

Look at the United States annual rainfall and growing season maps.


Which of the following states has the most area with an annual rainfall of 20 to 40 inches AND a growing season of 4 to 6 months?

- A) Oklahoma
- B) Iowa
- C) New Mexico
- D) Wyoming

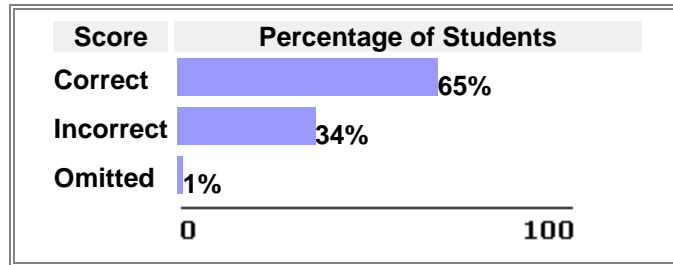
Key

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2001 National Performance Results



Note:

- These results are for public and nonpublic school students.
- Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Content Area

Space and Place

Example: Where is New York City? Why is it there? What are its most notable features? How has its physical location contributed to its population growth and density?

Spatial understanding is measured by questions such as these. It develops as students learn the context of place geography--where a specific place (or a particular thing) is located in the community, nation, and the world. Knowing the location of a place is practical information, and thinking about why it is there and what it is like helps students develop an understanding of a place and the issues that affect it. The spatial perspective helps students see the patterns and arrangements of places, things, and events that characterize Earth's space. Examples include the distributions of climates, crop regions, factories owned by multinational corporations, or sites where earthquakes occur. Studying patterns and the processes that shape them helps students understand and solve problems they will confront in their personal and civic lives.

In the early school years, the content of geography emphasizes space and place containing the fundamental concepts of geography. Teachers are familiar with these fundamentals and stress them in the "expanding horizons" social studies curriculum (home.school.neighborhood.sense of place in relationship to other places near and far) that is currently taught in most schools.

By grade 4, students should have a foundation of basic knowledge of the human and physical world. They can use map scales, grids, and map projections, and can measure relief. Students should be able to synthesize facts into generalizations.

By grade 8, the study of Space and Place has increased in sophistication (as have the other two content areas, Environment and Society and Spatial Dynamics and Connections). Students begin to understand the practical applications of geography to everyday life. Students should be able to use latitude and longitude and have a solid knowledge of facts and concepts embraced by this content area. As Space and Place is taught during the middle-school years, students should have a good sense of the location and general characteristics of places, of basic human and physical distribution patterns, and of the processes that create these patterns so that they have a working knowledge of the world.

By grade 12, basic understandings acquired in middle school and high school will be elaborated upon at increasing levels of sophistication. Performing simple statistical analyses and using remotely sensed images, for example, will prepare students to live in an increasingly complex, technologically innovative, and economically competitive world.

Cognitive Level

Knowing

In this area, students are assessed on their ability to perform two related functions concerning information: (1) an observation function and (2) a recall function. In general, tasks in this cognitive area are meant to measure students' ability to observe different elements of the landscape and to answer questions by recalling, for example, the name of a place or a resource indigenous to a particular country, or by finding information about trading patterns among several countries.