

# 3

## North America

### Learning Objectives

- Describe North America's major landform and climate regions.
- Identify key environmental issues facing North Americans and connect these to the region's resource base and economic development.
- Analyze map data to identify and trace major migration flows in North American history.
- Explain the processes that shape contemporary urban and rural settlement patterns.
- List the five phases of immigration shaping North America, and describe the recent importance of Hispanic and Asian immigration.
- Provide examples of major cultural homelands (rural) and ethnic neighborhoods (urban) within North America.
- Contrast the development of the distinctive federal political systems in the United States and Canada, and identify each nation's current political challenges.
- Discuss the role of key location factors in explaining why economic activities are located where they are in North America.
- List and explain contemporary social issues that challenge North Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Chapter Outline

- I. **Introduction:** globalization has transformed many portions of North America; North America includes the United States and Canada—it is a region that exhibits tremendous cultural and physical diversity; the region is also known as 'Anglo-America'; the region has benefited from economic growth, but there are continuing differences in income and quality of life
- II. **Physical Geography and Environmental Issues: A Vulnerable Land of Plenty:** North America's physical and human geographies are diverse and intricately linked
  - A. **A Diverse Physical Setting:** North America's landscape is dominated by vast interior lowlands bordered by mountainous topography to the west and coastal plains to the east; the Atlantic coastline is complex; in the west, mountain

building processes has produced numerous ranges which influence precipitation patterns

- B. Patterns of Climate and Vegetation:** due to the region's size, latitudinal range, and varied terrain, North America's climate and vegetation patterns are diverse; from the Great Lakes north, boreal forests dominate the landscape; southward in the interior are drier, continental climates and prairie vegetation; western climates and vegetation are complicated by the region's mountain ranges
- C. The Costs of Human Modification:** North America's landforms, soils, vegetation, and climate have been transformed by globalization, and accelerated urban and economic growth; energy consumption remains high, contributing to environmental and economic costs
  - a. **Transforming Soils and Vegetation:** European settlement affected the region's flora and fauna; many new species were introduced; grasslands were replaced with grain and forage crops; forests were removed
  - b. **Managing Water:** North Americans consume vast quantities of water; water quality is also a major issue, with many Americans exposed to water pollution; mining operations and industrial users generate substantial toxic wastewaters
  - c. **Altering the Atmosphere:** increased urbanization has generated "urban heat islands"—development associated with cities produces higher local temperatures; North America is also plagued by acid rain and air pollution
- D. Growing Environmental Awareness:** many environmental initiatives have addressed local and region problems; North America is providing increased support especially for sustainable agriculture and renewable energy sources
- E. The Shifting Energy Equation:** while both Canada and the United States are major players in the global energy markets, there is an understanding that renewables are the future; the debates about tar sands, fracking, and train and pipeline transport accidents have been regular news items
- F. Climate Change and North America:** global warming has already reshaped North America; coastal erosion has already occurred as a result of rising sea levels; the long-term consequences are enormous—many coastal locations are vulnerable; many alpine glaciers are disappearing; and agriculture will be affected; domestic politics have reshaped North American responses, as conservative political interests argue that agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol limit national sovereignty and economic growth

**III. Population and Settlement: Reshaping a Continental Landscape:** present-day human landscape is result of five centuries of human change; Europeans, Africans, and Asians arrived—disrupting Native American peoples; more than 357 million people currently live in North America

- A. Modern Spatial and Demographic Patterns:** large metropolitan areas dominate North America's population geography; Canada's "main street" corridor includes Toronto and Montreal; "Megalopolis" is the largest urban cluster in the United States, and includes Baltimore/Washington DC, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York; other clusters are around the Great Lakes and on the West Coast; North

America's population has increased greatly since European colonization; current rates of natural increase are generally low, with much growth occurring through immigration

- B. Occupying the Land:** Europeans began occupying the land 400 years ago; prior to that, North America was populated by Native Americans; the first state of European colonization created a series of colonies mostly in the coastal regions of eastern North America; the second stage occurred between 1750 and 1850, marked by settlement of better agricultural areas in the eastern half of the continent; the third stage continued till 1910 and was dominated by infilling of areas; settlers also moved to the western regions
- C. North Americans on the Move:** Americans, as a whole, move frequently
  - a. **Westward-Moving Populations:** the most persistent regional migration has been tendency for people to move west; much movement was based on employment opportunities; however, economic slowdowns have reduced rates
  - b. **Black Exodus from the South:** African Americans exhibit distinctive regional migration patterns; after the Civil War, many Blacks moved both north and west; since 1970s there has been a reversal, with many Blacks moving back south
  - c. **Rural-to-Urban Migration:** a long-standing trend has been movement from rural to urban areas; shifting economic opportunities account for much of the transformation
  - d. **Growth of the Sun Belt South:** especially since the 1970s southern states have grown more rapidly than other regions; expanding economies, modest living costs, and recreational opportunities explain this shift
  - e. **Nonmetropolitan Growth:** during the 1970s some areas witnessed a growth of nonmetropolitan areas—a substantial number are “lifestyle migrants”
- D. Settlement Geographies: The Decentralized Metropolis:** settlement landscapes in North America are characterized by urban decentralization
  - a. **Historical Evolution of U.S. Cities:** changing transportation technologies have shaped the evolution of the U.S. city; the pedestrian/horsecar city was compact; the automobile city continued the expansion of suburbanization; urban decentralization reconfigured land-use patterns; many suburbs, called “edge cities,” have fewer functional connections with the central city
  - b. **The Consequences of Sprawl:** increased suburbanization has led to problems in the inner cities, include absolute losses in population, increased levels of crime, social disruption, and a shrinking tax base; some inner cities have experienced gentrification; some planners advocate “new urbanism” which stresses higher density, mixed-used, pedestrian-scaled neighborhoods; there are also efforts to promote urban sustainability, including rooftop gardens

- E. Settlement Geographies: Rural North America:** rural North American cultural landscapes trace origins to early European settlement; many are exceptionally dispersed; commercial farming and technological changes (e.g., railroads) have transformed these settlement landscapes; many parts of rural North America are experiencing population declines; some, however, show signs of growth
- IV. Cultural Coherence and Diversity: Shifting Patterns of Pluralism:** North America's cultural geography exhibits global influence; the region is very much multicultural in character
- A. The Roots of Cultural Identity:** although both Canada and the United States gained their independence from Great Britain, they both remained closely tied to their Anglo roots; key Anglo legal and social institutions solidified core values; North America's cultural unity coexists with pluralism; a diversity of ethnic groups exists
- B. Peopling North America:** North America is a region of immigrants; immigrant groups displaced Native Americans and created a new cultural geography of ethnic groups, religions, and languages; the pace of cultural assimilation has varied by group
- a. **Migration to the United States:** there are five distinctive chapters in the immigration history of the U.S.: in phase one, English and African influences dominated; phase two consisted of immigrants from northwest Europe—mostly Irish and Germans; during phase three most immigrants originated from southern and eastern Europe; during phase four most immigrants came from Canada and Latin America; and during phase five, many immigrants originate from Latin America and Asia; these latter two groups exhibit the most pronounced growth in the United States
  - b. **The Canadian Pattern:** early migration was dominated by French settlers; after 1900 many migrants originated from eastern Europe; more recent migration has been dominated by people from Asia
- C. Culture and Place in North America:** North America's cultural diversity is expressed in two ways: first, people with similar backgrounds congregate near each other; and these distinctive cultures leave their mark on the everyday scene
- a. **Cultural Homelands:** there are many cultural homelands—cultural distinctive settlements in a well-defined geographic area: French-Canadian Quebec, Hispanic Borderlands; African-Americans in the South; and Acadiana, a zone of Cajun culture in southwest Louisiana; Native Americans are also tied to their homelands
  - b. **Native American Signatures:** similar to homelands concept with deep attachment to natural places and spiritual dimensions; the widespread use of native reservations in North America has led to socio-economic problems as well as segregation of indigenous people
  - c. **A Mosaic of Ethnic Neighborhoods:** there are many smaller ethnic landscapes: in addition to ethnic landscapes associated with historical settlement, there are ethnic neighborhoods in metropolitan areas; the ethnic geography of Los Angeles and Toronto are good examples

- D. Patterns of North American Religion:** while overwhelmingly Christian, the patterns of Catholic and Protestant are evident as well as the fragmentation of Protestant denominations
- E. The Globalization of American Culture:** North America's cultural geography is becoming more global; this is a two-way process however
  - a. North Americans: Living Globally:** North Americans are exposed daily to influences beyond their borders; globalization presents many challenges, such as the continued importance of the English language; many hybrid languages, such as Spanglish, are developing; also, many Americans have access to the Internet; Americans travel widely; and many non-American consumer products are widely available
  - b. The Global Diffusion of U.S. Culture:** American culture is diffusing around the globe; this has often accompanied political and economic initiatives; consumer culture, architecture, film, and fashion are some examples; American cultural diffusion has created problems in some parts of the world, as active resistance is notable
- V. Geopolitical Framework: Patterns of Dominance and Division:** both the United States and Canada are two of the most dominate states in the world; they retain a close relationship with each other
  - A. Creating Political Space:** The United States and Canada have different political roots; the United States broke cleanly and violently from Great Britain, whereas Canada emerged from peaceful separation from Britain and then assembled as collection of distinctive regional societies
  - B. Continental Neighbors:** Geopolitical relations between the United States and Canada have always been close; close political ties have strengthened economic relations--NAFTA; some political conflicts exist—especially those related to environmental issues
  - C. The Legacy of Federalism:** both Canada and the United States are federal states—both nations allocated political power to units of government beneath the national level; this contrasts with unitary states, such as France
    - a. Quebec's Challenge:** the political status of Quebec remains a major issue; since the 1960s a separatist political party in Quebec has advocated for the separation of Quebec from Canada
    - b. Native Peoples and National Politics:** in both Canada and the United States, North American Indian and Inuit populations have asserted their political power, marking a turn away from assimilation; trend has been toward greater control of their political and economic destiny
  - D. The Politics of U.S. Immigration:** Immigration policies are hotly contested in the United States; there are disagreements concerning how legal immigrants should be allowed into the country; there is concern over the scale and scope of undocumented immigration; there is concern with the increasing drug-related violence along the U.S.-Mexico border; and there is no political consensus surrounding undocumented workers

- E. **A Global Reach:** the geopolitical reach of the United States, in particular, is substantial; the United States has a long history of foreign intervention, especially throughout Latin America and Asia; throughout much of the twentieth century this was associated with Cold War geopolitics

**VI. Economic and Social Development: Geographies of Abundance and Affluence:**

North America possesses the world's most powerful economy and wealthiest population; however, some areas and people have not fared so well

- A. **An Abundant Resource Base:** the region is blessed with numerous natural resources; agriculture remains an important land use and has large economic impact; agribusiness is corporate farming that follows a business model more than a family farming ethos; fossil fuels are another dimension of resource abundance

- B. **Creating a Continental Economy:** timing of European settlement was critical in economic transformation—region's resources came under control of Europeans during the Industrial Revolution

- a. **Connectivity and Economic Growth:** improvements in transportation and communication systems laid foundation for urbanization, industrialization, and commercialization of agriculture; region's economic success was function of its connectivity; these links facilitated interaction between locations and reduced costs; railroads, telegraphs, and highway systems are key examples
- b. **The Sectoral Transformation:** sectoral transformation refers to evolution of nation's labor force; North America has experienced transformation from one dependent on employment in primary sector, to secondary sector, to now both tertiary and quaternary
- c. **Regional Economic Patterns:** there are key important regional patterns of North America's economic geography; the historical manufacturing includes Megalopolis and the industrial Midwest; industrial- and service-sector growth is pronounced in the South and West; key sites include the North Carolina "research triangle" and California's "Silicon Valley"

- C. **North America and the Global Economy:** North America plays a key role in the global economy; the region is home to a growing number of "global cities"; the region is vulnerable to global economic downturns

- a. **Creating the Modern Global Economy:** The United States in particular played formative role in creating the new global economy since the 1940s; the United States helped establish the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; both the United States and Canada are participants in the G8
- b. **Attracting Skilled Immigrants:** North America attracts thousands of skilled workers from other countries; strong linkages with Europe remain, but others include India
- c. **Doing Business Globally:** North America is at the center of global trade and money flows; the region attracts inflows of foreign capital; and North America invests significantly around the world; however, three shifts are notable: traditional American-based multinational corporations are

adopting new, globally integrated model, foreign multinational corporations are buying companies once controlled by the American capital; and these corporations are now investing in other parts of the less developed world; in effect, the top-down model of multinational corporate control and investment, traditionally based in North America (and Europe and Japan) is being replaced by a more globally distributed model of corporate control; Outsourcing is major issue, as millions of jobs in manufacturing sectors have relocated overseas—Americans benefit from cheap products, but their own jobs have been threatened

**D. Enduring Social Issues:** there are many economic and social problems confronting North America, including income inequality, gender inequities, and challenges to aging populations

- a. **Wealth and Poverty:** the global economic downturn of the late 2000s contributed to rising levels of unemployment; African Americans and Hispanics fared the worst; many people lost health-care coverage; real estate values and home ownership rates fell; poverty rates rose; the regional landscape thus reveals contrasting scenes of wealth (e.g., gated communities) and poverty (abandoned property, substandard housing)
- b. **Access to Education:** both countries invest heavily in education, yet there is much debate about how well they meet the challenges
- c. **Gender, Culture, and Politics:** Since World War II both Canada and the United States have witnessed improvements in the role of women in society; but gender gap remains in differences in salary, working conditions, and political power
- d. **Health Care and Aging:** millions of Americans are without healthcare; and yet the elderly are among the fastest growing part of the population—this will pose a considerable problem in years ahead

## **Summary**

---

- North America's future remains bright: It possesses a highly educated population and considerable natural resources, and it remains a seat of global corporate and political power
- North America's affluence has come with a stiff price tag, and today the region faces significant environmental challenges, including soil erosion, acid rain, and air and water pollution
- In a remarkably short time period, a unique mix of varied cultural groups from around the world has contributed to the settlement of a huge and resource-rich continent that is now the world's most urbanized region
- North Americans produced two closely intertwined societies that still face distinctive national political and cultural issues. In Canada, the nation's identity remains problematic as the country struggles with its multicultural character and the costs and benefits of its proximity to its continental neighbor

- For the United States, social problems linked to ethnic diversity, immigration issues, health-care costs, and enduring poverty remain central concerns
- The global economic downturn of the late 2000s profoundly affect North America's economic geography, particularly in many regions that were hit hardest by the housing crisis and by rising rates of unemployment

## Key Terms

---

acid rain	new urbanism
agribusiness	nonmetropolitan growth
boreal forest	North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
connectivity	outsourcing
cultural assimilation	postindustrial economy
cultural homeland	prairie
edge city	renewable energy source
ethnicity	sectoral transformation
federal state	Spanglish
fracking	sustainable agriculture
gender gap	tundra
gentrification	unitary state
Group of Eight (G8)	urban decentralization
location factor	urban heat island
Megalopolis	World Trade Organization (WTO)

## Reading Review Questions

---

1. *Describe North America's major landform regions and climates, and suggest ways in which the region's physical setting has shaped patterns of human settlement.*

The interior of North America is dominated by vast plains and prairies; the eastern seaboard consists of low-lying estuarine environments, bordered by the Appalachian Mountains to the west. The western portion of North America consists of high mountain ranges, plateaus, and coastal plains. Early settlement concentrated in the eastern coastal regions as part of the Atlantic trade networks; subsequently settlement moved westward, taking advantage of vast grasslands for agriculture.



2. *Identify key ways in which humans have transformed the North American environment since 1600.*

Humans have transformed North America in many ways, including the removal of forests and the clearing of grasslands to make way for agriculture; mining and other extractive industries have also impacted the environment. Rivers have been modified and connected via canals and other modes of conveyance. The weather has also been impacted in some areas, through the effect of urban heat islands.

3. *Identify four key environmental problems that North Americas face in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century?*

Climate change, water and air quality, acid rain, fracking, and fossil fuel extraction are all possible answers.

4. *Describe the dominant North American migration flows since 1900.*

In terms of international migration to North America, flows have been dominated by migrants originating from Asia and Latin America; for domestic flows, there have been a number of flows: a continued movement westward, as a whole, of America's population; a continued rural-to-urban migration; a smaller, but notable movement from urban to rural regions; and a movement toward the Sun Belt.

5. *Sketch and discuss the principal patterns of land use within the modern U.S. metropolis, including (a) the central city and (b) the suburbs/edge city. How have forces of globalization shaped North American cities?*

Many North American cities are characterized by urban decentralization; the central city is increasingly characterized by poor public transportation and poverty. Some selected central cities have experienced gentrification. Suburban locations, or edge cities, are increasingly becoming disconnected from the central cities. These locations are complete with low density residential areas, retail establishments, and even some manufacturing land use.

6. *Identify distinctive eras of immigration in U.S. history. How do they compare with those of Canada?*

Immigration to the United States was originally dominated by migrants from England; subsequent immigration during the 1800s originated from northwestern Europe (Irish and German), followed between 1880–1910 by migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, and migrants from Latin America and Asia (especially since the 1970s). Immigration to Canada mostly originated, initially, from France; in the 1900s considerable immigration originated from Southern and Eastern Europe. Most recently, there has been large numbers of immigrants from Asia.

7. *Identify four enduring North American cultural regions, and describe their key characteristics.*

There are many cultural homelands in North America. One is French-Canadian Quebec, a region defined by French-language speakers, as opposed to Canada's largely English-speaking

population. Another well-defined area is the Hispanic Borderlands—a more diffused geographic region that exhibits a rich legacy of Spanish place names, Catholic churches, and traditional Hispanic settlements. A third cultural region is that of African-American settlement the American South; this is a region that remains home to many black folk traditions, including music and food. A fourth region is Acadiana, a zone of Cajun culture in southwestern Louisiana. This homeland is considerably more compact in size, and is distinctive for its music and food.

8. *How do the political origins of the United States and Canada differ?*

The 13 colonies that formed the core of the United States broke free from England following a violent revolution; Canada's separation from England was largely peaceful and the area's now comprising Canada were gradually assembled into a unitary state.

9. *What are four of the key issues surrounding U.S. immigration policy?*

U.S. immigration policy is very complex, with four issues particularly notable: disagreements over how many legal immigrants should be allowed; disagreements surrounding the continued in-migration of undocumented migrants; drug-related violence that occurs along the U.S.-Mexico border; and disagreements over existing undocumented workers.

10. *Define sectoral transformation. How does it help explain economic change in North America?*

Sectoral transformation refers to the evolution of a nation's labor force from one dependent on the primary sector, to one with more employment in the secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sectors. North America has exhibited significant changes in employment. Initially most workers in North America were in the primary sector; from the late 1800s onwards many more workers found employment in the secondary sector. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been a further transformation, as work in the secondary sector has declined, while employment in the tertiary and quaternary sectors has increased.

11. *Cite five types of location factors, and illustrate each with examples from your local economy.*

There are five basic location factors: natural resources, connectivity, productive labor, market demand, and capital investment. Answers will vary for local economies; a city such as Los Angeles, for example, has minimal natural resources, but high levels of connectivity, large supplies of productive labor, high levels of market demand, and high levels of capital investment.

12. *What common social issues are faced by both Canadians and Americans? How do they differ?*

Aging populations, poverty, education, and gender gap. The United States and Canada often approach social problems in different ways. Health care, for example, is trending towards a basic level of universal care, but Canada launched a national system decades ago; meanwhile, the United States has had political deadlock over the issue.

**Working Toward Sustainability: *Greening the Colorado River Delta* (pp. 74–75)**

1. *Describe another setting in North America where an international border potentially complicates an important environmental issue.*

Fisheries along the coastlines; Arctic Plain (oil/caribou); oil drilling in Gulf of Mexico; flooding of Red River; Great Lakes water quality, etc.

2. *How might future plans for restoring the Colorado Delta go astray?*

Upstream users want/need water for other uses; the United States and Mexico have disagreements; less water in the system, etc.

**Exploring Global Connections: *Northwest Passage* (pp. 78–79)**

1. *List the potential positive and negative consequences of mass polar tourism for Inuit villages.*

Economic development with tourism revenues; irreversible cultural changes that come with interaction with foreigners.

2. *Make a brief list of five potential onboard lecture topics that might be of interest to passengers on the *Crystal Serenity*.*

Past polar voyages; indigenous people; northern lights; Arctic Sea resources; territorial-claims inside the Arctic Ocean; ecotourism; etc.

**Everyday Globalization: *The NBA Goes Global* (p. 91)**

1. *Name another American sport that has “gone global,” and identify two players from foreign countries who exemplify the pattern.*

Baseball and Dominican Republic; any number of players are possible answers.

2. *In addition to basketball, what is a sport you enjoy playing or watching? Where did it originate and how did it spread to your community?*

Answers vary by location; Curling and Canadian migrants in Southern California for example.

**Geographers at Work: *Toronto’s Chinese Entrepreneurs* (p. 98)**

1. *Give examples of both quantitative data and qualitative information, and explain how combining these could improve a research project.*

The study of a complex issue benefits from many perspectives and ways of knowing. Both qualitative data such as interviews, and quantitative data such as Census can be combined together.

2. *Identify and describe an immigrant-owned business in your own community or in a nearby town. What particular advantages or disadvantages might they have?*

A common answer is ethnic food. Authenticity of the cuisine is often seen as an advantage; meanwhile, the number of people inclined to identify with that establishment is often small.

**Other reading questions:**

*Figure 3.9 U.S. Energy Consumption:*

*Approximately what percentage of U.S. energy consumption is currently accounted for by nuclear power and renewable energy sources?*

According to the graph approximately 8% of energy comes from nuclear, and approximately 7% is considered renewable including solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, etc.

*Figure 3.13 Population Pyramids--Iowa and Texas:*

*How is the baby boom generation reflected in the Iowa pyramid?*

There is an excess of 45–59 year olds in the pyramid (both male and female); the 50–54 age group is the most of any age cohort in Iowa.

*Figure 3.20 U.S. Immigration, by Year and Group:*

*What were the dominant source regions of the U.S. population in 1850, 1910, and 1980? Why did they change?*

In 1850, immigration from North and West Europe dominated; in 1910, immigration from South and East Europe dominated; by 1980 and into the present, immigration has been dominantly from Asia and Latin America. Events in Europe explain the early transition, for example, demographic transition, urban-industrialization expansion, and politically, empire to nation-states. Recently, similar changes elsewhere that propel emigration as well as U.S. immigration policy being more open to non-Europeans.

*Figure 3.22 Distribution of U.S. Hispanic and Asian Populations, by State, 2010:*

*Outside of the West and South, why do you think New York, New Jersey, and Illinois are also important destinations for these immigrants?*

Cities outside of the West and South, such as New York and Chicago, are dynamic metropolitan areas with a history of immigration. Those states with these cities generally have overall economic and demographic growth.

*Figure 3.38 Earnings Ratios, by Gender, United States:*

*What variables might help explain how your own state fits into the larger national pattern?*

Answers will vary by location; furthermore, this choropleth map is at the state level, so rural—urban differences are somewhat masked. Even if a state is above the national average (78%) which means more parity; a good discussion is why is the ratio not closer overall.

## **Instructor Engagement Ideas**

*This part of the Instructor Resource Manual contains ideas and suggestions for active learning, deeper engagement, and expansion of textbook concepts; some are legacies of past editions of the textbook.*

### **For Thought and Discussion**

*This section provides questions and topics that can be used to initiate classroom discussion.*

1. What water, soil, air pollution issues are important in your area (city or region)? Who are the actors involved? What actions are being taken to resolve them? How will your community deal with climate change?
2. How has recent patterns of immigration impacted your city or state? What are the major issues involved? What specific policies are being debated to address the regulation of immigration? How do you think immigration should be regulated in the United States?
3. Examine the clothes you are wearing or the products in your backpack. From where did they originate? What types of products are made in various countries? How does the manufacturing of items in one place affect the people there? What might be the effects of relocating manufacturing to a new country?

### **Exercise/Activity**

*This section provides exercises and activities that the instructor can integrate into their classroom lectures.*

1. Engage in research at the library and use the Internet to learn more about your city. How has your city been impacted by historical changes in transportation and communication systems? Contrast what your life would have been like living in your city in 1816, 1916, and 2016.
2. Learn more about the displacement of Native Americans and the creation of reservations. How has the legacy of discrimination toward Native Americans contributed to the persistence of poverty on reservations? What is being done to address social inequalities present on reservations?
3. Using Pearson's MapMaster Interactive Maps in MasteringGeography, select the map sets for North America. Activate the poverty rate layer under the economic theme. Next, and separately, activate the distribution of African Americans, distribution of American Indians, distribution of Asian American, and distribution of Hispanic American layers. Describe the various patterns, both individually of the layers, and collectively. What patterns are particularly notable? How have these patterns been shaped by North American migration flows and the effects of the economic downturn? Note: You might want to explore other map layers to help in your answer.

## Thinking Geographically

*This section provides ideas about chapter topics and concepts.*

1. *Explain how “natural hazards” can be “culturally” defined. In other words, what role do humans play in shaping the distribution of hazards?*

Settlement patterns influence our “understanding” of natural hazards. People for example often choose to live in hazardous areas, such as coastal locations (subject to hurricanes) or hilly or mountainous areas (subject to wildfires). Also, the process of urbanization (which changes hydrological processes) has created urban flooding as a ‘natural’ hazard.

2. *Map the ethnic background and migration history of your own family. Write an essay exploring how these patterns parallel or depart from larger North American trends.*

Answers will vary. On my maternal side, my ancestors immigrated to North America in the 1600s; on my paternal side, my ancestors emigrated from Ireland in the late 1800s. Gradually both sides of my family moved westward, from initial settlements in the Ohio River Valley and Tennessee, respectfully. Ultimately, these lineages met (with my parents) in southern California. In short, my family confirms readily to the larger North American migration trends.

3. *Create a debate with the question; Do Canada and the United States have a moral and/or ethical responsibility to lead the world in addressing climate change?*

Arguments will vary. Some students might make an argument for leadership that is not a moral or ethical reason; the high-energy consumption of North America is a consideration; as are technology transfers and financial support for less developed countries.

4. *Divide the class into two groups and develop opposing arguments to debate the following proposition: “While the environmental price for North American development has been steep, the economic rewards have been well worth the cost.” Suggest why it may or may not be worth the price, and debate your responses.*

Answers will vary. Economically, North America is one of the strongest regions in the world. Many Americans live an exceptionally affluent lifestyle. However, economic growth has come at a cost, notably the widespread air and water pollution associated with industrialization; forest removal; and soil erosion.

5. *Who will the United States’ leading trade partner be in 2050? Explain the reasons for your choice.*

Answers will vary. Although Canada, because of its historical relations and proximity to the United States, will remain a strong trade partner, China may emerge as the United States’ leading trade partner. This is because of the continued economic growth and growing global position of China.

6. *In groups of three students, plan a field trip through your local community, and identify key features of the North American urban landscape described in the text. Report back to the class, and share your results and examples.*

Answers will vary. Students should focus on cultural features (e.g., churches or mosques; ethnic markets and restaurants); class divisions (e.g., gated communities or impoverished areas); and economic features (e.g., factories—with employment in the secondary sector—or businesses dominated by employment in tertiary or quaternary sectors).

## **Chapter 3 Review**

---

### *Physical Geography and Environmental Issues*

3.1 Describe North America's major landform and climate regions.

3.2 Identify key environmental issues facing North Americans and connect these to the region's resource base and economic development.

(A) Map of hazardous waste sites

Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the major physiographic regions with accuracy of names, locations, and descriptions of their prominent qualities. Students should be able to discuss both environmental resources and hazards in the region (and localize many aspects of this chapter).

### *Population and Settlement*

3.3 Analyze map data to identify and trace major migration flows in North American history.

3.4 Explain the processes that shape contemporary urban and rural settlement patterns.

(B) Photo of Las Vegas skyline.

Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical geography of the United States and Canada. What were the historical migration patterns and where is current migration taking place. What are the resource and environmental conditions that helped shape urban industrial patterns.

### *Cultural Coherence and Diversity*

3.5 List the five phases of immigration shaping North America and describe the recent importance of Hispanic and Asian immigration.

3.6 Provide examples of major cultural homelands (rural) and ethnic neighborhoods (urban) within North America

(C) Photo of a French language sign in Quebec.

Students should be able to demonstrate an awareness of the role of migration both past and present. The imprint of culture on the landscape should be exemplified if it's not a local trait. Persistent cultural uniqueness should be identified: Navajo in the Southwest, Quebec in Lower Canada, and rural African-American areas in the Southeast.

### *Geopolitical Framework*

3.7 Contrast the development of the United States' and Canada's distinctive federal political systems, and identify each nation's current political challenges.

(D) Remote sensed image of U.S.-Mexico border.

Students should be able to demonstrate the similarities and differences of the two countries. Students should also be reminded of how much the two are invested in common geopolitical agendas from military partners (NATO), economic liberalism (G7, WTO, IMF, etc.), and they are linked formally with Mexico in NAFTA.

### *Economic and Social Development*

3.8 Discuss the role of key location factors in explaining why economic activities are located where they are in North America.

3.9 List and explain contemporary social issues that challenge North Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

(E) Photo of Tyson's Corner, Virginia.

Students should be able to demonstrate that despite great wealth, both the United States and Canada still have development challenges, for example, prominently unequal quality of life with income disparities. Economic power was built on a set of advantageous resource bases and proximity factors that still play a very important role.

## **Data Analysis**

---

Every decade, the Census Bureau gathers and summarizes an enormous amount of data for the United States. These data are used by planners and government agencies to forecast future needs for public infrastructure and social services. Age and sex distributions for cities and states can provide real insights into the social and economic characteristics of these settings. Population pyramids are convenient ways to visualize these characteristics (see Figure 3.13). Go to the Census Bureau's website ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) and access the summaries and predictions of state populations.

1. *Examine the 2010 and 2030 (projected) pyramids for Florida and Utah. Describe major similarities and differences for both years. Write a paragraph that summarizes reasons for these differences.*

Both Florida and Utah reflect a general trend to higher median ages. Utah has a high birth rate for American states, while Florida has clear migration influences.



*Globalization and Diversity: Geography of a Changing World*

2. *Select two additional states that display quite different population structures. Write a paragraph that summarizes and explains these differences.*

Iowa and Texas (figure 3.13) Both reflect aging similar to Florida and Utah. Texas also shows youthfulness from migration and Iowa does not.

3. *From the point of view of a planner or budget expert, explain how the different population structures in the states you selected might impact future expenditures and trends in economic development in 2030 and beyond.*

Infrastructure and housing that accommodates the aging population is something to be planned. Those states with migration still have growth in education and future workforce.