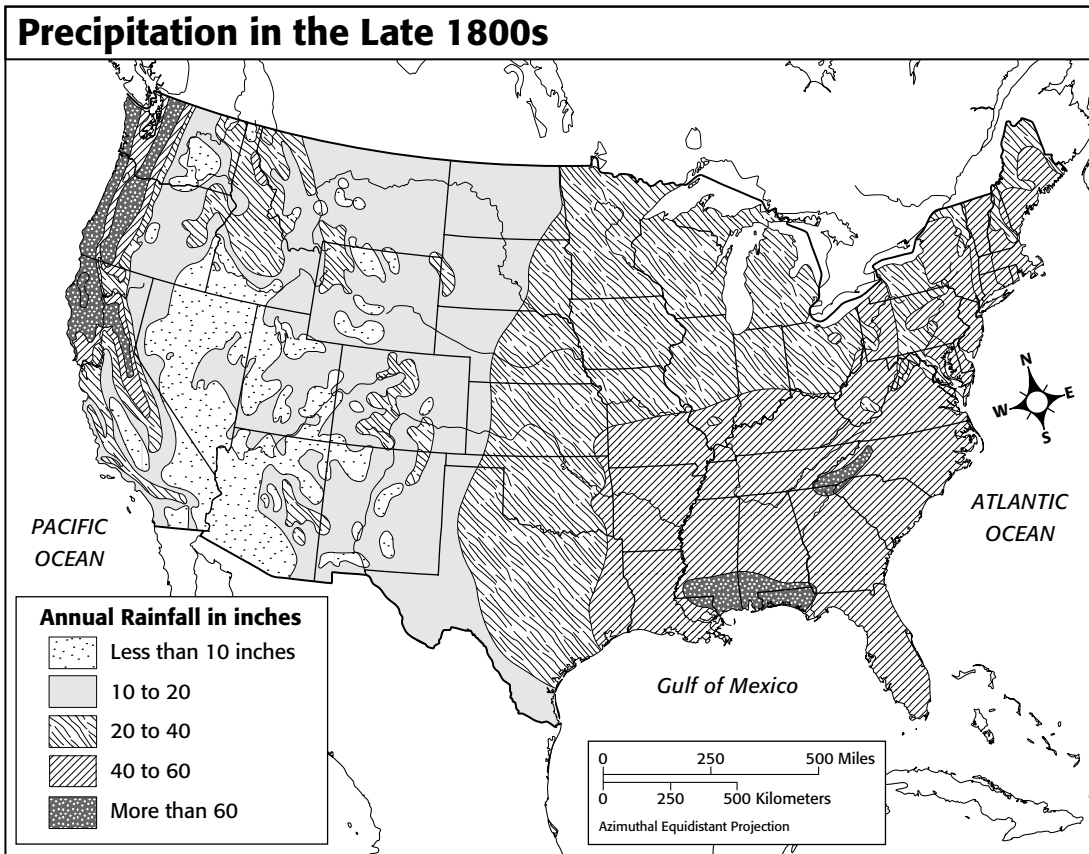


CHAPTER 1

Critical Thinking Activity
Studying Geography

Climate

Climate plays an important role in determining the way people live. It affects what plants and animals thrive in the region. It also affects how people work, dress, eat, and live. Climate maps may show differences in precipitation, temperature, or both. Study the map below then answer the questions that follow.



1. What information is shown?

2. Compare the eastern and western halves of the nation. Which section received more rain?

Chapter 1, Critical Thinking Activity, continued

3. How much rain could the average farmer living in Oklahoma expect?

4. If you were a farmer, how would information from a map like this help you?

HISTORIC EFFECTS OF CLIMATE: THE DUST BOWL

From the 1890s to the 1920s, grasslands in the Great Plains region of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas were put to the plow. For a time, the rains were bountiful. Farmers eager to maximize yields overtilled the soil and burned wheat stubble to kill weeds. Large-scale mechanized farming on the plains after 1900 exposed huge areas of soil. But in the 1930s, the rains failed. As crops withered, leaving bare dirt exposed, the region's high winds lifted the fine topsoil to create dust storms called "dusters." These poor soil-conservation practices and the long drought created a dust bowl on the plains throughout most of the 1930s, as millions of tons of airborne powdery topsoil buried crops and killed livestock.

5. How did human activities change the natural environment of the Great Plains in the early 1900s?

6. How was a dust bowl created in this region?
