

## Lesson 50 - COLORADO

### Land Regions

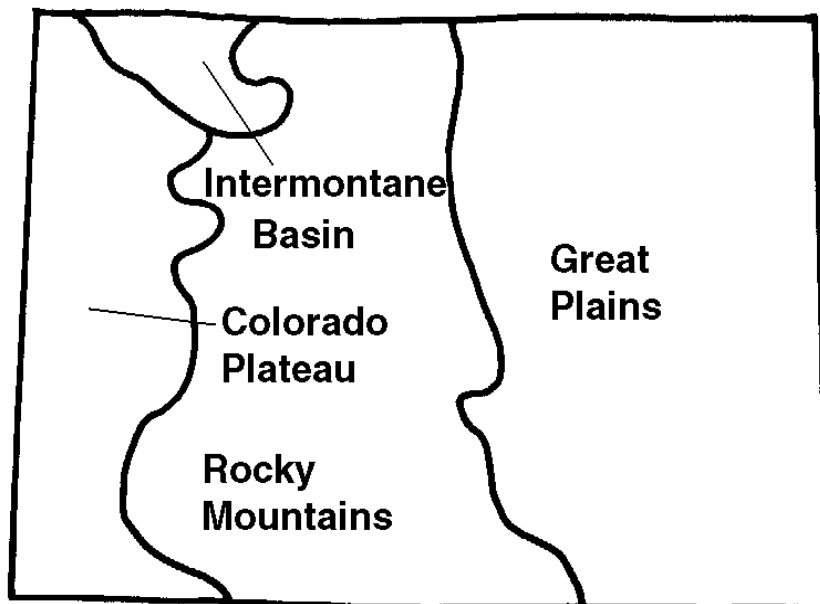
Find Colorado on the top Geographical Features Map on page 5. Notice that Colorado spreads across three regions: the Interior Plains, the Rocky Mountains, and the Western Plateaus, Basins, and Ranges. Keep in mind the characteristics and divisions of these regions as you read about land regions within Colorado. Colorado has four land regions. As you read about each region, find it on the map below and color it in, using a different colored highlighter for each region.

The Colorado Plateau is an area of hills and valleys, as well as plateaus and mesas. A mesa is a flat-topped hill that has steep sides. This region is a good farming region, and its grasslands are also used to graze cattle and sheep.

The Intermontane Basin consists of rolling, forested hills and grassy plateaus. This region was named "intermontane," or "between mountains," because it is located between mountain ranges. The plateaus of this region are used for grazing sheep.

The Rocky Mountains stretch from north to south through the center of Colorado. Colorado's Rocky Mountain peaks are the tallest in the Rocky Mountain chain. Over fifty mountain peaks are 14,000 feet tall. Because of this, the Colorado Rockies have been nicknamed the Roof of North America. The Continental Divide, an imaginary line dividing rivers that flow east to the Atlantic Ocean from those that flow west to the Pacific Ocean, runs through the Colorado Rockies. There are five main ranges that make up the Colorado Rockies: The Front Range, the Park Range, the Sawatch Range, the San Juan Mountains, and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. At the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains is an area of shifting dunes known as the Great Sand Dunes. Between Colorado's mountains are areas known as "parks" that are level and have few trees.

The Great Plains is a gently sloping region, gradually rising in elevation from the east to the west. Farmers in this region use irrigation as a means of watering their crops.



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## Borders and Geographical Features

Find Colorado on the Order of Statehood Map on page 7. Since Colorado was the thirty-eighth state, write “38” on Colorado. Notice that Colorado shares a border with seven states: Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.

Colorado is one of three states whose boundary is formed only by lines of longitude and latitude and not by any geographical features. (The other two states are Utah and Wyoming).

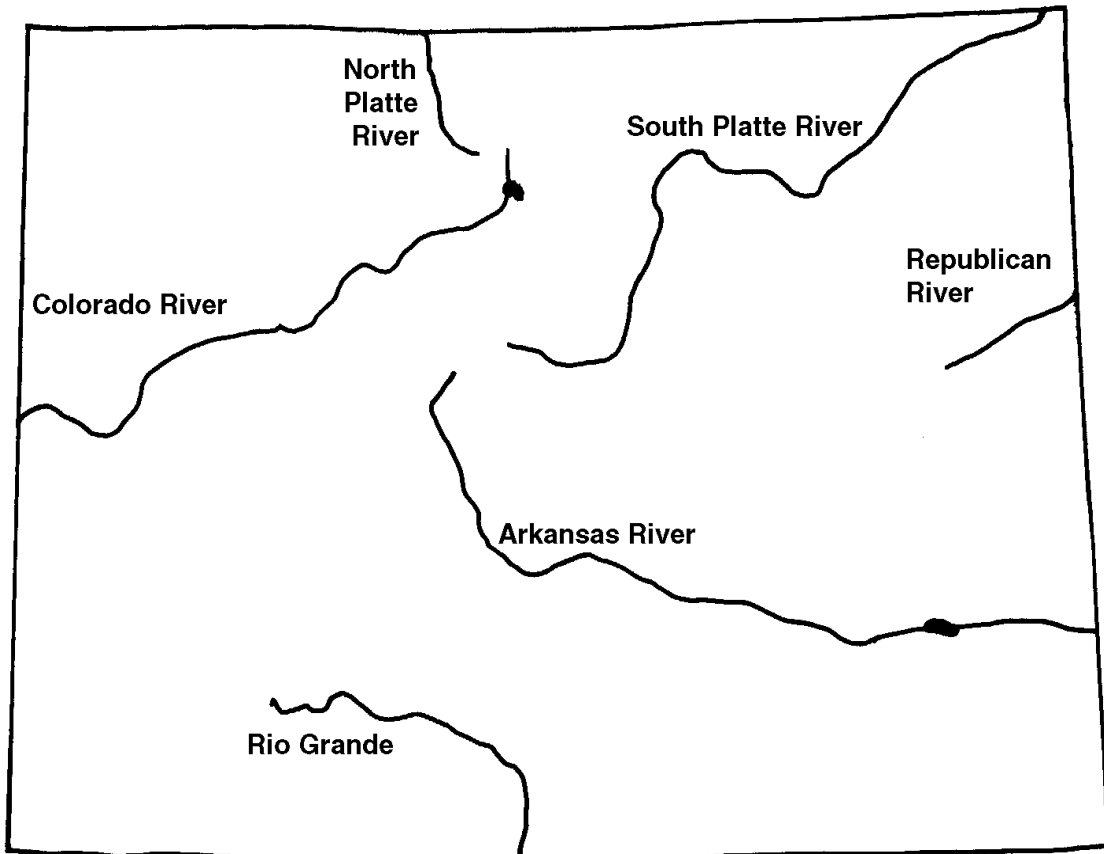
- Colorado’s boundaries are all straight lines.
- The place where Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico meet is called the Four Corners. This is the only place in the United States where four states meet. The exact spot is marked by a plaque. If you stand in the right place, bend over, and touch the ground with your hands, you can actually be in all four states at the same time!

Colorado does have several important geographical features. As you read about these features, refer to the adjacent map.

- More major U.S. rivers begin in Colorado than in any other state. These rivers include the Arkansas River, the South Platte River, the Republican River, the Colorado River, the Rio Grande River, and the North Platte River. Find these six rivers on the map. Trace them with a blue highlighter.
- The largest lake in Colorado is the John Martin Reservoir, an artificial lake formed by a federal flood control project on the Arkansas River. Find this lake on the map and label it.
- The largest natural lake in the state is Grand Lake. Grand Lake lies near the beginning of the Colorado River. Find this lake and label it on the map.
- Summit Lake, at almost 13,000 feet above sea level, is one of the highest lakes in the United States. (Summit Lake is not shown on the map.)
- Colorado is famous for its beautiful mountains.

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## Borders and Geographical Features Map



# COLORADO

## Major Cities

Denver is the capital and largest city of Colorado. Find Denver on the map below. Then find Colorado on the States and Capitals Map on page 9. Make a dot to show the approximate location of Denver. Label it "Denver," and label the state "CO." Denver is a major center for distribution, manufacturing, and transportation for the Rocky Mountain region. More federal agencies have national or regional headquarters in Denver than in any other U.S. city except Washington, D.C. At a mile above sea level, Denver is the highest state capital in the nation. Denver was founded after gold was discovered in the area. The early community served as a supply center for nearby mining settlements.

Colorado Springs, the second-largest city in Colorado, is known as a center of tourism and recreation. Colorado Springs has more than 300 days of sunshine each year. Colorado Springs was created by William Palmer to go along with his railroad. The gold mines at nearby Cripple Creek helped make Colorado Springs a luxurious place to live. The Garden of the Gods, an area containing strange-shaped stone pillars, is located in Colorado Springs.

Aurora, located just southeast of Denver, is part of metropolitan Denver. Aurora is the third-largest city in the state.

Lakewood is the fourth-largest city in Colorado. Lakewood is located just southwest of Denver and is part of metropolitan Denver.

Fort Collins, the fifth-largest city in Colorado, is a college-town. Colorado State University is located in Fort Collins. It was started over 130 years ago with only five students!

