



# North America



**Climate** The Arctic Circle is one of the coldest places on earth with winters reaching  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , although much of Canada is deciduous forest. Central U.S.A. consists of deciduous forest but also grassland, with very hot summers and cold winters whilst western Mexico and U.S.A. has a desert climate, reaching up to  $45^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Longest Rivers</b></p> <p>Mississippi (U.S.A.) – 3778km</p> <p>Missouri (U.S.A.) – 3767km</p> <p>Yukon (Canada) 3190km</p>     | <p><b>Largest Populations</b></p> <p><u>U.S.A.</u><br/>(322 million people)</p> <p><u>Mexico</u><br/>(127 million people)</p> <p><u>Canada</u><br/>(36 million people)</p> |
| <p><b>Tallest Mountains</b></p> <p>Denali (Alaska) 6190m</p> <p>Mount Logan (Canada) 5959m</p> <p>Pico de Orizaba (Mexico) 5636m</p> |  |

## Physical Features

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>The Arctic Circle</b></p>   | <p>One of the two polar circles on Earth. This one is in the north and consists of the Arctic Ocean and extends to Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the U.S.A. (Alaska), Denmark, Iceland and Russia. Conditions are freezing cold creating large sheets of ice.</p> |
| <p><b>The Grand Canyon</b></p>    | <p>An enormous carved canyon in the ground formed by the Colorado River, which began 5-6 million years ago. It runs 1800m deep and 18 miles wide and is in Arizona in western U.S.A.</p>  |
| <p><b>The Rocky Mountains</b></p> | <p>'The Rockies' are a major mountain range, spanning 3000km, in the west running through Canada and the United States. The range offers dramatic wilderness, diverse wildlife/alpine lakes.</p>  |
| <p><b>Central America</b></p>     | <p>There are 7 countries: Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Guatemala is famed for its ancient Mayan ruins. It is a significantly poorer region compared to the northern countries.</p>  |

## Human Features

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>The 50 States.</b></p>        | <p>The United States of America has the largest economy in the world and, because of its enormous size, is divided into 50 different states. Each state has their own laws. This is why there are 50 stars on the national flag.</p>                              |
| <p><b>Sports and Recreation</b></p> | <p>Sports in the U.S.A. define much of its culture and many sports are played exclusively to the country including American Football, baseball, ice hockey and basketball. Many more countries have since developed these too.</p>                                |
| <p><b>Colonisation</b></p>          | <p>When Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492, humans had been in North America for over 30,000 years. The Europeans settled on the land but disease and war meant most of the natives were killed. The U.S.A. declared its independence from Britain in 1776.</p> |

## Key Vocabulary

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| alpine        | plants relating to high mountains  |
| deciduous     | trees which lose their leaves annually   |
| Disney        | Florida, U.S.A. is famous for its Disney parks   |
| coniferous    | trees which do not lose their leaves   |
| countries     | There are 38 countries and islands in North America  |
| Everglades    | tropical wetlands in southern Florida, U.S.A.  |
| glacier       | slow moving river of ice in the Arctic Circle  |
| Great Plains  | flat grasslands through central U.S.A. between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River                       |
| Inuit         | native settlers from Alaska (Eskimos)  |
| Panama Canal  | man-made waterway to allow ships to cut through Central America rather than sail around the whole of South America |
| rainforest    | much of Central America is covered in rainforest   |
| swamp         | Atchafalaya Swamp is the largest in the U.S.A. and is in Louisiana near the Gulf of Mexico                         |
| tornado alley | large area of land near the Great Plains where tornados are very common  |
| totem pole    | monumental carving on trees by natives   |
| tundra        | an Arctic flat plain of land without trees   |

## Fauna (animals)



**Examples:** bobcats, wolves, bald eagles, alligators, moose and grizzly bears (Central America – monkeys, sloths, toucans and sea turtles).

## Flora (plants)



Giant Sequoia    Maple leaf    Pine tree    Oak tree    Organ Pipe cactus    Dogwood