



North America

Background Information

Have you ever wanted to visit the continent of North America? If you did, what would you find there? North America is a vast and varied continent; it is made up of twenty-three countries and is the third largest continent in the world! It features some very famous physical and human geographical features. Amazingly, North America is home to some of the most popular tourist places. The physical features include the Rocky Mountains (spanning from Canada to over the US border) and Mount St. Helens' (an active stratovolcano.) North America also features human geographical features such as the Statue of Liberty (an iconic structure that was given to the United States as a gift from France) and the Golden Gate Bridge (located in San Francisco).

In this unit the children will:

- learn how to locate the continent of North America on a map, including longitude and latitude
- identify the countries of North America.
- Learn about key physical and human features and land marks
- learn about the effects of the Mount St. Helens' eruption.
- Research the key features of a US state.
- compare New York with East Yorkshire.





Key facts

- North America has a population of more than 300,000,000 people!
- North America is comprised of 23 countries.
- North America's highest peak is USA's Denali, which rises to 6,168 metres (20,237 feet) above sea level.
- Its largest lake is Lake Superior, which is 82,100 square kilometres (31,700 square miles) in area- about the same size as the country of Panama. It's the largest lake in the world!
- Its longest river is the Mississippi River which is 5,960 kilometres (3,700 miles) long.
- North America's smallest country (by land area and population) is St Kitts and Nevis, a two-island nation in the Caribbean.
- It's biggest Country (by land area) is Canada, which is close to 10 million square kilometres in size. The UK could fit inside its borders forty times over!
- The languages spoken in these regions include English, Spanish and French which are most commonly spoken. In the Canadian state of Quebec four of every five people speak French at home.

Key Vocabulary

- **Continent:** A huge area of land that is separated from others by water or other natural features; one of the main landmasses on the globe.
- **Equator:** An imaginary circle around the Earth that divides the Earth into the northern hemisphere and the southern hemisphere.
- **Glacier:** A large area of thick ice that remains frozen.
- **Human geography:** The study of how humans interact with their environment.
- **Lake:** A large body of water that is surrounded by land but is not part of an ocean.
- **Landscape:** This is what you can see as you look across an area of land.
- **Latitude:** An imaginary line across the globe used to find out how far north or south somewhere is.
- **Longitude:** An imaginary line across the globe used to find out how far east or west somewhere is.
- **Mountain Range:** A group of mountains that is usually separated from others by passes and rivers.
- **Northern Hemisphere:** The section of the Earth that is north of the equator.
- **Physical geography:** The study of the natural features of the Earth's surface.
- **Rural:** Relating to the countryside.
- **Southern Hemisphere:** The section of the Earth that is south of the equator.
- **State:** There are fifty states that make the United States of America.
- **Urban:** Relating to a town or city.