

# Oklahoma Studies

## Procedures

1. Hand out copies of the reading page, "Oklahoma Agriculture."
  - Students will read the passage and circle unfamiliar words.
  - Students will write down your best guess of the word's meaning, based on context clues.
  - Discuss unfamiliar words as a class.
  - Students will look the words up in a dictionary and compare the meaning with the guessed meaning.
  - Students will answer the following questions in complete sentences.
    - What is the purpose of this passage?
    - What is the central idea?
    - List some of the details that support the central idea.
    - Describe the structure of the text.
    - Write a short summary of the reading.

## Vocabulary

**agriculture**—the science of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock

**ancient**— of, coming from, or belonging to a time that was long ago in the past

**climate**—the average weather conditions of a particular place or region over a period of years

**cosmetic**— of, relating to, or making for beauty especially of the complexion

**crop**— cultivated plants or agricultural produce, such as grain, vegetables, or fruit, considered as a group

**cultivate**— to prepare or prepare and use for the raising of crops

**diversity**—variety

**farming**—using land for growing food or raising animals

**flaxseed**— the small seed of flax used especially as a source of oil, as a demulcent and emollient, and as a dietary supplement

**growing zone**—one of 13 zones defined by the US Department of Agriculture representing the average low temperature range for an area

**harvest**— the act or process of gathering in a crop

**interstate**— relating to or connecting different states

**irrigation**—the act of supplying with water by artificial means

**nomadic**— roaming about from place to place aimlessly, frequently, or without a fixed pattern of movement

**organic**— roaming about from place to place aimlessly, frequently, or without a fixed pattern of movement

**prairie**—a large area of level or rolling grassland

**ranching**— raising horses, beef cattle, or sheep on a large farm

**rotation crop**— regularly changing a crop by replacing it with another one for soil health

**scarce**— not plentiful or abundant

**straddle**— to have parts that are in different regions

## Oklahoma Academic Standards

### GRADE 3

Speaking and Listening:  
R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Reading  
and Writing Process: 1,3.  
Critical Reading: 1,6  
Vocabulary: 1,3,5

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1,3,4. Critical Reading:  
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Vocabulary: 1,3,5

# Oklahoma Agriculture

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By the time Oklahoma and Indian Territories combined in 1907 to become the State of Oklahoma, there were over 62,000 farms, producing 8.6 million **bushels** of wheat, 113 million bushels of corn, 8 million chickens, 347,000 turkeys, 2 million bushels of potatoes, 90,000 bushels of **flaxseed**, 864,000 bales of cotton, and 60,000 sheep. Three years later, the state had over 190,000 farms.

Thousands of years earlier, long before statehood, **ancient** people were **cultivating** corn, squash, sunflowers and many other plants now considered weeds. On the Plains **nomadic** tribes burned brush to manage **grazing** land for herds of bison, elk and deer.

Today Oklahoma has nearly 80,000 farms and ranches. The average farm size is 431 acres, but there are farms and ranches over 5 million acres and some as small as 120 acres. About 76 percent of our state's 45 million acres of land is used for **farming** and **ranching**.

**Agriculture** in Oklahoma is **diverse** because our **climate** is diverse. Our deep soils are rich in **organic** matter built up under **tallgrass prairie**. The **short-grass prairie** in the west is fine for grazing beef cattle and sheep. Many crops there are grown under **irrigation** because rainfall is **scarce**. We have a long growing season—over 200 frost-free days in the central and southern parts of the state. We **straddle** five **growing zones**, determined by the number of frost free days. Oklahoma includes zones 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b and 8a. We also have many different kinds of soil— more different kinds than anywhere else in the world.

Two **interstate** highways cross our state, providing a means for transporting agricultural products. The Port of Catoosa near Tulsa connects Oklahoma with the Mississippi River, which carries agricultural products across the nation and to the Gulf of Mexico. From there they can be shipped all around the world.

Anyplace you live in our state, you are surrounded by agriculture. In nearly every county you will find beef and dairy cattle, hogs, sheep, goats and chickens.

Nearly half the state's cropland is planted in wheat. Wheat needs an average amount of rainfall and cool weather when it first starts to grow. Then it needs bright, sunny days late in the spring that gradually turn dry when it is time to **harvest** in June. Wheat grows well in north central Oklahoma. The wind that sweeps across the prairie helps the wheat dry in time for harvest.

Most of the crops that grow in Oklahoma provide feed for animals. Barley, sorghum, oats, corn, rye and hay are all grown mostly for that purpose. Barley and sorghum grow well in the Oklahoma Panhandle, where the weather conditions are dry. Corn grows in the Panhandle and eastern Oklahoma. Oats grow well in north and south central Oklahoma. Alfalfa and other kinds of hay grows all over the state.

Soybeans provide animal feed but are also used in common products, like candy bars, building materials, ink for newspapers, crayons, foods like soy sauce and vegetable oil, and in sunscreen, lip balm, hand lotion and other **cosmetic** products. Soybeans like the warm, moist climate in northeastern Oklahoma.

Peanuts, canola and cotton seed can be used for oil in the same ways soybeans are used. Canola is a good **rotation** crop with wheat. Cotton grows well in southwest Oklahoma, where the growing season is long, rainfall is moderate and temperatures stay around 90 degrees F in the summer. The nuts on a peanut plant grow underground in sandy soils. Most of Oklahoma's peanuts grow in the southwestern part of the state. There are four shelling plants in Oklahoma to handle most of the state's crop of Spanish peanuts.

Oklahoma is one of only 11 states in the US that grows pecans. Pecan trees prefer deep, moist soils. In Oklahoma these soils are usually found along rivers and creeks.

In most Oklahoma counties there are small acreages of specialty crops like grapes, peaches, strawberries, blueberries and blackberries. Fields of watermelon, sweet corn, muskmelon, green beans, squash and mixed greens grow in several locations across the state.

The southeastern corner of the state has loblolly pine tree plantations. Pine trees need plenty of water to grow. Loblolly pines grow fast and can be harvested to make furniture, lumber for building houses or paper products.