

## United States Map - Lesson 12 (K-3)

### Land Elevation

**Objectives** The students will learn the meaning of land elevation.  
The students will learn that a physical map uses different colors to show different land elevations.

**Vocabulary** physical map, land elevation

**Materials Needed** United States Physical Map

### Lesson

Ask the students if they have ever been on an elevator. If a student got on the elevator at the ground level (first floor) what would the elevator do? Emphasize that an elevator goes up-from the ground toward the sky.

Write the word elevation on the board. Elevation means how high something is. The higher the feature is above the ground, the higher its elevation. A twenty- story building has a higher elevation than a two-story building.

Pull the map all the way down. Locate the United States Physical Map. This is the middle inset at the top of the map. Read the information in the legend to the students. Colors are used on a physical map to show land elevation. Land elevation means the height of the land above the surface of the ocean.

Elevation must be measured from some base mark. Tell the students the elevation of the building was measured from the ground floor. Elevation of land is measured from the surface of the ocean. (This is called sea level, a term introduced later.)

Colors are used as symbols on a physical map to show land

elevation. Review with the students the physical map legend. Dark green means the lowest land elevations. Light green means low land elevations. Yellow means middle-land elevation. Light brown means high land elevations. Dark brown means the highest land elevations.

Ask the students where they think mountains may be found on the map. Where are hills? Valleys? What color is near all coastlines? What does that mean?

Remind the students to think of the land elevation color key as an elevator. The colors tell us how high the land is above the surface of the ocean.