

The Land ^[1]

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The land that we now call North Carolina existed before the people who lived on it, and the events that shaped it took place before any human could witness them. But one of the things that makes us human is our desire to understand what we've never seen.

This chapter tells the story — multiple stories, actually — of how North Carolina came to be. First we'll take a birds' eye view of the land, from the mountains to the sea. Then we'll see how geologists now believe the features of North Carolina — the Appalachians and the Outer Banks, the piedmont and the coastal plain — were formed over millions of years.

The chapter concludes with the creation stories of three peoples who would come to live in North Carolina: the Cherokee, Europeans, and West Africans. Think about what these stories might say about the people who told and believed them. As you read each story, consider who created the earth, and for what purpose. Why were humans created, and what did their creator see as their proper relationship to the land? Later, when we meet each of these peoples, remember their creation stories, and think about how their beliefs might have influenced the relationship they took to the land of North Carolina.

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North Carolina, seen from space, blends into the rest of eastern North America. ^[18]

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