



NORTH AMERICA



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Map and Overview



-North America is the world's third largest continent by area. It covers about 24.7 million km², which is about 16.5% of the earth's total land area.

-North America is the fourth most populous continent, after Asia, Africa and Europe. Its population is about 580 million people.

-North America is in the western hemisphere (apart from Hawaii and parts of Alaska) and the northern hemisphere.

-The first people reached America over a frozen crossing from Siberia in the last Ice Age, between 40,000 and 15,000 years ago.

Human Geography

Features

Population Densities		The population density for North America is about 20 people per km ² . However, due to big cities in some areas (e.g. New York City) and extreme weather in others (e.g. northern Canada) people are not spread evenly.	Where? Parts of Central America and the Caribbean are also densely populated.	Key Fact: The most densely populated country in North America is Bermuda.
Manhattan, New York City		Manhattan is the business and entertainment centre of New York City, the largest city in the US. Manhattan is mostly on an island, with many high rise buildings, e.g. the Empire State Building, surrounding Central Park.	What? One WTC is the tallest building in Manhattan and the USA, at 546 metres.	Key Fact: New York City is made up of five boroughs: Manhattan, The Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island.
Colonisation/ Languages		Throughout the 16 th -17 th centuries, European settlers (mainly from Britain, Spain and France) colonised different parts of North America. Many native North Americans became displaced by the colonisers.	When? The USA became independent from colonisers on July 4 th , 1776.	Key Fact: The languages spoken in North America are mainly as a result of colonisation.
Sports/ Recreation		North America is relatively unique in that sports that originated in the region (e.g. American football, baseball, basketball) are more popular than the global sports popular elsewhere (e.g. football/soccer, rugby, cricket).	What? American football is the most popular sport in the USA	Key Fact: Lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in North America.
Caribbean Exports		One of Jamaica's biggest exports is cane sugar. It comes from one of the true grasses. The sugar is exported all over the world, but Jamaica's biggest partner is the USA.	What? Cane sugar can be refined into the sugar we use at home.	Key Fact: The true grass used to grow sugar cane can be 2m tall.

Countries of North America

Largest N. American countries

- Canada – 9.98 million km²
- USA – 9.83 million km²
- Greenland (Den) – 2.16 million km²
- Mexico – 1.96 million km²
- Nicaragua – 130,375 km²

There are 23 countries in North America, and a further 9 states that are listed as dependencies of other nations.

Most populous N. American countries

- USA – 328 million people
- Mexico – 132 million people
- Canada – 37 million people
- Guatemala– 18 million people
- Cuba – 11 million people



The United States

The United States is a large country made up of 50 states – including 48 on the US mainland, plus Alaska and Hawaii. It has the largest population of any country in North America, and the third largest population in the world. The USA is considered the richest and most powerful country in the world, at the forefront of world politics and economy.



Central America

Central America is the region found on the southern tip of North America, and contains many smaller nations: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. The countries have many cultural similarities, and Spanish is the main language in the region. The area is sometimes considered as its own microcontinent.

Canada



Canada is the largest country by area in North America, and the second largest in the world (after Russia). As a whole, Canada is very sparsely populated – most of its population lives along the US border in the south, whilst very few people live in the central and northern areas of the country. Most of its land is dominated by forest and tundra.

The Caribbean Islands



The Caribbean Islands are a number of tropical islands based in the Caribbean Sea off North America. The sea is considered as a part of the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered by Mexico and Central America. Cuba is by far the largest Caribbean Island, with an area of 105,806 km². The Caribbean Islands are sometimes referred to as the West Indies.

Physical Geography Features

The Mississippi River		The Mississippi River is the second-longest on the continent, with its basin including 32 states in the USA. North Americans have lived along the Mississippi River for thousands of years.	What? Along the river is amongst the most fertile places in the USA.	Key Fact: The Mississippi serves as a boundary between several states.
The Great Lakes		The Great Lakes are a series of interconnected lakes across the USA-Canada border. They include lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario. By area, they are the largest lake system in the world, and 2 nd by volume.	What? Because of their great size and their waves, they are sometimes called inland seas.	Key Fact: Only Lake Baikal in Russia has a larger volume than the North American Great Lakes.
Animals		Due to the extreme latitudes of the continent, there are a wide variety of animals adapted to different climates in North America. The brown bear is one of the largest and most powerful carnivores, whilst the American alligator is a feared predator in South-Eastern USA.	What? North America has 457 mammals, 662 reptiles & 300 amphibians.	Key Fact: American Alligators can attain lengths of longer than 4m – they are a serious threat to people.
The Grand Canyon		The Colorado River runs through the Grand Canyon, it has been eroding its steep sides for millions of years. Many people consider it to be one of the seven wonders of the natural world. The Grand Canyon is 277 miles (446 kilometres) in length.	What? It is located in the state of Arizona.	Key Fact: It is approximately 6000 feet deep.

		The Rocky Mountains 	The Rocky Mountains are approximately 3000 miles long and stretch across a total of eight US states. The range is composed of many ranges in total.	Where? They span from Alaska down to New Mexico	Key Fact: Mount Elbert is the tallest mountain in the Rockies.
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Vocabulary	
biome	a natural area of the living world which has its own climate , vegetation and animals
city	a large town . London is a city .
climate	the general weather conditions that are typical of a place
coastal	an area of land close to the sea
compass points	any of the main points of a compass: north, south, east, west, north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west
continent	a very large area of land that consists of many countries . Europe is a continent .
country	an area of land that is controlled by its own government.
earthquake	a shaking of the ground caused by movement of the Earth's crust
equator	an imaginary line around the middle of the Earth at an equal distance from the North Pole and the South Pole.
desert	a large area of land, usually in a hot region, where there is almost no water, rain, trees, or plants (vegetation)
farm	an area of land used to produce crops or to breed animals and livestock.
harbour	a sheltered port so that boats can be left there safely
human features	features of land that have been impacted by human activity
landscape	everything you can see when you look across an area of land, including hills, rivers, buildings, trees, and plants.
mountain	a very high area of land with steep sides
physical features	natural features of land
port	a harbour area where ships load and unload goods or passengers
river	a large, natural stream of fresh water that flows into the sea or a lake.
tectonic	relating to the structure of the Earth's surface or crust.
tourist	a person who is visiting a place for pleasure and interest, especially when they are on holiday.
trade	the activity of buying, selling or exchanging goods and services.
weather	any of the main points of a compass: north, south, east, west, north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west
vegetation	plants, trees or flowers
village	a small group of houses, perhaps with a few shops. Irby is a village .



What will I know by the end of the unit?

- Some of the **countries** in the **continent** of North America include Canada, United States of America and Mexico.
- There are different **climate** zones in North America.
- The further **north** you go, the colder it becomes. This means that the **climate** in Canada tends to be cold and relatively snowy.
- The **climate** in Mexico is warmer, and it can be hot and humid. This is because it is closer to the **equator**.
- California is a state (a large area) in the USA on the **coast** of the Pacific Ocean.



Capital of USA: Washington DC



Capital of Mexico: Mexico City



Capital of Canada: Ottawa