Views of Earth

How can locations in the United States be identified by their geographic features?

Earth has many natural features. These features are known as landforms. There are three basic types of landforms on Earth – plains, plateaus, and mountains.

Plains are expansive, mostly flat areas. Interior plains and coastal plains make up about half of all the land in the United States. Plateaus are also basically flat, but they rise sharply from the land around them. Mountains rise above the land around them and vary in size and in how they are formed.

The landforms of the United States have distinct characteristics that can help in identifying them. A map that shows Earth’s major landforms and natural features is a physical or topographical map.

Latitude and longitude lines form an imaginary grid system that help people find locations anywhere on Earth. One way to locate a specific landform is to find its latitude and longitude.

Latitude lines run parallel to the equator and refer to distance in degrees either north or south of the equator. The equator is 00 latitude, and the poles are either 900 north or south latitude.

Longitude refers to distances in degrees east or west of the prime meridian. This 00 meridian is an imaginary line running vertically through Greenwich, England, from the North Pole to the South Pole.

In this Virtual Lab you will locate places in the United States using clues about their geographical features and their latitude and longitude.

**Objective:**

* Identify locations in the United States using specific clues about each location’s features.

**Procedure:** Prepare Data Tables for data collection… See below

1. Read the first clue in the cue card display area. To see more clues, click the right arrow. To see a clue you have already read, click the left arrow.
2. Use the mouse to point to a dot on the map to see the name of a location. Click the dot to highlight a location. Click the dot again to remove the highlight.

***NOTE:*** *Highlights may be used to indicate locations that may be possible choices, based on revealed clues. Conversely, highlights may be used to indicate locations that may not be possible choices based on revealed clues.*

1. To select the name of a location, click the up arrow in the clue card display area. Click the Check location button.
2. If your selection is correct, click the See Location button to view a photograph of the location.
3. Record your information in the data table.
4. If your selection was incorrect, continue to review the clue cards and try again.
5. Repeat the activity. Click the new Location button to see clue cards for the locations.
6. Continue until you have identified all fifteen locations.
7. Record information for each location in an individual data table.
8. Answer questions.

**Data Collection:** Prepare a data table for each of the locations with the following Row Titles

|  |
| --- |
| Location # 1 - Name: |
| Clue with Latitude / Longitude (approximate - with direction) |
| Clue for Highest Elevation |
| Clue # 1 |
| Clue # 2 |
| Clue # 3 |
| Clue # 4 |

**Questions:** How can locations in the United States be identified by their geographic features?

Use the background information as well as your collected data to answer the following……

1. What are the tree basic types of landforms?
2. Compare and contrast plains, mountains, and plateaus.
3. Which way do longitude lines run?
	1. Which way to latitude lines run?
4. Where is the prime meridian located?
5. Which one of the locations that you correctly identified was the easiest to find?
6. Which one of the locations that you correctly identified was the hardest to find?
7. Which location has the Colorado River flowing through it?
8. Which location contains the Muir Glacier?
9. Which location is the largest subtropical wilderness remaining in the United States?
10. In which location would you find Jacksonville Beach?
11. At which location would you find the world’s most active volcano?
12. Which location has “the mountain that was God”?
13. In which location would you find the Snake River?
14. Where would you find Mount Mazama?
15. Which location is on the Colorado Plateau?
16. In which location were dinosaurs from the Mesozoic era found?
17. Where would you find Clingman’s Dome?
18. Which location is the site of a major cataclysmic volcanic event?
19. Describe the features on the map that provided you with the most helpful information.
20. Compare and contrast the geographical features of any two locations you identified.