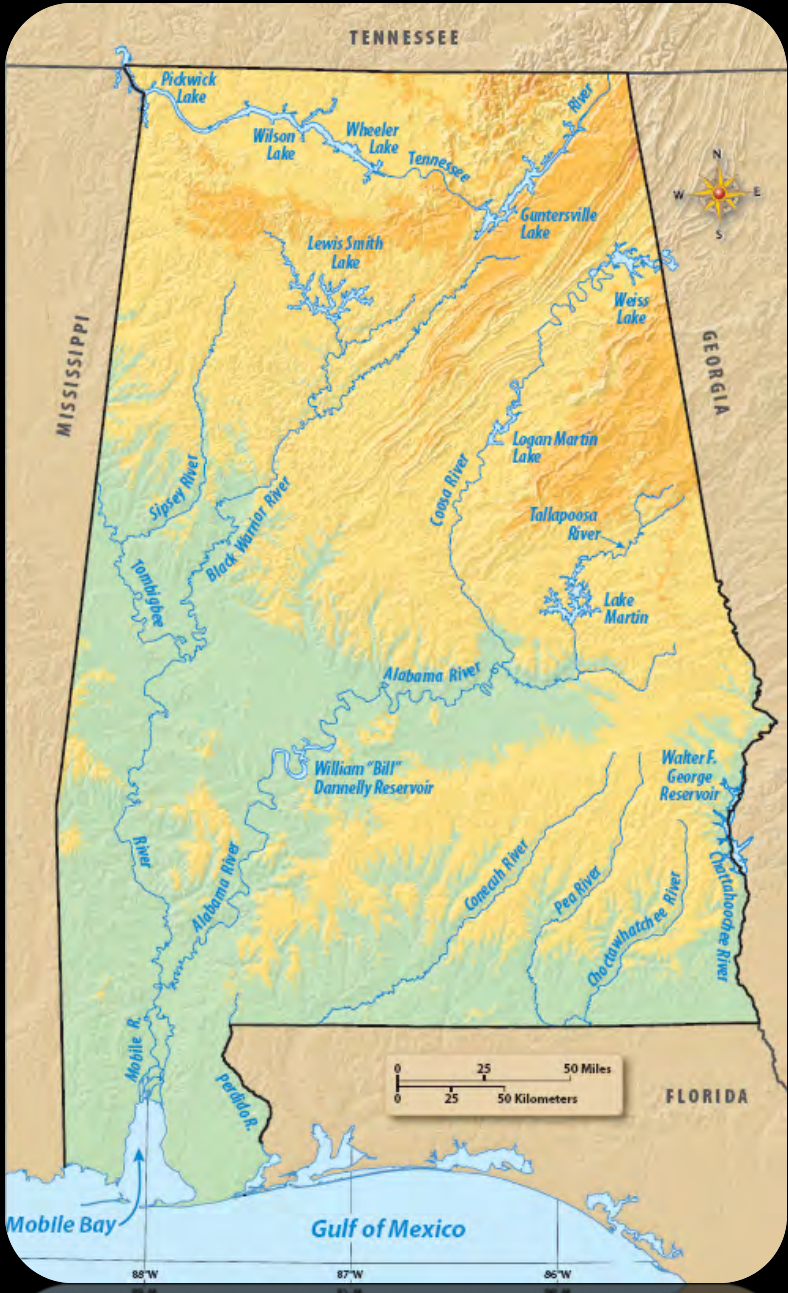
- **Surface water** is found in rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands.
- Six of Alabama's rivers can be used for large boats. These rivers are called **waterways**.
- Indians, settlers, farmers, and traders used waterways to carry supplies and people.
- Surface water slowed settlers' movements, though, since there were no bridges.
- The Tennessee, Chattahoochee, and Perdido Rivers form part of Alabama's borders.



The mouth of the Perdido River at Orange Beach, AL



Surface Water Map



Section 3: Weather, Climate, and Natural Hazards

- Essential Question: Why do people work to understand their climate?



Section 3: Weather, Climate, and Natural Hazards

- What terms do I need to know?
 - subtropical
 - temperature
 - precipitation
 - natural hazard
 - drought
 - flash flood
 - lightning
 - tornado
 - hurricane
 - evacuate

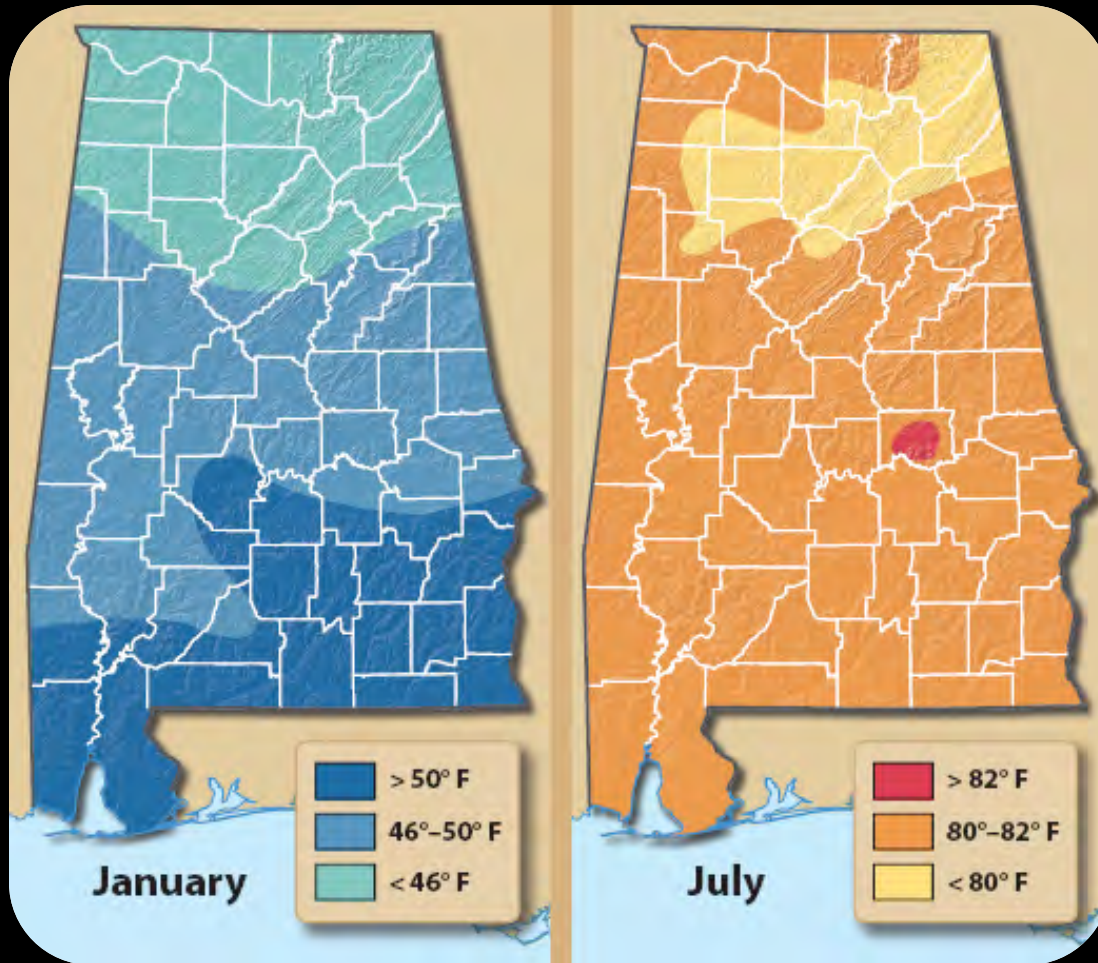


Temperature and Precipitation

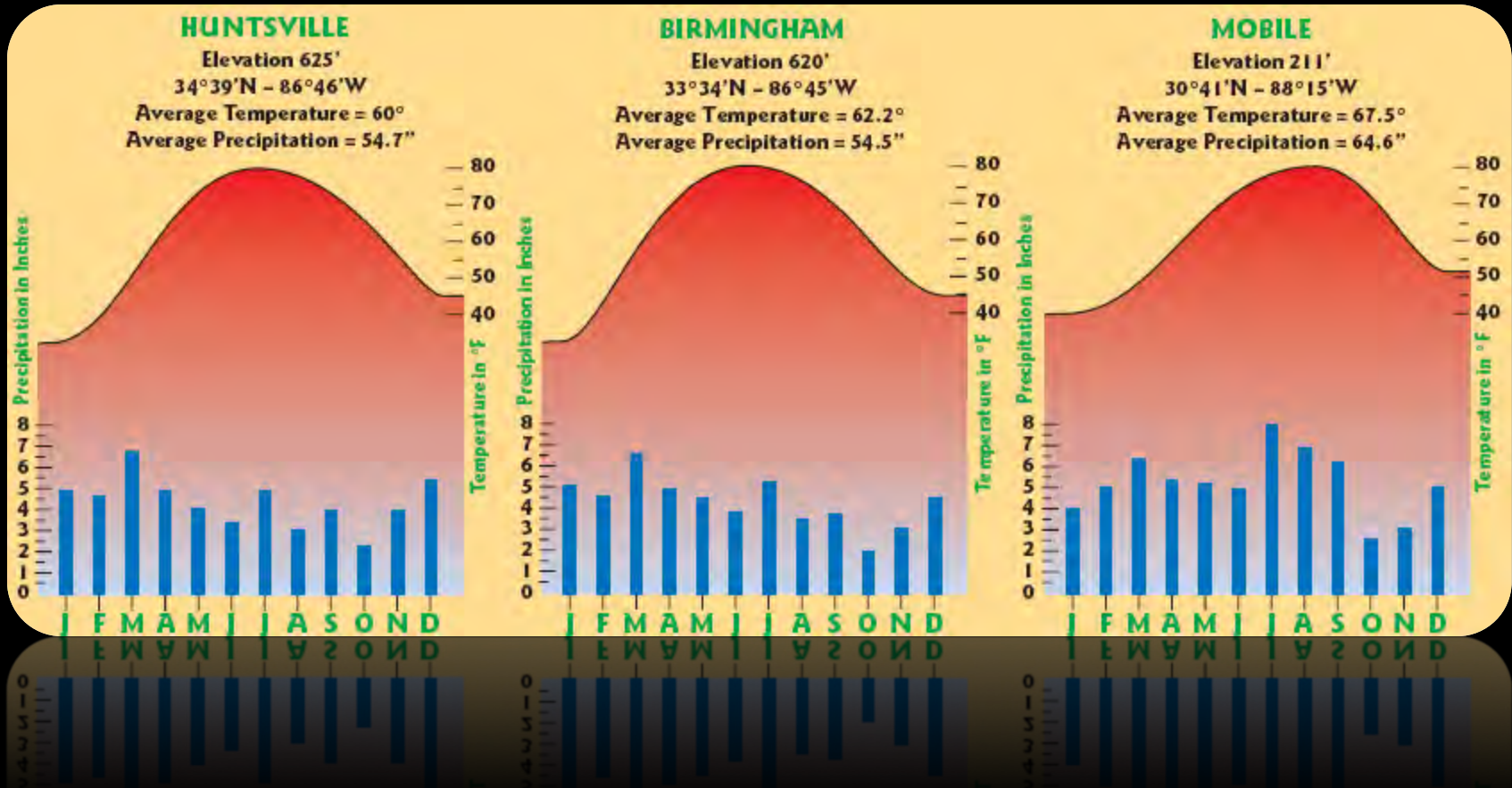
- Alabama's climate is called **subtropical**, or temperate. Summers have hot **temperatures** and winters are mild.
- Mountain areas are usually cooler because of their altitude.
- **Precipitation** is water in the form of rain, snow, sleet, or hail that falls from the sky to the earth.
- Alabama gets 50-60 inches of precipitation per year; most of it is rain.



Alabama Temperature Maps



Temperature and Precipitation Graphs for Three Cities



Natural Hazards

- Weather that can cause harm is a **natural hazard**.
- Ice storms, heavy snows, droughts, flash floods, thunderstorms, tornadoes, and hurricanes can be natural hazards of Alabama.



Frozen Hazards

- When drops of rain fall onto freezing surfaces, ice forms. Sheets of this ice on roads and bridges can cause accidents.
- Snowstorms are large amounts of snow at one time.
- Snow and ice have weight. When there is a lot of it, trees, power lines, and roofs can fall.



Water – Too Much or Not Enough

- When too little rain falls for weeks or months, it's called a **drought**.
- Droughts can kill crops and forests. Results can be higher food prices and forest fires.
- Water shortages can affect everyone at home, school, or work.
- Too much rain at one time can cause a **flash flood**. Streams and ditches fill quickly and water spills onto the land.
- Flash floods can cause accidents or drowning.



Thunderstorms

- Thunderstorms can produce **lightning** which can kill or injure people.
- These large storms can also produce small balls of ice called hail which can damage roofs or cars.



Tornadoes

- Large thunderstorms can produce **tornadoes**. These powerful funnel-shaped clouds can do tremendous damage.
- Tornadoes form quickly, and people must be on the lookout for them.
- Radio, weather radios, and TV warn people when there is a danger of tornadoes.
- When a tornado touches the ground, winds can be over 300 miles per hour. Everything in the tornadoes path can be destroyed.
- In Alabama, most tornadoes happen between February and May. Sometimes these storms happen in late November and early December.



A home destroyed by a tornado in Jackson County, AL in 2008



Enhanced Fujita Intensity Scale for Tornadoes

Rating	Miles/Hour	Expected Damage
EF0	65-85	Light: Loose debris
EF1	86-110	Moderate: Broken windows and doors
EF2	111-135	Considerable: Trees broken
EF3	136-165	Severe: Outer walls collapse
EF4	166-200	Devastating: Structure damage
EF5	Over 200	Total: Structure destroyed



Hurricanes

- **Hurricanes** form over warm ocean waters.
- These storms can spread over 300 miles and have wind speeds over 200 miles per hour.
- Buildings and highways near the coast may be flooded and destroyed.
- Hurricanes usually occur between June and November.
- The [National Hurricane Center](#) warns people when to **evacuate**.



Homes destroyed on the Alabama coast by Hurricane Georges in 1998

[Click for Hurricane Photo](#)



Section 4: Natural Vegetation and Wildlife

- Essential Question: What types of plants and animals live wild in Alabama?



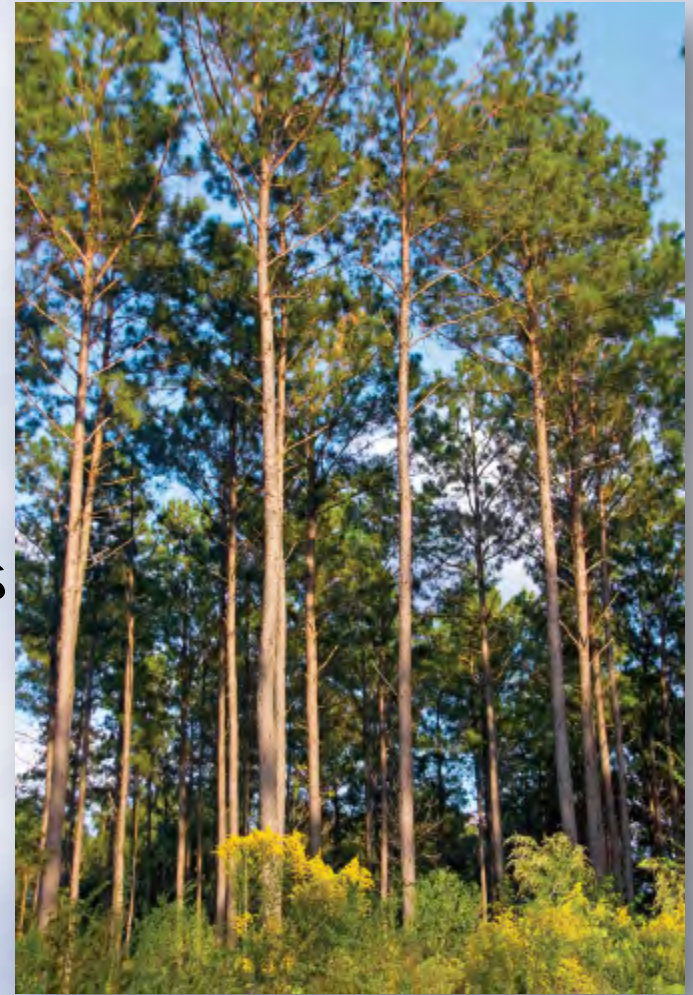
Section 4: Natural Vegetation and Wildlife

- What terms do I need to know?
 - natural vegetation
 - evergreen tree
 - deciduous tree
 - ecosystem



Types of Plants

- **Natural vegetation** covered Alabama before settlers arrived.
- **Evergreen trees** covered two-thirds of the southern part of the state. Most were different types of pine trees.
- **Deciduous trees** covered most of the rest of the state's hills and mountains.
- Trees today support a timber industry.
- The amount of water and sun in an area helps determine which plants will grow.



Ecosystems

- An **ecosystem** is all the plants and animals living in an area along with the air, water, soil, and climate.
- Our many ecosystems mean we have a variety of animals.
- Fish, birds, insects, deer, snails, hawks, rodents, and snakes are some of our animals.
- All living and nonliving parts of an ecosystem must work together to keep it going. Changing an ecosystem can kill the creatures in it.



Section 5: Culture

- Essential Question: How have cultures changed in Alabama?



Section 5: Culture

- What terms do I need to know?
 - technology



How Cultures Change

- People bring their own ideas, beliefs, and customs with them when they move from another place.
- Cultures change as people change.
- In the past, most people in our area hunted and fished for food. Later they became farmers. After that, most moved to work in factories. Today our people work in many types of jobs.



Technology Changes Culture

- **Technology** can change culture, too. Simple tools have been replaced by complicated power tools.
- Cars and airplanes have replaced horse and wagon.
- Computers are used everywhere today, but 30 years ago, they were rare.
- Alabama's resources have been used differently as its people's needs have changed.
- People have built towns, cities, roads, and railroads. These changes are part of our human environment.





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