The Cultural Geography of the United States and Canada
Chapter Objectives

• Describe the peoples of the United States and Canada, and explain how physical geography affected population and economic development patterns.

• Identify factors that led to the rise and expansion of the United States and Canada, and compare the governments of both countries.

• Explain how religion, language, and the arts reflect the region’s past, and discuss present-day educational and health care systems.
Population Patterns

Section 1
Objectives

- Identify the peoples of the United States and Canada.
- Explain how population patterns in the United States and Canada are influenced by the region’s physical geography.
- Describe the geographic factors that encouraged the industrialization and urbanization of the United States and Canada.
Terms to Know

- Immigration
- Native American
- Sunbelt
- urbanization
- metropolitan area
- suburb
- megalopolis
- mobility
A Geographic View

Chinatown, New York City
In 1998 about 661,000 immigrants were admitted for legal permanent residence in the United States. The country sending the largest number of immigrants—about 131,000—was Mexico. New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and Chicago were the top four destinations for immigrants in that year.
The People

- North America’s first immigrants may have come from Asia thousands of years ago.
- Because they were the first settlers, they are called Native Americans.
- In recent centuries, people have immigrated to North America from all parts of the world for various reasons—religious or political freedom and economic or educational opportunities.
The People
Population Density and Distribution

- Canada is larger in land area than the United States, but it has fewer people.
- About 90 percent of Canadians live in a narrow strip of land along the United States-Canada border.
- In the United States, the Northeast, Great Lakes, and Pacific coast regions are the most densely populated areas.
- Since the 1970s, the American South and Southwest, including California, have become the country’s fastest growing areas.
Cities

- **Coastal Cities**  Today most people in the United States and Canada live in metropolitan areas.

- Many population centers in both countries lie in coastal areas where healthy economies support large populations.  

- A chain of cities stretching along the northern Atlantic coast of the United States—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and **Washington, D.C.**—is home to about 42 million people.
The Cities
Cities

- **Coastal Cities**  Other important U.S. coastal cities include the busy ports of Miami, on the Atlantic coast, and New Orleans and Houston, on the Gulf of Mexico.

- **Vancouver**, a year-round warm-water port, is the largest city in British Columbia and handles nearly all the trade between Canada and Asia.
The Cities
Cities

- **Inland Cities** Important inland cities in North America are located on rivers or lakes. These waterways offered both natural resources and transportation routes that contributed to the region’s economic growth.

- Major inland cities include Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, and **Ottawa** in Canada, and **Detroit**, Chicago, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh in the United States.

- Other inland cities, such as Dallas, Atlanta, Denver, and San Antonio in the United States and Regina and Calgary in Canada grew from agricultural or trading centers.
Cities

- **Future Trends** Because of the low birthrates in Canada and the United States, most population growth in this region comes from immigration.

- As immigration adds to population diversity, living with cultural differences and managing urban congestion are ongoing challenges.
History and Government

Section 2
Objectives

- Describe what life was like for the earliest Americans and for European settlers.
- Explain how industrialization and technology enabled westward expansion in North America.
- Discuss how the governments of the United States and Canada differ.
Terms to Know

- Republic
- Underground Railroad
- dry farming
- Constitution
- amendment
- Bill of Rights
- cabinet
- dominion
- Parliament
A Geographic View

Monument Valley, Arizona
The president of the United States is chosen by electors, not by direct popular vote. In presidential elections, each political party in each state presents voters with a slate of electors who will vote for the presidential candidate of their party. In some states, electors are required to vote as a bloc. In others, electors are not legally bound to vote for a particular candidate. The electors in each state vote for president in early December of every election year. Their votes are counted in Congress on the following January 6.
History

- **Native Americans** The lifestyles of Native Americans were shaped by location and climate.

- Native Americans of the cold Arctic tundra hunted animals, while those in temperate areas grew crops and hunted.

- **European Colonies** By the late 1500s, Europeans had begun migrating to North America in search of farmland, valuable minerals, and freedom.

- The Spanish colonized what is now the southwestern and southern United States, the English settled along the Atlantic coast, and the French came to northern areas for the fur trade.
History

- The middle Atlantic coastal area provided fertile soil and plenty of game.
- The English settlers there thrived and raised cash crops for trade.
- Plantation owners in the South used enslaved Africans to provide the labor for large-scale farming.
History

- **Two New Countries**  In the late 1700s, thirteen British colonies along the Atlantic coast fought a successful war of independence, creating the United States of America.
- In 1867 other British North American colonies formed the **Dominion** of Canada, a self-governing nation within the British Empire.
History
History

- **From Sea to Shining Sea** By the mid-1800s, the United States had expanded westward across the North American continent to the Pacific coast.

- Canada carried out its own westward expansion during the late 1800s.
History

- **Growth, Division, and Unity** Industrialization transformed the United States and Canada during the 1800s.
- The waterfalls of the northeastern United States were good sources of power for factories.
- Coal from the Midwestern states powered steam engines.
- Rivers and lakes throughout the central part of the continent provided easy transport for manufactured goods.
History

- Cotton, the raw material of the textile industry, became more and more profitable.
- By the 1800s the demand for cotton also increased the demand for enslaved workers. Disputes over slavery led to the United States Civil War of 1861–1865.
History

- **Technological and Social Change** The completion of transcontinental railroads in the late 1800s in both Canada and the United States led to increased settlement of the West.
- Thousands of immigrants were hired to build the railroads.
History
Government - US

- The United States is a democratic republic with a federal system of government.
- In a federal system, the national government shares power with state and provincial governments.
- The American plan of government is set down in the Constitution, drafted in 1787.
- Over the years, amendments to the Constitution have been made to meet the country’s changing needs.
- The national government is made of three branches—executive, legislative, and judicial.
Government – Canada

- Canada is a parliamentary democracy with a federal system that includes a national government and various provinces and territories.
- The British monarch, represented by a Canadian governor-general, is Canada’s ceremonial head of state.
- The prime minister, who heads the majority party in Parliament, is the actual head of government.
- Canada became independent from the United Kingdom in 1931.
The Cultural Geography of Canada and the United States

Section 3
Objectives

- Discuss how the religious practices and languages of the region reflect the immigrant history of the United States and Canada.
- Describe how the arts of the United States and Canada reflect the region’s colonial past.
- Identify the kinds of educational and health care systems that serve the people of the region.
Terms to Know

- Bilingual
- jazz
- socioeconomic class
- literacy rate
- patriotism
A Geographic View

*Fresh Eggs* by Winslow Homer
Geographic Literacy

• The United States and Canada are pluralistic societies composed of many religions and creeds. The majority of Americans and Canadians, however, identify as Christian. The largest number of American Christians belong to one of many Protestant groups. Roman Catholics make up the largest Christian group in Canada. Other religions in the United States and Canada include Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.
Cultural Characteristics

- **Religious Freedom**  Freedom of religion has always been valued in both the United States and Canada.
- Most Americans and Canadians who are members of organized religions are Christians.
- **Language**  English and French are the official languages of Canada.
- French-speaking Canadians in Quebec and some other provinces want greater protection for their language and its culture; many people in Quebec favor Quebec's independence.
Cultural Characteristics
The Arts

• **Music**  **Jazz**, a mix of African and European musical ideas, was born in New Orleans early in the 1900s as a genuinely American music form. Country music and rock ’n’ roll became popular later in the 1900s.

• **The Visual Arts**  American and Canadian painting and sculpting began to diverge from European traditions in the early 1900s.

• Painters from both countries have depicted their unique landscapes and urban environments.
The Arts

- **Literature** In the late 1800s and early 1900s, American and Canadian literatures took on their own distinct identities as writers wrote about their home regions, such as the Great Plains, and told stories about ordinary working men and women.

- **Popular Entertainment** The United States movie industry, which began in New York City and soon moved to Los Angeles, has had an enormous cultural impact on the rest of the world.

- Both Canada and the United States are noted for their contributions to the performing arts.

- The United States is the birthplace of the musical, associated with Broadway—the street that runs through New York City’s theater district.
Lifestyles

- As citizens of two of the world’s wealthiest countries, most Americans and Canadians have a high standard of living as well as the advantage of many personal choices and opportunities.
Lifestyles

- **Health Care** In Canada, the government pays for health care for all citizens.
- In the United States, most people must pay for their own health insurance.
- The role of the U.S. government in health care is under debate.
Lifestyles

- **Education**  Both the United States and Canada require all children to attend school.

- Both countries have public and private schools and universities. Over 95 percent of both populations are literate.

- **Sports and Recreation**  Sports are popular in both Canada and the United States.

- Many Americans and Canadians also take advantage of their countries’ millions of acres of national parks for hiking and camping.
Lifestyles

- **Celebrations** People in the United States and Canada celebrate many of the same religious holidays, and many civic observances are similar, although held on different dates.

- Independence Day is on July 4 in the United States, and Canada celebrates its national holiday, Canada Day, on July 1.
Lifestyles
Section 1 – Summary

- Both Canada and the United States are home to various groups of native peoples and descendants of immigrants.
- Physical geography impacts the distribution and density of population in the U.S. and Canada.
- North America’s settlements and its largest cities developed along waterways.
- Natural resources and waterways for transportation helped North America industrialize.
Section 2 – Summary

- Native Americans are North America’s earliest people.
- Europeans set up colonies in North America for trading, conquest, and religious freedom.
- The thirteen British colonies won their independence from Britain in 1776 and formed their own republic, the United States of America.
- In 1867 the eastern provinces combined to form the Dominion of Canada. Canada today encompasses 10 provinces and 3 territories; it became an independent country in 1931.
- Industrialization and technology enabled westward expansion and spurred social change.
The immigrant roots of the United States and Canada make these two countries diverse.

Both countries have a heritage of religious freedom.

Musical and artistic expression began with immigrants and gradually became uniquely North American.

Health care is supported by the governments of both countries but in different ways.

Both countries in the region have high standards of living.