



NORTH AMERICA

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Map and Overview

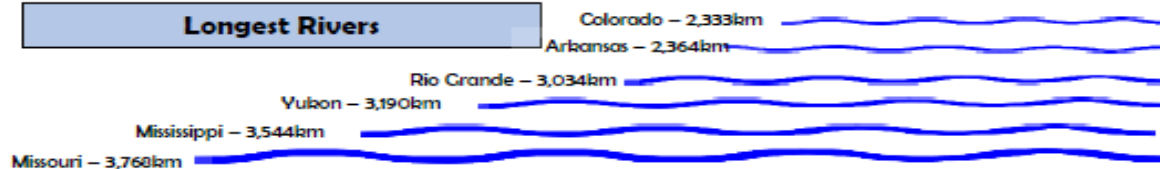


- North America is the world's third largest continent by area. It covers about 24.7 million km², which is about 16.5% of the earth's total land area.
- North America is the fourth most populous continent, after Asia, Africa and Europe. Its population is about 580 million people.
- North America is in 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.

Key Vocabulary

population	The number of people living in a country or area
rainforests	Dense, warm and wet forests where millions of different plants and animals live
desert	A large region that gets very little rain each year; very few plants and animals will be able to live there
climate	The usual measurements or average measurements related to temperature, wind and rainfall
tropical	The area near the equator where the climate is warm and wet
prominent	Something that stands out
volcano	A deep hole in the earth's layer that can let out hot gases, ash and lava
earthquake	What happens when the earth's plates slip past one another causing shaking
region	An area of the land that has common features
species	A group of plants or animals with similar characteristics
world heritage	An important place from a cultural or natural point of view

Longest Rivers



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: In 2001, the original World Trade Centre towers were destroyed by terrorists.
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.



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.
Death Valley		Death Valley, located in eastern California, is one of the hottest places in the world. Its Badwater Basin is 86m below sea level, the lowest point on the continent.	What? It has an area of 7,800 km ²	Key Fact: In 1913, the heat reached 56.7°C, the hottest ever recorded.
Hawaiian Islands		The Hawaiian Islands consist of 8 major islands, and many other smaller islets in the North Pacific Ocean. They are spread out over 2400km. The islands are the exposed peaks of a massive underwater mountain chain.	Where? The islands are about 3,000km from the nearest continent.	Key Fact: Mount Kea is the 'tallest' mountain in the world - 10,000m from base to tip (6,000m is below the sea).

Highest Mountains

