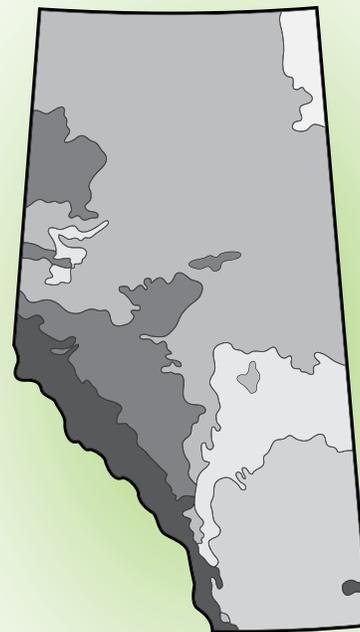


What attracted homesteaders and farmers to Alberta?

Alberta is a province of diverse environments. Boreal forest covers most of its northern half. The Rocky Mountains along the south-western border is also heavily forested. In the south, Alberta is prairie land, with short grass prairie in the east and mixed grass prairie to the west. Between Calgary and Edmonton is the central aspen parkland. This region has some of the most fertile land in the province. Most of Alberta's population is found in the aspen parkland region.



- Boreal Forest
- Canadian Shield
- Aspen Parkland
- Grasslands
- Mountains
- Foothills

Much of the land that is not covered by forest is used for grain, dairy, or mixed farming. Ranching and irrigated agriculture is found primarily in the south.

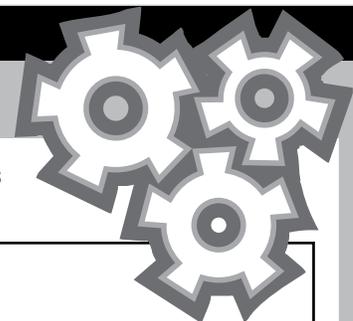
It was Alberta's environment that attracted homesteaders and farmers to the province. The government used descriptions of the land and its features to persuade farmers that they could make a good living here.

"Alberta." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Foundation of Canada. 2010. www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0000113

Researcher's Corner

Using Maps

What geographic features do you think would have attracted farmers to Alberta? Create a list in the box below.



Advertising the West

The government used advertisements to persuade farmers to consider making the trip to Alberta. Posters were used to show the fertile land and rich way of life. Settlers often found that life was not as easy as the advertisements said it would be.

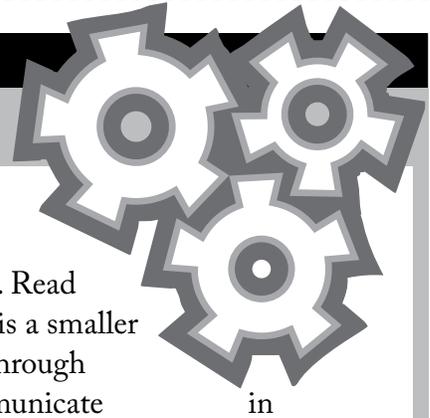
Go to **Weblinks** on www.moo2you.ca to select and explore the Provincial Archives of Alberta website on *Homesteading Alberta* at www.culture.alberta.ca/paa/eventsandexhibits/education/homesteading/default.aspx to find an example of a poster that advertises the west for settlement.

Researcher's Corner

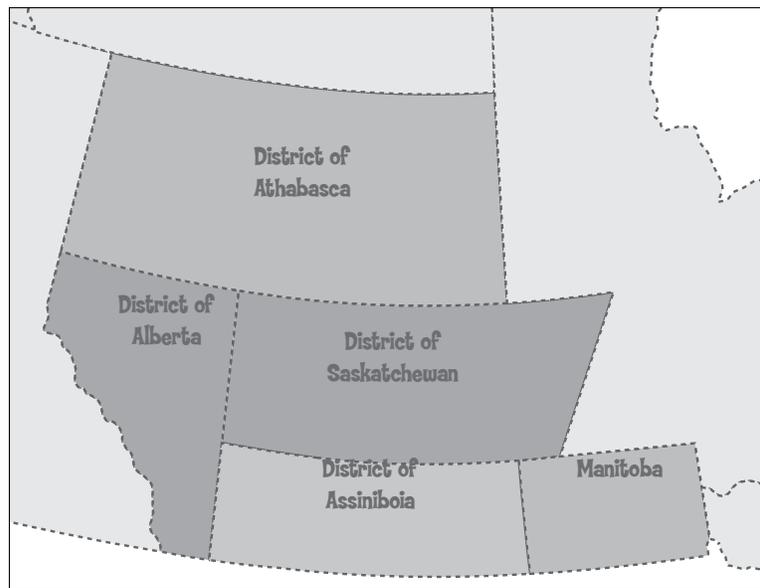
Using Primary Sources

A **primary source** is an original document or object that was created during a specific time period. The descriptions on the following page come from a pamphlet that was written in 1889. Read each excerpt with a research partner or your group. An **excerpt** is a smaller part or section that is taken from a larger story or article. Talk through the different words and style of language that was used to communicate the 1800s. Read through each sentence together and discuss the words or phrases that are difficult to understand. Then, share what you think the writer was trying to say.

Some of the language in the excerpts has been replaced with words or sentences that you may find easier to understand. These terms and phrases are in *italics>*. Some of the language has been shortened. These places have been marked with three dots, called an **ellipse**. You'll also find some definitions in brackets to help you.



Western Districts in 1895



Canada 1895. *Historical Maps of Canada*. Canadian Geographic website at www.canadiangeographic.ca/mapping/historical_maps/1895.asp

From Advertising Pamphlet, 1889



The settler coming to Alberta will be rather benefited than otherwise by coming early in the spring. Spring work and **ploughing** starts at the end of February and seldom later than the middle of March.

True, after that we have some disagreeable cold spells, but it will better to arrive in good season.

If a farmer intends entering into dairy farming, he will be in a position to enjoy the full benefit of the season.

There is no reason why he should not make money from the first by butter making.

Dairy Farming, Ranching and Mining in Alberta and Assiniboia. Accessed from *Internet Archive*: p.7. www.archive.org/details/cihm_30354



Canada is excellent for the making of cheese and butter because:

1st.—The rich natural grasses on which the cows can **graze** [feed or eat] the whole year round, doing away with the necessity of artificial feeding.

2nd.—The entire absence of highly flavoured **noxious** [harmful] weeds, the consumption of which **taints** [ruins or spoils] the product of the dairy.

3rd.—The Summer temperature cooled by the Mountain breezes, and the sparkling springs of cold mountain water.

Dairy Farming, Ranching and Mining in Alberta and Assiniboia. Accessed from *Internet Archive*: p. 28. www.archive.org/details/cihm_30354

An account by James Ruby, Calgary, November 17th 1888

I have no hesitation in saying or **foretelling** [predicting] that Alberta must... become in the near future one of the largest producers of the finest butter...

Here are my reasons:

To produce good butter the materials that make it must be good; the grass in warm seasons must be **abundant** [present in large amounts], sweet and free from noxious or strong-flavoured weeds, and...hay made from this grass for winter feeding.

These, with cool, sweet water...are the main resources with which any intelligent man, possessing a herd of milk cows, needs nothing else.

How is Alberta in regard to the required pasture for dairy purposes?

Let me tell you I have driven through central Alberta from Fort McLeod, on the south, to Edmonton, on the north,

a distance of over **300 miles** [483 kilometres], and from the rolling foot-hills near the mountains to the undulating plains near the eastern border.

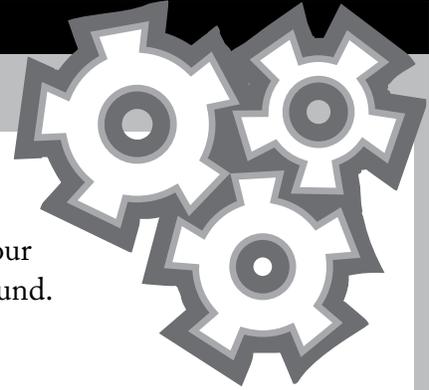
I do not hesitate to say... that the sun...does not shine on a fairer or more inviting field of choice, rich, abundant pastures than is to be found along the mountain streams of cool, sweet water that flow from out of the Rocky Mountains... through the valleys of Alberta.

The waters of our streams, flowing as they do from melting ice in the mountains, keep their coolness even in **midsummer** [middle of the summer]... Then, the nights, on account of our elevation, are cool and the air... pure and clear, following the warmest days of our warmest seasons.

Dairy Farming, Ranching and Mining in Alberta and Assiniboia.
Accessed from *Internet Archive*: p. 38. www.archive.org/details/cihm_30354

Make a list of the geographic features to which the excerpts refer.

Using Primary Sources



The excerpts mention some of the geographic features of Alberta. Where in the province do you think these geographic features were found? Use the **T-Chart** below or make one of your own to identify the regions in which these features would be found.

| Regions | Geographic Features that Attracted Farmers to Alberta |
|---------|---|
| | |

Based on your research, where do you think most settlers preferred to build farming communities? Why do you think this?

