The Piedmont is the middle region of the state, located between the Coastal Plain and the Mountain regions. Piedmont is a French word meaning "foot of the mountain." The elevations of this region range from about 300 feet in the western Coastal Plain to about 1,500 feet near the mountains. The boundary between the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont is called the fall line or fall zone. Along this area, rivers flow from the older, harder rocks of the Piedmont to the softer rocks of the Coastal Plain. Along the fall line, rivers form shoals, low waterfalls, and rapids. Below the fall line, streams are usually sluggish and smooth-flowing. Above the fall line, the streams are rocky and shallow, making boating difficult. The land of the Piedmont is called a plateau because it is high and mostly flat.

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