

## **DRYLAND AND IRRIGATED FARMING**

Cynthia Stout, Instructional Services, Jefferson County School, and  
Sandra Stokely, Ellis Elementary School, Denver

### **OVERVIEW**

Students will use photographs and primary sources to understand the difference between irrigated and dryland farming. A map exercise will help them understand the importance of water to Colorado agriculture and the growth of cities.

### **STANDARDS**

- History Standard 4.3: Students understand the historical development and know the characteristics of various economic systems.
- Geography Standard 2.2: Students know how and why people define regions.
- Reading and Writing Standard 3: Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

### **OBJECTIVES**

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Differentiate between irrigated and dryland farming.
- Describe the relationship between access to irrigation and the kind of crops grown in Colorado.
- Describe the relationship between availability of water and size of towns and cities in Colorado.
- Use a map to record information about farming.
- Generalize about the importance of water to the settlement of Colorado.

### **INQUIRY QUESTIONS**

- Where in Colorado did farmers use irrigation?
- Where was dryland farming practiced?
- What crops depended on irrigation? What crops were grown in dry areas?
- How important was water to the development of farms and towns in Colorado?

### **PROCEDURE**

1. CD-ROM/Internet use: Whole-class teacher-directed instruction.
2. Show the students photographs related to irrigated farming:
  - Click on Farm Work and Tools;
  - Click on Irrigated Farming to access these photographs.

- Ask what these photographs tell us about farming in Colorado?
3. Show the students photographs related to dryland farming:
    - Click on Farm Work and Tools; click on Harvesting Wheat.
    - Ask what these photographs tell us about farming in Colorado?
  4. Make copies and handout the following primary sources:
    - Rules for Irrigated Farming
    - Learning to Farm in a Dry Climate
    - The Drought in Yuma County in the 1880s
    - The Drought in Baca County in 1891
    - Drought in Eastern Colorado in 1892
    - Ask what these sources tell us about farming in Colorado?
  5. Use a blank map of Colorado that shows physical features, including waterways.
    - Locate or drawn in the rivers and larger streams
    - Shade the adjoining areas where farmers probably practiced irrigated farming.
    - Cross-hatch or otherwise distinguish areas where farmers probably used dryland farming techniques.
  6. Make a list of crops grown in Colorado.
    - Develop a set of symbols to represent each crop.
    - Draw the symbols on the map in the regions where those crops were grown.
    - Discuss the relation between crops and the kind of farming techniques (irrigated, dryland) used.
    - Which area had the greatest variety of crops?
  7. Make a two-column list of major towns and/or cities located
    - Along major streams/rivers where farmers irrigated.
    - In dry-farming areas.
    - Which list includes most of the largest towns and cities?
  8. The students must write a paragraph about the importance of water to the farmers and townspeople of Colorado using evidence drawn from the above activities.