

Activity 3: Physiographic Region Cards and Photos – Page 1 (1/2)

Cut the cards and photos, scramble them. Participants are to place cards and photos in the appropriate regions of the maps.

The Central Lowlands Province in Pennsylvania is a small section of low relief ridges parallel to Lake Erie. It exists along a glacial escarpment adjacent to the lake. Local relief is quite flat, in most places less than 50 feet. Elevation at Lake Erie is 570 feet and rises southward to about 1,000 feet. Presque Isle State Park and Erie Bluffs are outstanding scenic geological features in this section.

The Atlantic Coastal Plain Province is a narrow, flat strip of land with elevations less than 200 feet adjacent to the Delaware River in the easternmost corner of Pennsylvania. It consists of bedrock buried under sand and gravel deposits. Many small tributaries have cut small gorges into the bedrock. It was once home to thousands of acres of fresh water tidal marsh, much of which was filled for industrial and residential development. Philadelphia is located in this province. The area is prone to floods. Neshaminy State Park is located here.

The New England Province has fragmented parts that extend into eastern Pennsylvania as the southern end of the Hudson Highlands from New York and New Jersey. The hills and ridges north and east of Reading are called the Reading Prong and consist of ridges of gneiss and quartzite which project above the softer sedimentary rocks. It occupies sections of Lebanon, Berks, Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

The Piedmont Province located northwest of the Coastal Plain is dominated by gently rolling hills and valleys. It has some of the best farmland in the state (Lancaster and Chester Counties) and some of the most fertile soils in eastern United States. The upland areas contain some of the oldest exposed rocks (Baltimore Gneiss). The lowlands contain limestone, sandstone, shale and a resistant diabase which is best seen at the Gettysburg battlefield. The famous fall line defines the Piedmont from the Coastal Plain. Some of the state parks in this section include Codorus, Marsh Creek and Ridley Creek.

The Appalachian Plateaus Province is the largest province in the state extending from the northeast corner to the entire western part of the state. Most of the rocks are not folded and faulted but remain relatively flat. There are a variety of sections each with their own characteristics. In western Pennsylvania, large bituminous coal fields exist. In glaciated sections, steep canyons developed and erosion created steep gorges. Ricketts Glen State Park contains examples of the escarpment that divides the high plateau. The Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania is in an isolated northern area of deep gorges, some at least 1000 feet deep. The Allegheny Front section includes Blue Knob (3,146 feet) that is an unusual bulge along the ridgeline. The Allegheny Mountain section contains Pennsylvania's highest point, Mount Davis (3,213 feet) near the Maryland border. The Pocono Mountain section is a glaciated part of this province and contains the sedimentary rocks such as sandstones. With elevations from 1,200 feet to 2,300 feet, this section has a few steep hills such as Camelback Mountain. Lackawanna and Promised Land are state parks located here.

The Ridge and Valley Province provides a roller-coaster ride of valleys and steep ridges. It is the second largest province in the state. The rocks are severely folded and contain numerous anticlines and synclines that plunge and fold due to continent collision. The Great Valley is known by three parts: the Lehigh Valley, the Lebanon Valley and Cumberland Valley. It is characterized by valuable carbonate rocks such as limestones and dolostones which are used for cement and fertilizers. The limestone areas are subject to cave-ins due to sinkholes. Blue Mountain, also known as the Kittatinny Ridge contain many water gaps such as the Delaware Water Gap and wind gaps. The anthracite coal fields are located in the northeastern section of the province. Landslides and acid mine drainage are some of the hazards here. Numerous state parks are located here including Beltzville, Greenwood Furnace, Lehigh Gorge, Jacobsburg, and Kings Gap—to name a few. (The northern tip of the Blue Ridge is included in this section but it was grouped as part of a separate province, creating a seventh province in Pennsylvania).

Activity 3: *Physiographic Region Cards and Photos - Page 2 (2/2)*

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