

Lesson 2: Iowa's Land Formation

Learning Goals:

Students will understand that prior to pioneer settlement, Iowa's natural geography was characterized by prairie land streaked with wooded stream bottoms.

Students will recognize that most of Iowa's land is composed of gently sloping hills or flat lands.

Students will understand that Iowa's elevation descends generally from the NW to the SE areas of the state.

National Standards—Geography:

Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment.

Iowa History Benchmarks:

1. The Physical Landscape
 - a. Iowa's rich topsoil is a product of the thick grasses that have lived and died on the prairies for centuries.

Materials:

Map of Iowa's Elevation for each student

Transparency of Iowa's Elevation

Transparency of Iowa's Major Rivers

Transparency of Iowa's Native Vegetation

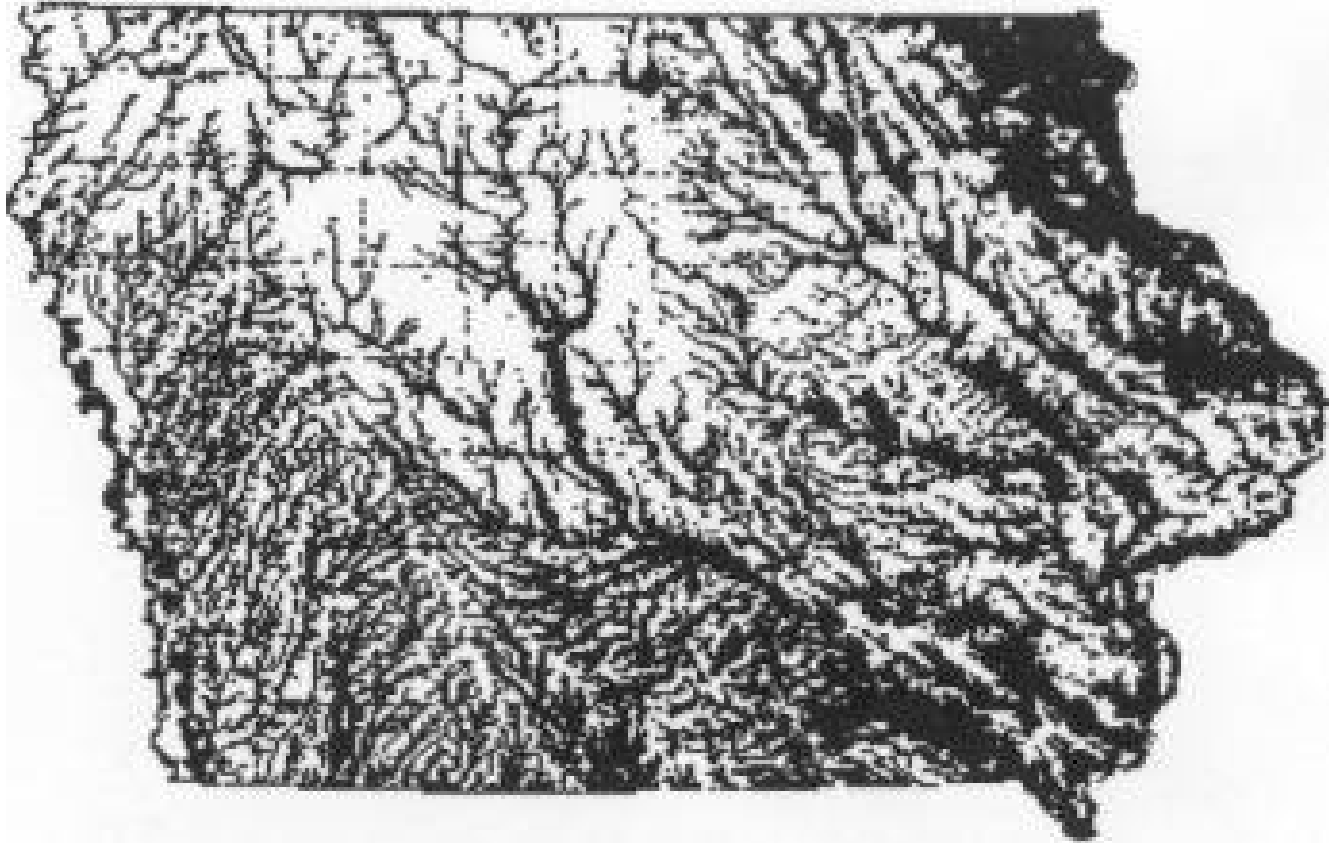
Wall map of the United States

Activities:

1. Ask students to identify characteristics of Iowa's land prior to pioneer settlement (prairie, hills or flat land, streaked with wooded stream bottoms).
2. Project transparency of Iowa's Native Vegetation. Share with students that Iowa's native prairie land was cut by tree-lined creeks and streams prior to pioneer settlement.
3. Project the transparency Iowa's Elevation. Share with students that Iowa's land slopes gently from the NW to the SE corners of the state. Iowa's rivers flow from higher land to lower elevations.
4. Place the transparency of Iowa's rivers over the transparency of Iowa's Elevation map. Students should recognize that rivers flow from higher elevations to lower elevations. Share with students the relationship between elevation levels and directional flow of the rivers.
5. Distribute to each student an Iowa Elevation map. Have students identify the parts of the map including the map title, the border and the key.
6. Have students color each section of the map and color the corresponding section of the map key.

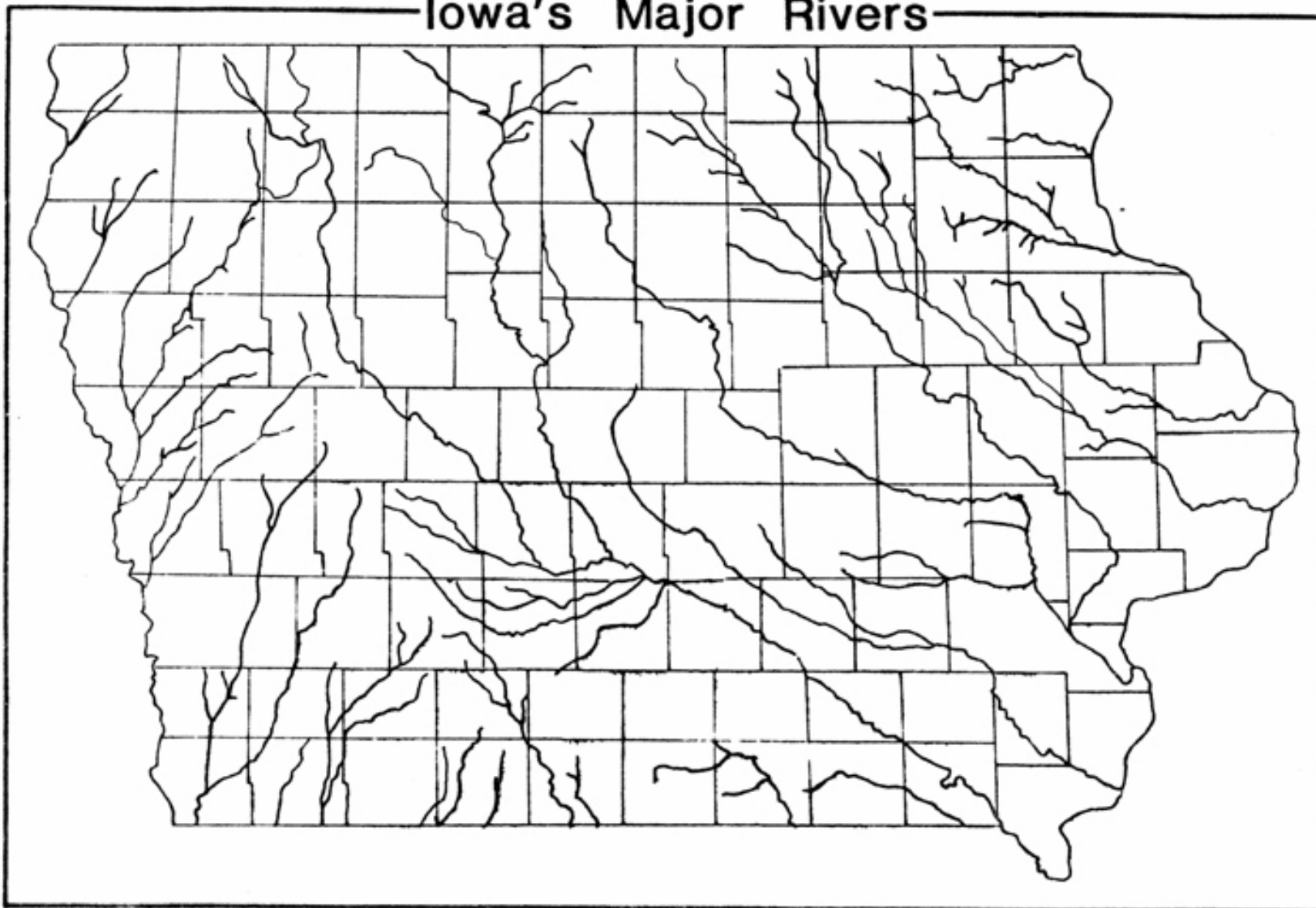
7. Conclude the lesson by directing students to a wall map of the United States. Share with students how Iowa's land is related to larger geographic characteristics of the United States. Iowa's elevation is related to its proximity to the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

Iowa's Native Vegetation Prior to Pioneer Settlement



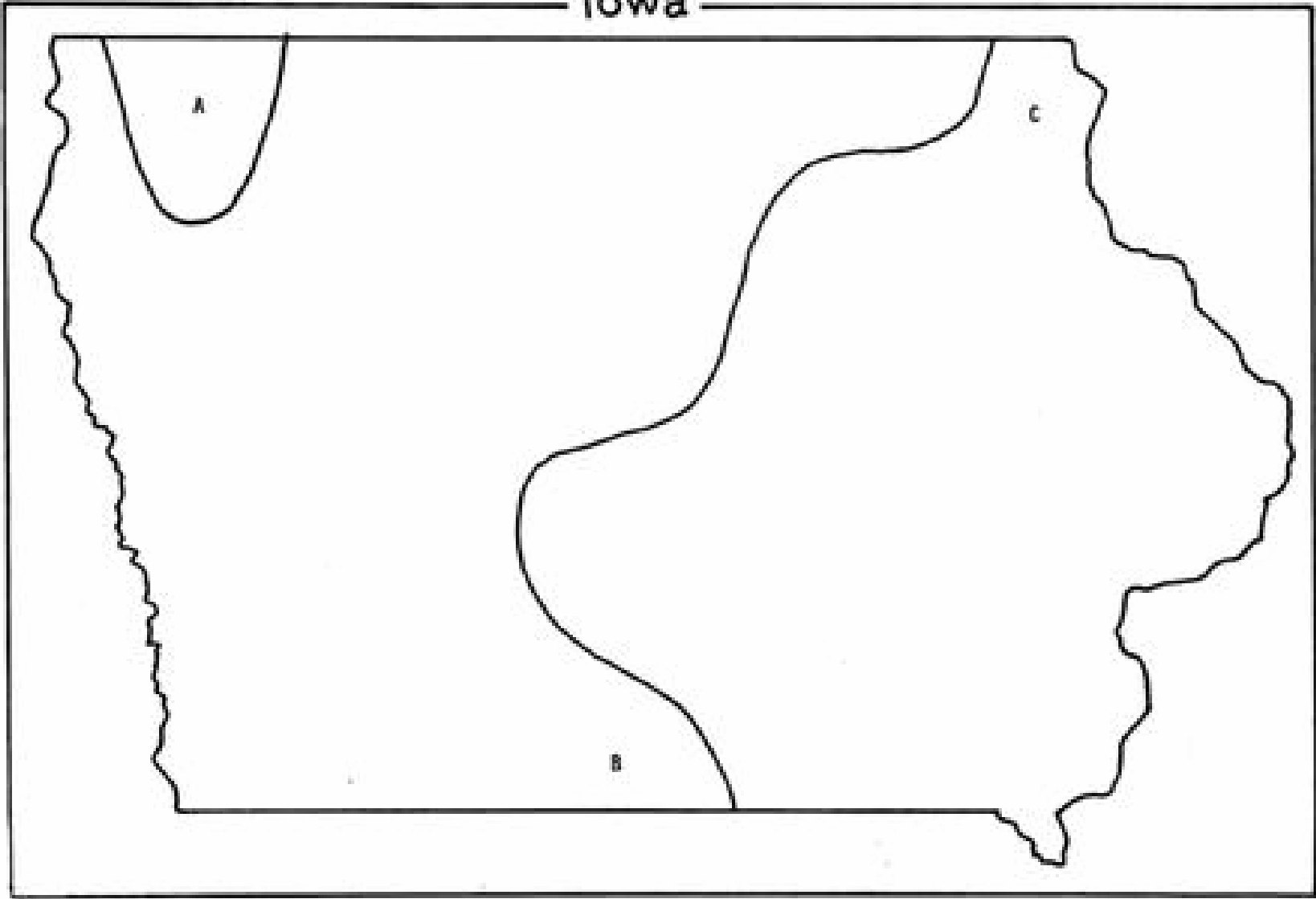
**Most of the forests were located along the rivers (areas shaded black).
Prairie grass covered the rest of the state.
Iowa Department of Natural Resources**

Iowa's Major Rivers



Explorations in Iowa History Project
Price Laboratory School
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

Iowa



- A
Over 1500 feet
- B
1000-1500 feet
- C
Less than 1000 feet