

Lesson

3

Bodies of Water



WHAT TO KNOW

What are some of the different bodies of water in the United States?

VOCABULARY

inlet p. 31

gulf p. 31

sound p. 31

tributary p. 32

river system p. 32

drainage basin p. 32

fall line p. 33

PLACES

Gulf of Mexico

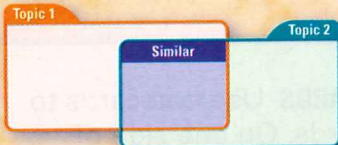
Great Lakes

Great Salt Lake

Mississippi River



COMPARE AND CONTRAST



"Watch out!" You duck as the sail swings over your head. The wind is very strong on Lake Michigan today.

"Sorry," your dad says. "But we're going so fast now that we should be at the dock in Chicago before the sun goes down."

You lean over the side of the boat and look out at the tall buildings of the city ahead.



Inlets and Lakes

Hundreds of inlets along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts help define the shape of the United States. An **inlet** is any area of water extending into the land from a larger body of water.

Gulfs and Inlets

The largest inlets are called **gulfs**. The largest gulf bordering the United States is the **Gulf of Mexico**. Another large gulf, the Gulf of Alaska, lies south of Alaska along the Pacific Coast.

Hundreds of bays and sounds also shape the coastline. A **sound** is a long inlet that separates offshore islands from the mainland. The largest bays and sounds provide harbors where ships can safely dock. Most of the country's largest bays and inlets are found along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

Our Largest Lakes

The largest lakes in the United States and in all of North America are together known as the **Great Lakes**. They are located along the border between the United States and Canada. These five lakes—Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario—are among the world's largest freshwater lakes.

The Great Lakes and the rivers connected to them form an important inland waterway. This waterway links the Midwest and the Atlantic Ocean.

Most lakes in the United States are made up of fresh water, but the **Great Salt Lake** in Utah is as salty as any ocean. Some people even consider it to be a sea—an inland body of salt water.

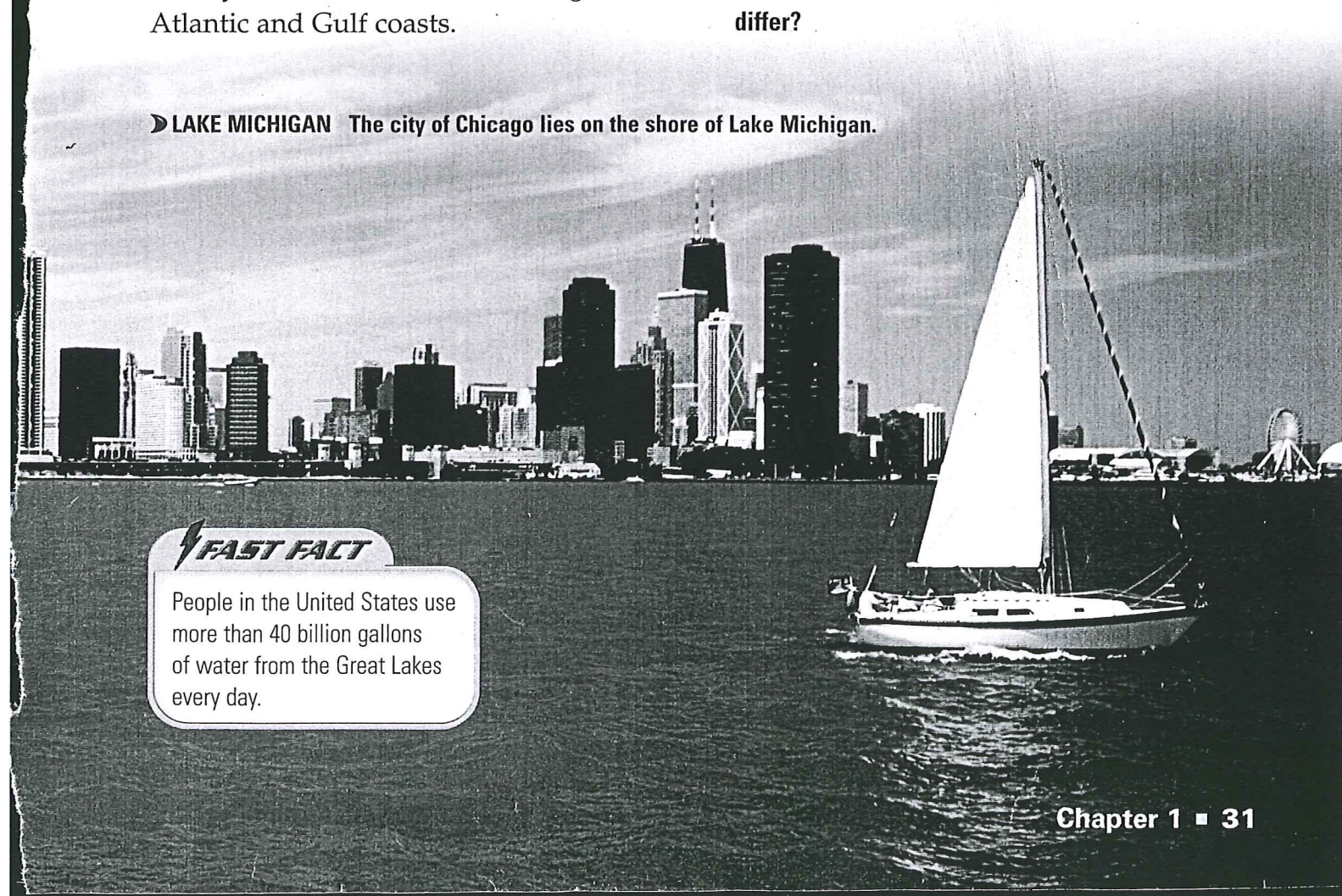
READING CHECK COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How do the Great Lakes and the Great Salt Lake differ?

► **LAKE MICHIGAN** The city of Chicago lies on the shore of Lake Michigan.

FAST FACT

People in the United States use more than 40 billion gallons of water from the Great Lakes every day.



Major Bodies of Water in the United States



LOCATION Which city on the map borders the Ohio River?

Rivers

Rivers are bodies of fresh, moving water. Every river begins at a source and ends at a mouth, where it empties into a larger body of water.

River Systems

All rivers flow from higher to lower ground. They may be joined by other streams or rivers. A stream or river that flows into a larger stream or river is called a **tributary**.

Together, a river and its tributaries make up a **river system**. A river system drains, or carries water away from, the

land around it. The land drained by a river system is its **drainage basin**.

The **Mississippi River** and its tributaries create the largest river system in the United States. It drains most of the land between the Rocky and Appalachian Mountains. It forms an important transportation route through the nation's interior.

The Mississippi River flows from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Its largest tributaries include the Missouri, Ohio, and Arkansas Rivers.

READING CHECK **COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

What is the difference between a river and a river system?

Rivers in the East

Many rivers cross the Coastal Plain and flow into the Atlantic Ocean. Most of these rivers and their tributaries begin in the Appalachian Mountains.

Rivers and Population

Many cities have been built where rivers flow into oceans. For example, New York City was built where the Hudson River flows into the Atlantic Ocean. Living near a river made it easier to travel and to transport goods.

Other cities lie inland along the Fall Line, which divides the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. A **fall line** is a place where the land drops sharply, causing rivers to form waterfalls or rapids. People once

used fast-moving water to power factory machines. They now use it to make electricity.

READING CHECK SUMMARIZE

Why were some early cities built near rivers?

Rivers in the West

An imaginary line runs north and south along the highest points of the Rocky Mountains. This line is called the Continental Divide. It divides the major river systems of North America into those that flow into rivers leading to the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean and those that flow into the Pacific or Arctic Oceans.

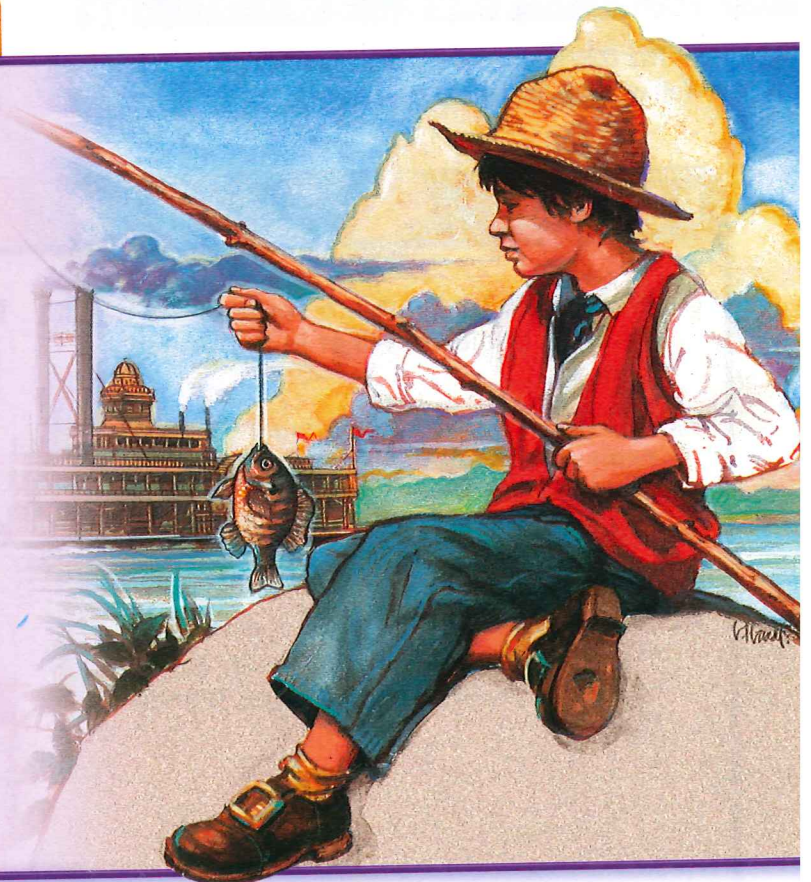
Children IN HISTORY

Mark Twain

When Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, was four years old, his family moved to Hannibal, Missouri. Hannibal is on the banks of the Mississippi River. As a boy, Twain watched steamboats on the river and dreamed of becoming a steamboat pilot.

After Twain grew up, he earned his pilot's license. When the Civil War shut down steamboat traffic on the Mississippi River, Twain traveled the country and began writing the stories that made him a famous author.

Make It Relevant How does where people live affect the kinds of work they do?





► **THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE** runs through Yellowstone National Park.

Rivers and the Continental Divide

Rivers that begin east of the Continental Divide eventually reach the Atlantic Ocean. Most rivers that begin west of the line empty into the Pacific Ocean.

Rivers that flow from sources east of the Continental Divide include the Missouri River and the Rio Grande. The rivers to the west of the Continental Divide include the Sacramento, Columbia, and Colorado.



READING CHECK COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How do rivers east and west of the Continental Divide differ?

Summary

The United States has different bodies of water. Its largest lakes are the Great Lakes. Rivers drain land and are often used for transportation. The Continental Divide separates rivers that flow into the Atlantic from rivers that flow into the Pacific.

REVIEW

- WHAT TO KNOW** What are some of the different bodies of water in the United States?
- VOCABULARY** Write a sentence that explains how the terms **tributary** and **drainage basin** are related.
- GEOGRAPHY** Which countries do the Great Lakes border?
- CRITICAL THINKING** Why do you think it is important to have a waterway that connects the Midwest and the Atlantic Ocean?
-  DRAW A POSTER** Find out what river is located nearest to where you live. Make a poster showing the river and its surrounding landforms. Label nearby cities and any tributaries the river may have.
-  FOCUS SKILL GENERALIZE** On a separate sheet of paper, copy and complete the graphic organizer below.

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|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Topic 1 | | Topic 2 |
| Rivers in the East | Similar | Rivers in the West |
| | | |