

# Florida Studies Weekly

## State History



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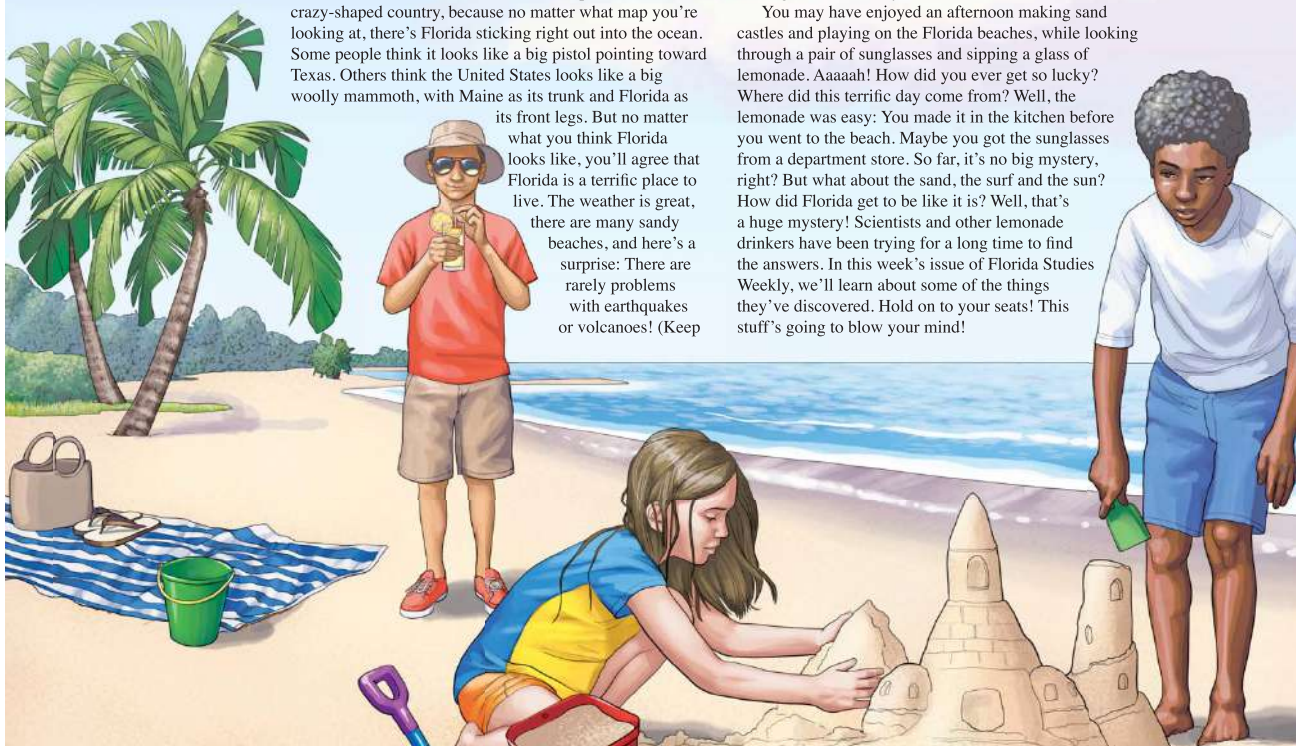
## What a Great Place to Live!

*If you ask a friend who lives in a far-off country to point out on a map where Illinois, Montana, Virginia or Utah is, he or she may just look at you in confusion. But if you ask your friend to tell you where Florida is, he or she will probably point right to it!*

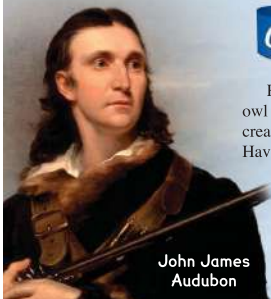
Florida is one of the easiest states to spot in this crazy-shaped country, because no matter what map you're looking at, there's Florida sticking right out into the ocean. Some people think it looks like a big pistol pointing toward Texas. Others think the United States looks like a big woolly mammoth, with Maine as its trunk and Florida as its front legs. But no matter what you think Florida looks like, you'll agree that Florida is a terrific place to live. The weather is great, there are many sandy beaches, and here's a surprise: There are rarely problems with earthquakes or volcanoes! (Keep

reading to find out why.)

You may have enjoyed an afternoon making sand castles and playing on the Florida beaches, while looking through a pair of sunglasses and sipping a glass of lemonade. Aaaaah! How did you ever get so lucky? Where did this terrific day come from? Well, the lemonade was easy: You made it in the kitchen before you went to the beach. Maybe you got the sunglasses from a department store. So far, it's no big mystery, right? But what about the sand, the surf and the sun? How did Florida get to be like it is? Well, that's a huge mystery! Scientists and other lemonade drinkers have been trying for a long time to find the answers. In this week's issue of Florida Studies Weekly, we'll learn about some of the things they've discovered. Hold on to your seats! This stuff's going to blow your mind!



### Connections Nature Festival



John James  
Audubon

Have you ever wanted to take apart some owl droppings? Race crabs? Touch weird sea creatures in a tank? Ride a swamp buggy? Have we got the place for you!

Every January, students, families and tourists head to Naples for the Southwest Florida Nature Festival, where the main focus is on birds. Florida has a rich history with birds, thanks to John James Audubon.

John Audubon lived more than 150 years ago. He grew up in France, but spent most of his life in America, studying birds. He especially enjoyed Florida because of the huge variety of beautiful birds he found. He painted pictures of the birds he studied and eventually put his paintings and knowledge in a book called "Birds of America."

In 1905 the Audubon Society was formed. The purpose of this society is to conserve

and restore the ecosystem of birds and other animals everywhere. They work hard to help animals and birds, especially when tragedies like oil spills happen.

John James Audubon loved animals. The good people at the Southwest Florida Nature Festival love animals. Chances are, you love animals too. Why don't you head down to the festival next time it happens and inspect some owl droppings? Don't forget your gloves!

**Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:** SS.4.A.1.1: Analyze primary and secondary resources to identify significant individuals and events throughout Florida history. SS.4.A.1.2: Synthesize information related to Florida history through print and electronic media. SS.4.A.2.1: Compare Native American tribes in Florida. SS.4.A.6.3: Describe the contributions of significant individuals to Florida. SS.4.C.2.2: Identify ways citizens work together to influence government and help solve community and state problems. SS.4.C.2.3: Explain the importance of public service, voting, and volunteerism. SS.4.FL.1.1: People have many different types of jobs from which to choose. Identify different jobs requiring people to have different skills. SS.4.FL.2.7: Planning for spending can help people make informed choices. Develop a budget plan for spending, saving, and managing income. SS.4.FL.3.1: Identify ways that income is saved, spent on goods and services, or used to pay taxes. SS.4.FL.3.2: Explain that when people save money, they give up the opportunity to buy things now in order to buy things later. SS.4.FL.3.4: Identify savings goals people set as incentives to save. One savings goal might be to buy goods and services in the future. SS.4.G.1.1: Identify physical features of Florida. SS.4.G.1.2: Locate and label cultural features on a Florida map. SS.4.G.1.3: Explain how weather impacts Florida. SS.4.G.1.4: Interpret political and physical maps using map elements (title, compass rose, cardinal directions, intermediate directions, symbols, legend, scale, longitude, latitude).





# Florida's Geology

*Florida's geology is fascinating. This week, let's explore some of the reasons scientists think it's so interesting.*

## That's One Big Place!

Where is the biggest place you've ever been? Disney World? The Grand Canyon? There was once a place here on Earth that was bigger than any place you've ever visited. We're talking bigger than Miami, bigger than Florida, even bigger than all of North America! This huge place was called Pangaea, which means "one worldwide land." Pangaea was one huge continent! Imagine being able to travel over all the world's land without getting in a boat or a jet. What happened to this giant continent? Over millions of years, the land broke up into huge sections and moved across the face of the planet to become the continents we know today. You may have visited some pretty big places, but you'll never visit a place as totally huge as Pangaea. But don't feel bad; no one ever visited Pangaea.



After Pangaea separated, the plates started moving (right), and our continents began to form as we know them today.

Scientists believe this "worldwide land" broke up into continents millions and millions of years before people ever lived on Earth.

## States on Plates

If you had a machine that could suck up all of the world's oceans, you would see that all of Earth's landforms are resting on top of huge landmasses called tectonic plates. Plate tectonics is the study of these plates. Landforms are hills, mountains, plains and valleys that make up the surface of the Earth. The massive tectonic plates slowly rub up against each other. This means the world is changing a tiny bit every day. Earthquakes and volcanoes are both more common near places where two tectonic plates meet. These places are called fault lines. One of the most famous fault lines is the San Andreas Fault, in California.

Volcanoes form whenever there is a gap between two plates. Molten rock and hot gasses leak out and slowly build up over time. Thankfully, Florida is hundreds of miles from the nearest fault line. That means few earthquakes and no volcanoes nearby!

## The Travelin' Tropical Terrain

Florida is not only a super place for travelers—it's also a super traveler itself! Scientists believe that millions of years ago, our super traveling state was part of northwestern Africa. Are you kidding?

How could scientists believe such a crazy thing? The answer will amaze you.

Deep under the young rock of every continent's surface are very old layers that scientists call basement rocks.

A study of Florida's basement rocks reveals an amazing secret: They match up almost exactly with the basement rocks of northern Africa.

What it all means is that once, long ago, when those very old layers of rock were brand new, Florida and northern Africa may have been two pieces of the same Pangaea puzzle.

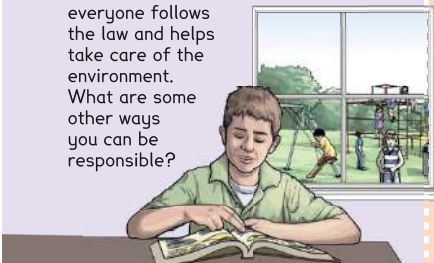


**American Civics**  
www.americanhistory.com

## Responsibility

Has anyone ever told you that it is important to be responsible? Do you know what being responsible means? You are responsible when you do things that need to be done, even without being asked. Your responsibility could be starting your homework as soon as you get home or doing chores without being reminded.

As a community, being responsible means that everyone follows the law and helps take care of the environment. What are some other ways you can be responsible?

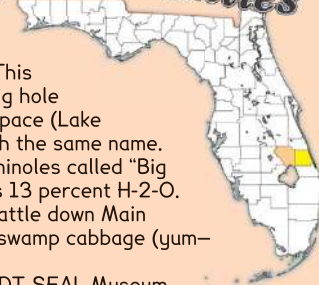


## Okeechobee and St. Lucie Counties

**Okeechobee:** Welcome to the "Top of the Lake." This county is located at the northern end of that big hole in Florida that astronauts can see from outer space (Lake Okeechobee, that is) and has a county seat with the same name. Fire up the airboat and check out what the Seminoles called "Big Water" at 730 square miles. Yup, this county is 13 percent H-2-O. There's fun for everybody here, from driving cattle down Main Street to festivals for sugar, birding and even swamp cabbage (yum—just hold your nose!)

**St. Lucie** is the county that's home to the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum on Hutchinson Island. Now that is one cool place! You can even ride a horse while you're on the beach there. The county seat, Fort Pierce, is just one part of this "Jewel of the Treasure Coast" with miles of protected lands and tons of "green" building going on. St. Lucie County is known for its sustainable community living that helps the environment, preserves ecosystems and makes the world a cleaner, prettier place.

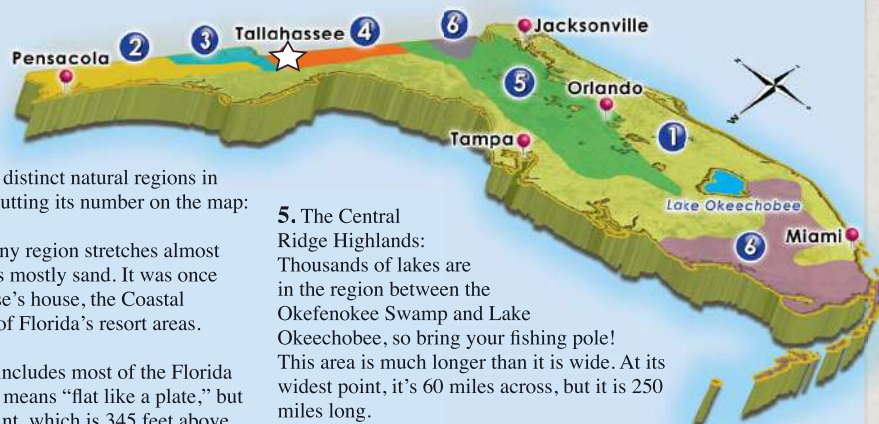
## Florida Counties





## Six Great Regions

There are forces at work all of the time on Florida's landscape. Rivers, waves, wind, changes in sea level and ocean currents all want to leave their mark on our state. The shaping forces of nature have left six distinct natural regions in Florida. Try to label each region by putting its number on the map:



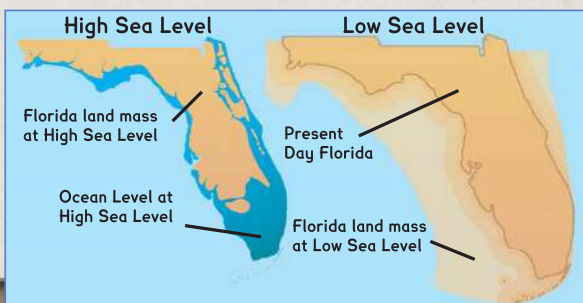
- 1. Coastal Lowlands:** This long, skinny region stretches almost all the way around the state. Its soil is mostly sand. It was once underwater. Except for Mickey Mouse's house, the Coastal Lowlands are the home of nearly all of Florida's resort areas.
- 2. The Western Upland:** This region includes most of the Florida Panhandle. It's a plateau, a word that means "flat like a plate," but it is the home of Florida's highest point, which is 345 feet above sea level.
- 3. The Marianna Lowlands:** This is sinkhole country, and it's full of small lakes. A sinkhole is caused by underground water. For a country area, it has many people, and it's a great place to grow peanuts, cotton and grapes.
- 4. The Tallahassee Hills:** This region stretches from Tallahassee north to the Georgia border. It's only 25 miles wide, but it's nearly 100 miles long. It was once the center of cotton production in Florida, but now most of the old cotton estates raise quail.

**5. The Central Ridge Highlands:** Thousands of lakes are in the region between the Okefenokee Swamp and Lake Okeechobee, so bring your fishing pole! This area is much longer than it is wide. At its widest point, it's 60 miles across, but it is 250 miles long.

**6. The Everglades and the Okefenokee Swamp:** This region has two parts: one way up north and one way down south. The Okefenokee Swamp is the small part up north. Most of this area is in Georgia, but 66 square miles of it poke over Florida's border. The Everglades in southern Florida are 1,200 miles square. This region is home to a great deal of wildlife, including the world-famous Florida alligator. The Everglades area is the most threatened ecosystem in the United States.

## Seein' Sea Levels

Have you seen how low the water at the beach is at low sea level? Over thousands of years, the height of the water at the beach can change hundreds of feet depending on the weather. During an ice



age, much of the Earth's water becomes frozen storage on land. This makes the level of the seas go down.

When the Earth warms up, the level of the seas goes up, too. The brown area of the "High Sea Level" picture shows where the beach was when the Earth was warmer. Florida was much smaller.

During an ice age, the level of the sea goes down. Look at the "Low Sea Level" picture to see how much bigger Florida was during the last ice age 11,000 years ago!

## Let's Test Your Science I.Q.

Write your answers on another piece of paper.

1. Why can't you find dinosaur fossils in Florida?
2. Why can you find other fossils in Florida?
3. When did the first people arrive in Florida?
4. Create your own questions from the issue. Be prepared to ask a question and then be able to answer it. Answers are on Page 4

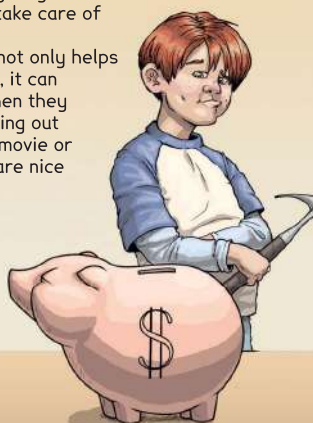
## Financial Literacy

### Spend or Save?

There are a lot of ways to use the money we earn, or income. Many families make a monthly budget that keeps track of how much they spend on important things like food, water, clothes and electricity.

Many times, families will save as much money as they can. By saving money now, your family will be able to buy something special later. Saving money is also a good way to prepare for accidents. If something bad happens, your family may need to use savings to help take care of things.

Making a budget not only helps families save money, it can help them decide when they can spend it, too. Going out for dinner, seeing a movie or other fun activities are nice for families to plan. Making the choice to spend or save money is important for everyone.



## Enjoying Florida's Weather

Many people enjoy Florida's weather. Our state usually sees warm, rainy summers and cool, dry winters. Summer temperatures range from 70-90 degrees Fahrenheit. Florida sees a lot of rain during the summer and heavy fog during the winter.

Most of the time, Florida has very good weather. Many people from all over the country like to vacation here because of the nice days. However, our state is often hit by hurricanes that form over the Atlantic Ocean. A hurricane is a huge storm with lots of rain and wind. Hurricanes can cause lots of damage and force people to leave their homes until the storm is over. Hurricane season is from June to November.

What type of weather have you seen in your part of our state?

Hurricane Dennis batters Key West in 2005



Name \_\_\_\_\_



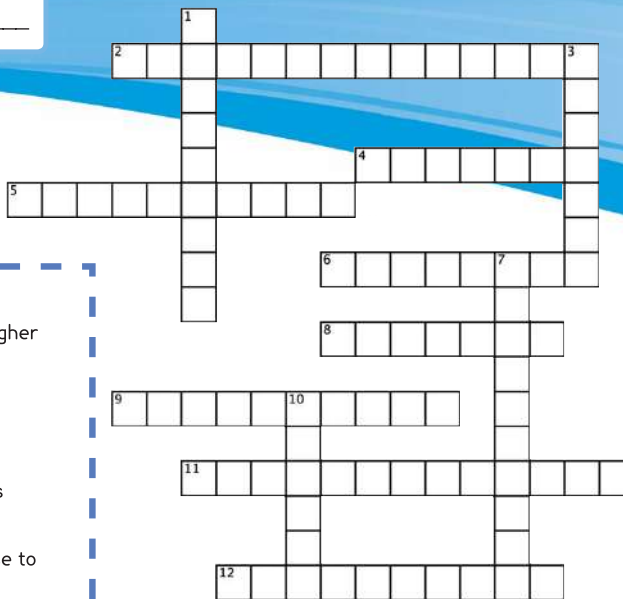
As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

#### ACROSS

2. study of the movements of continental landmasses
4. word that means "flat like a plate" (flat land that is higher than surrounding land)
5. Most of this swamp is in Georgia.
6. hole in the ground caused by underground water
8. one worldwide land
9. county seat of St. Lucie County
11. oldest rocks (Florida's match Africa's.)
12. 1,200-square-mile area that has many alligator dens

#### DOWN

1. western part of Florida (shaped like something you use to cook eggs)
3. county where you'll find the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum
7. county called "Top of the Lake"
10. age of low tide

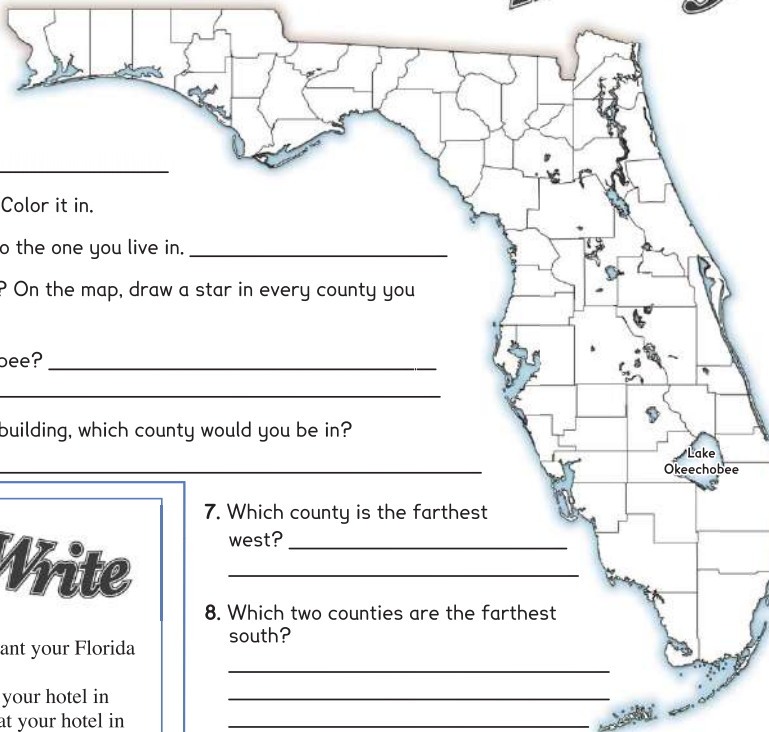


1. Florida's landmass was under the sea during the dinosaur age.  
2. Bones of fish and shells can calcify and become fossils even under the ocean.  
3. Archaeologists have found evidence that humans were in Florida as far back as 12,000 years ago.  
4. Record the answer to your own question.

## Counties of Florida

Use this map to help you answer the following questions about Florida's counties. If you need help, ask for permission to use the Internet or an atlas.

1. How many counties are in Florida? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Find the county you live in on the map. Color it in.
3. Name at least one county that is next to the one you live in. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you ever traveled around Florida? On the map, draw a star in every county you have visited.
5. What counties surround Lake Okeechobee? \_\_\_\_\_
6. If you were to visit our state's capitol building, which county would you be in? \_\_\_\_\_



## Activity

You have just been given land and money to build your own hotel in Florida.

Your hotel must have a pool and playground for kids. You want your Florida hotel to be the best.

Before you begin to write, imagine what your hotel in Florida would be like. Now write to tell what your hotel in Florida would be like.

## Let's Write

7. Which county is the farthest west? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which two counties are the farthest south? \_\_\_\_\_



The longest journey begins with one small step.

**ACHIEVEMENT**

Pass It On.

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## Think & Review

1. Why is Florida a great place to live?
2. What does the word "Pangaea" mean?
3. Why do scientists believe Florida was originally connected to northern Africa?
4. What are some of the causes of earthquakes and volcanoes?
5. What has caused Florida to change size and shape over the years?
6. How many counties are in Florida?
7. What is plate tectonics?
8. How can budgets be helpful?
9. Compare and contrast the counties of Okeechobee and St. Lucie.
10. What are the six great regions of Florida? Describe them.
11. What does the character trait responsibility mean?