

Geography

Year: 5

Unit 2: SOUTH AMERICA

Links to: Year 2 – Continents; Year 3 – Water Weather & Climate; Mountains, Volcanoes & Earthquakes; Year 4 - Rivers; Year 5 – Natural resources; Year 5 – Biomes

What I Should Already Know: How to compare different places using human & physical geographical features; Know some important Mountains and Rivers; Types of natural resources; what a biome is and where they can be located.

South America Key Facts



South America



Location: South America is the fourth largest continent made up of 12 Countries and 2 territories. It is located in the western hemisphere and mainly in the southern hemisphere. It is bordered to the north by the continent of North America and the Caribbean Sea; to the west, by the Pacific Ocean; to the east by the Atlantic Ocean and to the South by the Southern Ocean. Its largest country is Brazil and its smallest country is Suriname.

- It has a diverse climate range - it is home to the world's largest river (the Amazon) as well as the world's driest place (the Atacama Desert).

- The major countries of South America include Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Ecuador.
- South America has the most diverse range of plants and animals in the world. Fauna includes jaguars, alpacas, condors and anacondas. Flora includes the passionfruit vine, avocado, pineapple, papaya, and guava are also native to tropical South America.
- Natural Resources** within the continent include South America's major mineral resources - **gold, silver, copper, iron ore, tin, and petroleum**. Venezuela has the largest oil reserve. There are also rich fisheries and ports on three bodies of water: the Caribbean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, and Pacific Ocean. Brazil is the world's largest exporter of coffee and forestry is another major economic activity along with the exportation of wine. The continent's economy is centered on the export of their natural resources.

Diversity



While South America's rainforests are some of the wettest places on Earth, the Atacama desert in Chile is considered the driest place on Earth.

The Incas were the largest group of **indigenous** people in South America when the Europeans arrived. Indigenous cultures are still present in South America but their numbers are getting smaller. Spanish is the main language but in Brazil people speak Portuguese. In Suriname, formerly a Dutch colony, the official language is Dutch. Many people speak English as a second language. Quechua, the language spoken by the Inca, is the most common indigenous language.

The population of South America is estimated to be 432 million.

The five most **populous** cities are:
 Sao Paulo, Brazil - 21.7 million;
 Buenos Aires, Argentina, - 15.1 million;
 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - 13.4 million;
 Bogota, Colombia - 10.6 million;
 Lima, Peru - 10.4 million.

Key Vocabulary

Capital City - A city where the government of a country or state is based.

Climate - The long term average weather in a place over many years

Colony - a country occupied by another country

Continent - a large mass of land and the islands closest to it. The Earth has seven continents.

Economy - the system of how a country or region makes and manages its money

Export - to send goods to another country to sell.

Human geography - The impact of human beings on an environment.

Indigenous - native to a country

Latitude - Distance north or south of the equator measured in degrees. A region marked by its distance north or south of the equator called latitudes

The Andes - The longest continental mountain range in the world. Alongside the western edge of South America.

Tropics - the hottest area of the earth, the area on either side of the equator reaching to 23.5 degrees to the north and south.

Physical geography - The impact of natural features on an environment.

Topographic - relating to the physical features of an area

Populous - with a large population

River basin - the portion of land drained by a river



Human Features

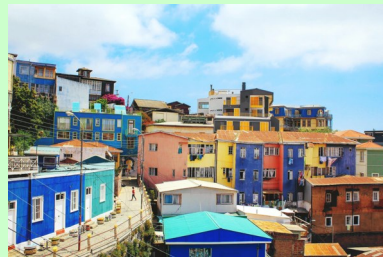
Santiago de Chile



Buenos Aires



Machu Picchu, Peru



Valparaíso

The movement of the population from rural to urban areas has meant many of the large cities are struggling to overcome traffic problems, housing and water shortages and other high population related problems.

Atacama Desert - Physical Feature



The Atacama desert is located in the north of Chile, and stretches into Bolivia - It covers over 100,000 square kilometres! It is one of the driest regions in the world, so it barely ever rains there. Many people also live within the region of the desert, as high as 4000 metres above sea level! It is warm in the day, but it can be very, very cold in the desert at night. Because it has very little air pollution and cloud cover it is famous for star gazing!

Physical Features - Rivers & Mountains



Angel Falls, Venezuela



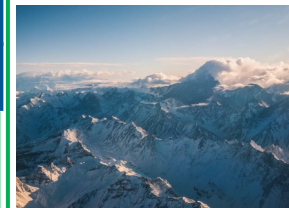
South America is home to the largest river basin in the world - **the Amazon**. It is also home to the Angel Falls waterfall, which is the highest in the World at over 900 m high. This can be found on a tributary to the Orinoco River - the River Churun.

A **river basin** is the portion of land drained by a river. South America has 3 important river basins.

- The **Amazon River** has an area of almost 2.7 million square miles - it covers most of northern South America and feeds into the Atlantic Ocean.
- The **Orinoco River** flows north of the Amazon through Venezuela and Colombia and into the Atlantic Ocean. It covers an area of about 366, 000 square miles.
- The **Parana River** basin covers almost 1.1 million square miles. It includes Iguazu Falls, a series of waterfalls that extend for 1.7 miles. It flows into the Rio de la Plata estuary between Argentina and Uruguay.



The Amazon—largest rainforest in the world!



The Andes Mountains - The western coastline is dominated by the Andes mountain chain. It is 4300 miles long, which straddles 7 countries: Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Argentina. The Andes has the second highest peak to any mountain range, the tallest being the Himalayas in Asia. The Amazon River has its source in the Andes. Numerous cities have developed on the Andes, including **Bogota in Colombia - the world's highest capital city**. Machu Picchu is an ancient, abandoned Incan citadel set high in the Andes mountains in Peru and attracts thousands of tourists each year.

The **Aconcagua** in Argentina is the highest peak in the Andes at 6,961 metres high.

The **highest active volcano** in the Andean Mountains is the **Ojos del Salado** (pictured) on the Chile-Argentina border. It also has the highest crater lake in the world!

