

THE GEOGRAPHY OF WESTERN CANADA:

Concise version:

- Where a place is in the world, and the people/things that inhabit it can determine what it will look like and be.
- The temperature is affected by a few things. (Mostly common sense.) Proximity to the equator, proximity to a body of water, height difference from sea level.
- Culture also has effect on how a section of land is divided and managed. Today we use *Political Boundaries*, in the past we used *Natural Boundaries*.
- **Geography = Location**

Places:

- have a location.

Where a place is, is measured in longitude and latitude. Longitude and Latitude are measured in degrees.

- have physical and cultural characteristics.

The resources in a certain location determine how people live there. People in Price Rupert have used the bark of certain trees to craft their clothes, fishing nets and tools.

- change.

Places change when political boundaries are re-evaluated or when new vegetation is brought in.

- interact with other places.

Just like people, places have an impact on each other. Nowadays, it is easier for places to interact through the use of communications like telephone or internet.

- are in regions.

Closely related to climate, the region in which a place is located will determine how it's inhabitants live.

Physical Regions:

The Canadian Shield: The Canadian Shield consists of shield rock, eroded by the weather and sea.

The Interior Plains: Usually found between the Western Mountains and Canadian Shield, the Interior Plains are made up of eroded material from the Canadian Shield. This land is very flat and rich in nutrients. (Perfect for growing crops.)

The Western Mountains: Formed by the actions of plate tectonics, the Western Mountains are full of valleys, trenches and plateaus. Sediments called "Alluvium" form river valleys such as the Fraser River.

Climate of Western Canada:

How temperature is affected:

- Latitude - The closer to the equator it is, the hotter it will be.
- Altitude - The close to sea level, the hotter it will be.
- Proximity to the Sea - The praries like Alberta can have really hot summers and really cold winters, because there is no body of sea water close to it. A large body of sea water helps to moderate temperature.
- Wind Direction - If there is wind blowing onto the land from the ocean, or vice versa, it increases the moderating effects of water.
- Ocean Currents - Ocean currents warm or cool the air blowing over the land.
- Precipitation - Rain is a byproduct of air moving from areas of high pressure to low pressure. Usually, rain falling brings cooler air. (Which is why the Okanagan valley is so warm.)

The Western Biomes:

Boreal Forest - Made up of coniferous trees. Precipitation is erratic and winter temperatures are cold. Boreal forest is most common in Alberta.

Parkland - Transitional area between coniferous forest and prairie grasslands. Most prominent vegetation is long grass.

The Prairie - Also called the: "Grasslands". The prairie soils are extremely high in nutrients and may vary in color.

The Interior Mountain Region - Vegetation is heavy in this region, as well as wildlife. Soil types vary.

Coastal Forest - Forests on the coast. Precipitation is high in November to March, and tall trees are found here.

The Cultural Landscape:

- Different cultures have different views on how land should be used.
- Areas go through times of boom and bust. Boom happens when a valuable resource is found and a rush of people come to mine/fish/chop/harvest it. Bust is the process of the resource becoming exhausted.
- More people in an area means more variety and specialization.
- Before Europeans settled in Canada, the boundaries between places were defined by landmarks such as mountains, rivers, etc. Nowadays, they are defined by specific lines. (Political leaders like to have precise lines for boundaries.)
- Boundaries defined by landmarks are called natural boundaries, artificial boundaries are called political boundaries.

Today, boundaries can determine which taxes you pay, your form of education and how your government acts towards the environment.