



The Rocky Mountains Printable Reading Comprehension

Word Count: 243 | Lexile 950

The Rocky Mountains stretch for more than 3,000 miles across North America. They begin in Canada and continue south through the United States into New Mexico. Known simply as “the Rockies,” this chain includes some of the continent’s highest peaks. Many mountains rise above 14,000 feet, creating a dramatic skyline.

The Rockies formed about 70 million years ago when plates of Earth’s crust pushed against each other. This powerful movement forced huge blocks of rock upward, shaping tall ridges and deep valleys. Over time, slow-moving glaciers carved out lakes and river paths that still flow through the region today.

The Rocky Mountains are rich in wildlife. Elk, mountain lions, and black bears live in the forests and meadows. Bald eagles soar over cold rivers where trout swim. Because habitats change with elevation and climate, the Rockies support one of the most diverse ecosystems in North America.

People are drawn to the Rockies for many reasons. Tourists come to hike, ski, and camp in parks such as Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain National Park. Native peoples have lived in and around these mountains for thousands of years, building cultures closely tied to the land. Today, the Rockies continue to inspire visitors with natural beauty, challenge, and history.

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1. What geographic feature makes the Rockies especially notable?

- a) They are the widest mountain chain in the world.
- b) They contain some of the tallest peaks in North America.
- c) They form the border between Canada and the United States.
- d) They were created by glaciers melting quickly.

2. How were the Rocky Mountains originally formed?

- a) Earthquakes that split the land into valleys.
- b) Volcanoes erupting along the western coast.
- c) Plates of Earth’s crust pushing together and lifting rock.
- d) Rivers carving out canyons in soft soil.

3. **Which role did glaciers play in shaping the Rockies?**
- a) They melted into rivers and destroyed the mountains.
 - b) They carved lakes and river paths into the landscape.
 - c) They carried mountains from Canada into the U.S.
 - d) They flattened tall ridges into plains.
4. **Why are the Rockies described as having one of the most diverse ecosystems in North America?**
- a) The mountains are located across three countries.
 - b) Wildlife has adapted to a variety of elevations and climates.
 - c) Few humans have ever visited the Rockies.
 - d) The rivers provide food for every species in the area.
5. **Compare the role of the Rockies for Native peoples and modern tourists. Which statement is most accurate?**
- a) Native peoples relied on the land for culture and survival, while tourists visit for recreation and natural beauty.
 - b) Both groups visit the Rockies only in the winter.
 - c) Native peoples built ski resorts, while tourists built campsites.
 - d) Tourists and Native peoples both ignored the land's resources.
6. **What does the passage suggest about why people continue to visit the Rockies today?**
- a) To escape cold weather in other parts of the U.S.
 - b) To explore history, enjoy outdoor activities, and experience natural beauty.
 - c) To mine gold and silver, as in the 1800s.
 - d) To settle permanently on the high peaks.
7. **Which statement best summarizes the passage?**
- a) The Rocky Mountains are ancient, full of wildlife, and important for both culture and recreation.
 - b) The Rocky Mountains are dangerous and should be avoided.
 - c) The Rocky Mountains are the tallest in the world and were formed by volcanoes.
 - d) The Rocky Mountains are only important because of skiing.
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Answer Key

1. b) They contain some of the tallest peaks in North America
2. c) Plates of Earth's crust pushing together and lifting rock
3. b) They carved lakes and river paths into the landscape
4. b) Wildlife has adapted to a variety of elevations and climates
5. a) Native peoples relied on the land for culture and survival, while tourists visit for recreation and natural beauty
6. b) To explore history, enjoy outdoor activities, and experience natural beauty
7. a) The Rocky Mountains are ancient, full of wildlife, and important for both culture and recreation