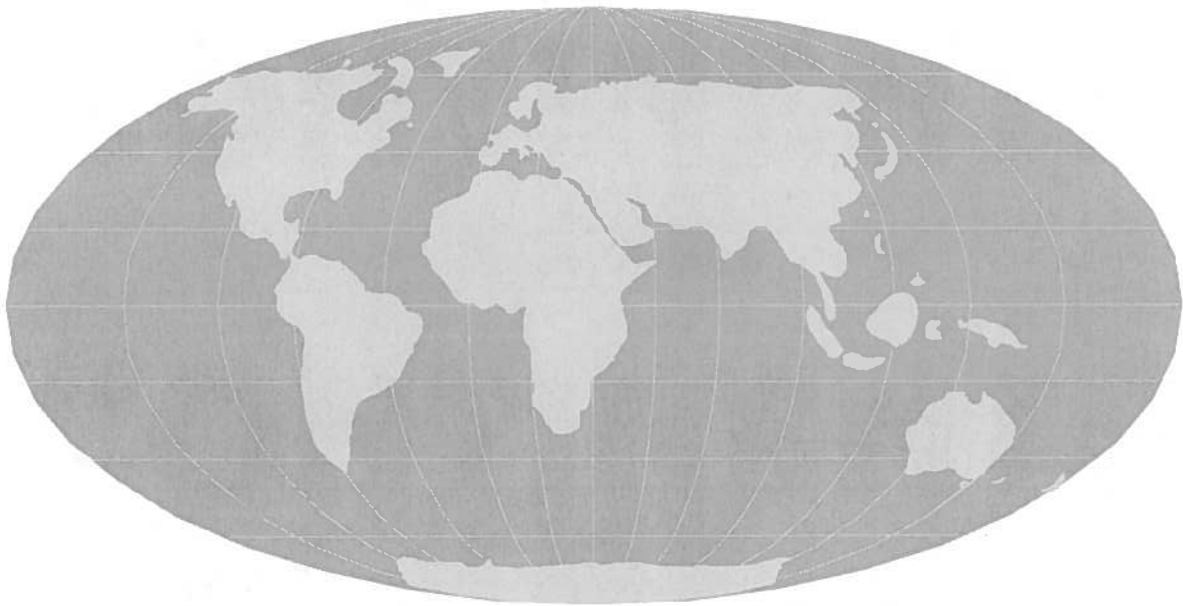


# **THE CONTINENTS**



**BY**

**LARRY ROBBINS**



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This unit is suitable for the middle or upper elementary students. As you study geography in your class, you may use these pages to introduce the continents of the world. A fact sheet and a worksheet are included for each continent. A word search is included, as well as an activity that can help you introduce more facts about the world and the continents.



# THE CONTINENTS



## AFRICA

Africa covers almost 12 million square miles. It is the second-largest continent (after Asia). It has 53 nations and 750 million people. The continent is divided into two racial and cultural zones by the Sahara Desert. Northern nations, bordering the Mediterranean, are populated by light-skinned, Arabic-speaking Muslims. Countries south of the Sahara are populated mostly by black Africans who speak hundreds of different languages.

Although the Portuguese began establishing coastal colonies in the early 15th century, it wasn't until the late 1800s that Europeans penetrated the African interior and began carving up the continent in earnest. At the outbreak of World War I (1914), only Liberia and most of Ethiopia remained free of foreign control. The second half of the 20th century brought a great rush toward independence, and colonialism formally came to an end in 1990, with the free elections in Namibia.

Independence did not mean freedom for most Africans; they generally were ruled by some form of dictatorship. The boundaries of the new countries were virtually the same as those drawn by the colonialists, who were either ignorant of or indifferent to traditional tribal divisions. Many nations suffer from arbitrary borders that separate related groups or confine traditional enemies within the same country.

Over 80% of Africa lies between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn; it has the largest tropical region of any continent. It has been said that the night hours are Africa's winter. Not all of Africa is warm. There are glacial regions in some eastern mountain ranges near the Equator.

The African landscape has relatively little fertile territory; topsoil is thin, the deserts are huge, and most of the wetter regions are covered by a thick jungle. Tree-dotted, semi-arid grasslands (savannas) occupy wide areas of the continent and support an enormous population of large animals--elephants, giraffes, rhinoceroses, lions, and others. In the rainforests of central Africa, monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas, reptiles, and birds live in the tall trees, high above the dark, dank jungle floor.

There are four major rivers in Africa: Nile, Congo, Niger, and Zambezi. The Nile is the world's longest river at 4,150 miles. Lake Victoria is the source of the Nile, but nearly 90% of the water that flows along the Nile through Egypt comes from Lake Tana, Ethiopia. Lake Victoria is the world's second largest lake (after Lake Superior).

The dominant geographical feature of Africa is the world's largest desert, the constantly expanding Sahara. It is currently the size of the continental United States. Any rainfall is slight and unpredictable. The Sahara is covered mostly by rock, gravel, and salt deposits. Only about one-fifth of the desert's surface is covered by sand dunes. Because roads are so few, the camel ("ship of the desert") remains the most reliable form of transportation. Dust from the Sahara has blown as far north as the Swiss Alps. In the summer, desert winds bring intense heat to the Mediterranean region. The world's highest shade temperature, 136 degrees, was recorded near the Libyan coast.



# THE CONTINENTS



## AFRICA

After reading the previous page on Africa, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. The continent is divided into how many racial and cultural zones?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who began establishing colonies in the 15th century?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What percentage of Africa lies between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Another name for the semi-arid grasslands is:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Name the world's largest desert.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Give the true name for "ship of the desert."

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What was the world's highest shade temperature?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Name the world's 2nd largest lake.

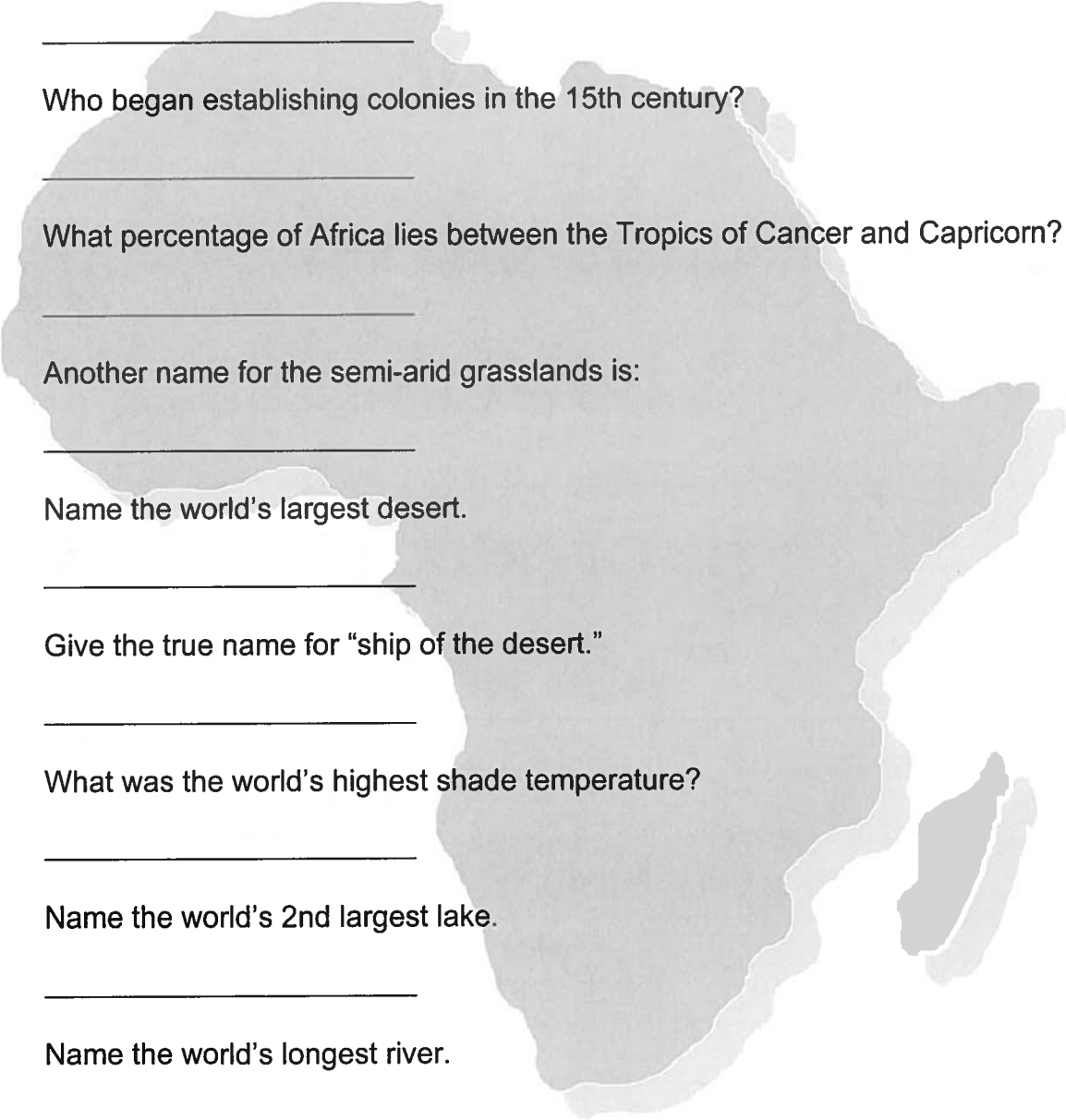
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Name the world's longest river.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. 90% of the water that flows along the Nile through Egypt comes from what lake?

\_\_\_\_\_





# THE CONTINENTS



## ANTARCTICA

Many people know very little about the continent of Antarctica. The continent is much larger than Europe, Australia, or the United States.

Most of the continent is covered with an ice cap that averages one mile thick. There are many mountains in Antarctica. The highest mountain is Vinson Massif which is 16,864 feet above sea level.

Antarctica is the source of the world's greatest icebergs. Some of the icebergs formed are huge--as large as the state of Connecticut. The icebergs flow northward and eventually melt. There has been some thought given to towing the icebergs to countries in need of fresh water. The problem is to find a way to melt the ice cheaply.

The commonly accepted definition of a desert is a region that receives less than 10" of precipitation in a year. By this definition most of Antarctica is a desert. The average yearly precipitation there is less than two inches.

Many nations have sent exploratory groups and research groups to Antarctica. Some nations have "staked out" claims to parts of the continent. However, in a treaty that was signed in 1959 and took effect in 1961, 12 nations including the United States and Canada agreed to use Antarctica for peaceful purposes only. Since the treaty went into effect several other nations have joined in the agreement.

In 1911 the South Pole was first reached by a group of Norwegians led by Roald Amundsen. They used dog teams to pull sleds loaded with supplies.

In 1989 two Americans were the first women to travel overland on skis to the South Pole. The other nine members of the group were men from several other nations. The expedition received wide coverage on television.

A well-known inhabitant of Antarctica is the penguin. Many people consider the penguin a cute, cuddly, little bird. But in an article in *USA Today* a research scientist had this to say about penguins: "They are strong, tough, aggressive animals in a ...harsh environment, and cute just does not apply." The article goes on to say that "survival" is uppermost with penguins.

The chief enemies of penguins are not humans. Killer whales and leopard seals hunt and eat them.

There is more than one kind of penguin. The most numerous in Antarctica are the *Adelies* which number as many as 100 million.

Penguins eat a fat-loaded diet, but do not suffer heart disease. Why not? Scientists are trying to find out so that we may be able to produce drugs that would help reduce heart disease in humans.



# THE CONTINENTS



## ANTARCTICA

After reading the previous page on Antarctica, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. Antarctica is covered by an ice cap that averages how thick?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Some of the icebergs that are formed are as large as what state in the U.S.?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Antarctica receives less than how many inches of precipitation annually?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. In what year was Antarctica first reached?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The first group to reach Antarctica was led by whom?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Name the highest mountain in Antarctica.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How many Adelies penguins are there in Antarctica?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. The chief enemies of penguins are two other animals. Name them.

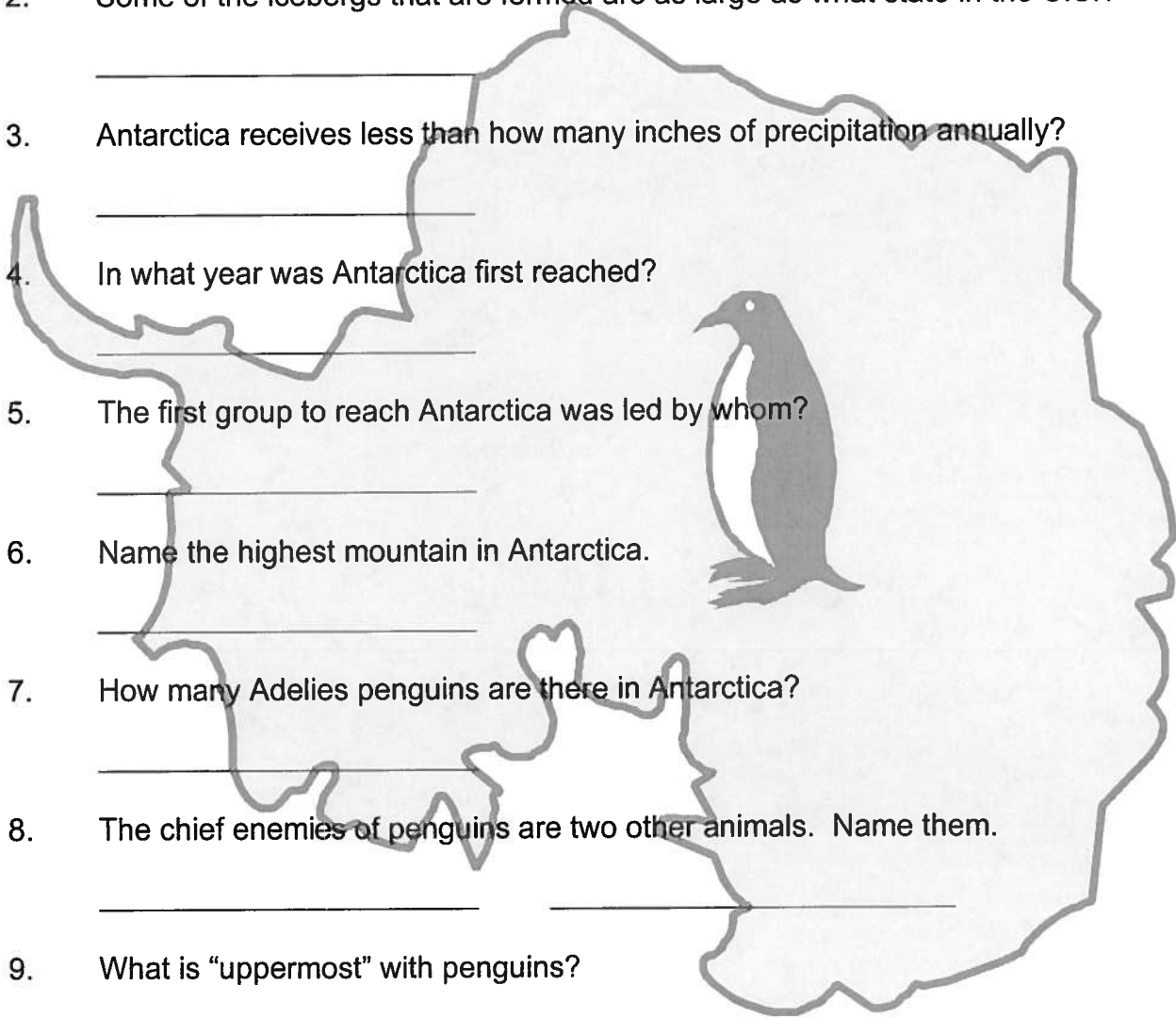
\_\_\_\_\_

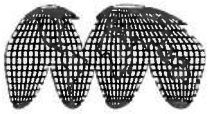
9. What is "uppermost" with penguins?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What means of transportation was used by the first American women to reach the South Pole?

\_\_\_\_\_





# THE CONTINENTS



## ASIA

Asia is the largest continent and contains 30% of the earth's landmass. It has the most people (3,500,000,000)--nearly 60% of the world's population. One out of every three human beings lives in either China or India. Because so much of Asia is extremely dry or mountainous, the world's most crowded population centers are generally along the continent's coastlines or in its river valleys.

Asia is separated from Europe by a fictitious line that passes southward along the Ural Mountains to the Caspian Sea, then westward across the Caucasus Mountains to the Black Sea. Asia was once linked to North America, but when ocean levels rose as glaciers melted, the Bering Strait was created, separating Siberia (Russia) and Alaska.

Most of Asia is rural, and the standard of living is very low, but in the Far Eastern region, Japan and the "Little Dragons" (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) had become extraordinarily productive industrial powers until the economic crash of the late 1990s. The wealthiest nations (per capita) in the world are located on the Arabian Peninsula. These desert monarchies are sitting on well over half of the world's known oil reserves.

Asia was the birthplace of many of the world's oldest civilizations. The Tigris-Euphrates Valley of the Middle East, the Indus River Valley of Pakistan, and the Huang He River Valley of China were the locations of flourishing, advanced societies. All of the world's major religions originated in Asia: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam came from the Middle East. Christianity, with the most followers worldwide, actually plays a minor role in Asia. Hinduism, centered in India and Nepal, has the most followers in Asia. Islam, the second-largest faith worldwide, is dominant in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and the Arab nations of the Middle East.

The highest and lowest places on the planet (Mt. Everest and the Dead Sea) are in Asia. Unlike the mountains of North and South America and Europe, Asia's massive ranges are located in the center of the continent. In this region, surrounded by some of the tallest peaks, is the Plateau of Tibet, the "Roof of the World" and the world's highest inhabited plateau. Along Tibet's southern border are the Himalayas, the world's tallest mountains, including the tallest peak, Mt. Everest at 29,028 feet.

The Asian subcontinent (the Indian Peninsula) is a triangular plateau that is subject to heavy monsoonal rainfall. The Yangtze River is the world's third longest river at 3,615 miles in length. It is China's most important river for transportation, commerce, irrigation, and hydroelectric power.

Because Asia is so vast, the interior is far from the moderating influence of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, allowing the region to experience the earth's greatest temperature fluctuations.



# THE CONTINENTS



## ASIA

After reading the previous page on Asia, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. About what percent of the world's population lives in Asia?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. One out of every three human beings lives in one of two countries. Name the countries.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name all of the "Little Dragons".

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the planet's highest point?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The Plateau of Tibet is also called what?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is known as the Asian subcontinent?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What river is China's most important river for transportation and commerce.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How tall is the world's tallest mountain?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What religion has the most followers worldwide?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. All of the world's major \_\_\_\_\_ originated in Asia. Put the answer below.

\_\_\_\_\_





# THE CONTINENTS



## AUSTRALIA

Australia is the smallest continent but one of the largest countries in the world. It is about the size of the 48 contiguous states of the United States. It is often referred to as the "Land Down Under" because of its location south of the Equator. The name Australia comes from the Latin "australis" meaning "southern."

In 1770, Captain James Cook arrived and claimed the continent for Great Britain. The earliest immigrants were inmates of Britain's new overseas penal colony. For many years the only European settlers were British and Irish immigrants. Australia was a huge, isolated, English outpost. Since 1907 Australia has been part of the British Commonwealth of Nations, but completely independent.

Australia is a multi-racial and multi-cultural nation. Nearly one-fourth of the population is foreign-born. When the first Europeans arrived, approximately 300,000 Aborigines were living on the continent. These dark-skinned nomads were nearly wiped out by European disease and mistreatment. Their numbers are on the rise (currently 140,000) as the government is making restitution for the wrongs of the past. They are now able to retain their tribal lands and culture, or have the choice of becoming thoroughly integrated into Australia's modern society. One well-known artifact, the boomerang, is an ancient Aborigine invention.

Even with growing industries, Australia's greatest wealth continues to come from mining and agriculture. The country is the top exporter of bauxite, and it has large reserves of iron, coal, lead, zinc, and other minerals. Australia is the world's leading producer of wool. Most of the sheep are the incredibly woolly merinos, which thrive in the hot, dry interior ("outback"). Not surprisingly, the country is also the leading exporter of lamb and mutton. Cattle do well on the relatively barren ranches (called "stations"); the weather is mild and there is plenty of land for each animal. Australia is so large, and its meager population so scattered, that in the outback, medical aid has to be rendered by airplane, and children are taught at home by radio and mail correspondence.

70% of all Australians live in the six coastal cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, and Hobart in southern and eastern Australia. Sydney is Australia's largest city. The tiny Australian Capital Territory, located within New South Wales, is the site of the nation's capital, Canberra, which is the only major city not located on the coast. The smallest state is Tasmania, which is located off the southeastern tip of the mainland.

Three states, the Northern Territory, South Australia, and Western Australia, make up two-thirds of the nation. Except for a narrow Mediterranean climate belt along the south coast, these states are mostly barren desert. The remarkable Ayers Rock, located near the center of Australia, may be the world's largest monolith. This enormous oval boulder is sacred to the Aborigines. It rises abruptly from the flat desert floor to a height of 1,140 feet and is nearly 2 miles long. It can be compared to an iceberg in that only about 5% of the rock is above ground.



# THE CONTINENTS



## AUSTRALIA

After reading the previous page on Australia, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. Australia is often referred to as what?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. For many years the only European settlers were from two countries in Europe.

Name the countries.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name the original people in Australia.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Australia is the leading exporter of what mineral?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Cattle do well on the relatively barren ranches that are known as what?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The dry, hot interior of Australia is known as what?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What percent of all Australians live in six coastal cities?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. The world's largest monolith is known by what name?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What city is the capital of Australia?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What is a well-known ancient Aborigine invention?

\_\_\_\_\_



# THE CONTINENTS



## EUROPE

Europe is the second-smallest continent (after Australia), and its population of 720 million is second only to that of Asia. This makes Europe the most densely populated of all the continents. There are more than 40 nations in Europe. The former country of Yugoslavia is continuing to break into separate countries.

Territorial barriers, in the form of mountains, rivers, lakes, gulfs, channels, and peninsulas, have preserved the continent's distinctly different cultures. Most people speak some form of four Indo-European languages: (1) Celtic (Breton, Irish, Scottish Gaelic, and Welsh); (2) Latin-Romance (French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish); (3) Germanic (Dutch, English, German, and the Scandinavian languages--Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish); (4) Slavic (Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Slovak).

Christianity is the principal religion, and Roman Catholicism is its most widely practiced form, especially in southwestern Europe.

Before the end of the 1980s, no one could foresee the end of the communist stranglehold on the Soviet Union and its captive nations of Eastern Europe. But by the 1990s, communism was gone, and with it the Soviet Union. All 15 republics became independent nations; Russia, the largest, is the Russian Federation. The Eastern Bloc of Soviet-controlled nations ousted their rulers. Yugoslavia disintegrated, and in its place five democratic countries emerged.

The European Community (EC), an economic union of 15 nations, has broken down all trade barriers among member nations and has introduced a single unit of currency (the Euro). An even more difficult task facing it is the long-range goal of creating a "United States of Europe."

The continent's extensive river systems have historically provided important transportation routes. The longest river in Europe, the Volga, is 2,194 miles long. The longest river in western Europe is the Danube. It is 1,776 miles long and flows eastward through three capital cities. The Rhine flows northward through Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands to the North Sea. The Rhine carries the most commercial traffic of any river in the world.

The many peninsulas give Europe a longer coastline for its size than any other continent. With so many nations having access to the sea, Europeans have had a long history of shipbuilding, exploration, foreign trade, and fishing. Major fishing industries flourish on the Atlantic coast but not in the Mediterranean Sea, where the shallow Strait of Gibraltar bars the entry of the deep, cold Atlantic currents necessary to sustain large fish populations. There is very limited fishing in the highly polluted Black Sea.

Mountains play a major role in defining the landscape. The Urals in Russia form Europe's eastern boundary. The Alps contain almost all of the continent's tallest peaks except Europe's highest peak, Mt. Elbrus. It rises 18,480 feet and is located in the Caucasus.



# THE CONTINENTS



## EUROPE

After reading the previous page on Europe, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. Europe is the most densely \_\_\_\_\_ of all the continents.
2. Most people speak some form of \_\_\_\_\_ Indo-European languages.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the principal religion of Europe.
4. There were \_\_\_\_\_ republics in the former Soviet Union.
5. The letters **EC** stand for \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The **EC** has introduced a single unit of currency called the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The longest river in Europe is the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ River carries the most commercial traffic of any river in the world.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ is Europe's highest peak.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ is 1,776 miles long and flows eastward through three capital cities.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ is the largest republic of the former Soviet Union.
12. The \_\_\_\_\_ bars the entry of the deep, cold Atlantic currents into the Mediterranean Sea.
13. The Czech language belongs to which one of the four main languages spoken in Europe? \_\_\_\_\_
14. What is the reason why there is very limited fishing in the Black Sea?  
\_\_\_\_\_



# THE CONTINENTS



## NORTH AMERICA-

North America stretches from deep within the Arctic Circle to close to the Equator.

North America includes Greenland, Central America, and the West Indies, along with Canada, the United States, and Mexico. It is the third-largest continent. Its population of 465 million is the fourth largest. Population density in North America increases the farther south one goes. Canada, the continent's largest and most northern nation, has only one tenth the population of the United States. Canada and the United States share the shores of Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake.

Most North Americans are descended from people who immigrated within the past 400 years from all other continents except Antarctica. The majority came from Europe. The true natives, named "Indians" by Columbus, who believed he had landed in the East Indies, number about 5 million. Their ancestors came from Asia, crossing the land bridge that existed between Siberia and Alaska.

Today, most people living south of the United States are of mixed European and Indian ancestry and are called "Mestizos." Blacks living in the United States and the West Indies are descended from slaves brought from Africa.

The Vikings were the first Europeans to set foot on North America. After Columbus's arrival some 500 years later, exploration, colonization, and exploitation began in earnest. Though British rule ended some 200 years ago, the English left a permanent impression on the language, religion, and culture of the United States and Canada. Along with the French and the Dutch, the British continue to have many possessions in the West Indies. These possessions are the last areas of colonial rule in North America.

North America has the longest coastline of any continent. It has a widely varied landscape and climate. Greenland and northern Canada have frozen wastes; western parts of Canada and the United States have towering peaks in the Rocky Mountains; southwestern United States has barren deserts; the islands of the Caribbean Sea have palm trees; and Central America has steamy jungles.

Pikes Peak, Mt. Elbert, and over 70 other peaks in the Colorado Rockies are higher than 14,000 feet. Mt. McKinley is the tallest peak on the continent. It is located in the state of Alaska. Popocatepetl is the tallest of the many active volcanoes in Mexico and Central America. Death Valley, California, is the lowest point on the continent.

Even the shape of the continent is unusual; a broad expanse of 4,900 miles from Alaska to Newfoundland narrows to a mere 30 miles at the Isthmus of Panama.

There are three large river systems in North America. The Mississippi-Missouri complex forms the continent's longest river extending 3,872 miles. This river system flows south to the Gulf of Mexico. The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River and Seaway flow to the Atlantic Ocean. The Mackenzie and Nelson systems flow to the Arctic Ocean.



# THE CONTINENTS



## NORTH AMERICA

After reading the previous page on North America, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. Population density in North America increases the farther \_\_\_\_\_ one goes.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the continent's largest and most northern nation.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ were the first Europeans to set foot on North America.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the tallest peak on the continent of North America.
5. The true natives, named "Indians" by Columbus, were given that name because Columbus believed he had landed in the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Pikes Peak and Mt. Elbert are higher than \_\_\_\_\_ feet.
7. North America extends over \_\_\_\_\_ miles from Alaska to Newfoundland.
8. At its narrowest point, North America extends only \_\_\_\_\_ miles at the Isthmus of Panama.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ is the world's largest freshwater lake.
10. \_\_\_\_\_, California, is the lowest point on the continent.
11. The \_\_\_\_\_ River complex forms the continent's longest river extending \_\_\_\_\_ miles.
12. The tallest and most active volcano in all of Mexico and Central America is known as \_\_\_\_\_.
13. North America has the longest \_\_\_\_\_ of any continent.



# THE CONTINENTS



## ***SOUTH AMERICA***

South America is the fourth-largest continent and is made up of 12 countries and 2 foreign possessions. The continent has many extremes: affluent cities and wretched slums; densely populated coastal areas and nearly empty interiors; and the extreme wealth of the elite and the desperate poverty of the masses.

South America lies almost entirely east of North America, and most of it is within the tropics. Seasonal changes south of the Equator occur at opposite times from those in the Northern Hemisphere. South America is much closer to Antarctica than any other continent.

Most of the nations of South America are struggling with stagnant economies and massive foreign debts. Another serious problem is the population explosion that is in large measure due to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

Descendants of the Incas are still the majority in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. The continent's earliest inhabitants probably migrated from North America. Well over half of all South Americans are mestizos (of mixed Indian and European ancestry); mulattos (of mixed black and European backgrounds); and pure-blooded Indians and blacks.

In the early 19th century, revolutionary fever swept the continent. European powers were too weakened by domestic wars to prevent their colonies from breaking away. Simon Bolivar led successful revolts in many countries. New nations were formed, but actual democracies were not developed. For nearly 200 years, extremely wealthy families have maintained enormous landholdings by supporting dictatorial and military rule.

Like North America, ice cream cone-shaped South America is broad in the north and narrow in the south. The Andes are the world's longest and second-tallest mountain range (after the Himalayas). They extend 4,500 miles down the western edge of the continent from the Caribbean to Cape Horn. Mt. Aconcagua (22,831 feet) is the tallest of nearly 40 Andean peaks that are higher than Mt. McKinley (20,320 feet) in North America.

Dominating the Central Plains is the mighty Amazon River Basin of rivers, streams, and rainforests. The river is the world's largest, and its length of 4,000 miles is second only to the Nile in Africa. From the Peruvian Andes, the Amazon winds its way across the continent, transporting 20% of the world's total river water. The flow is so great that fresh water can be detected in the Atlantic Ocean 50 miles from the river's mouth.

The rainforest (selva), which is the world's largest, is being destroyed at an alarming rate. This forest has been called the "earth's lungs," but trees actually perform the reverse function: they take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. The Amazon Basin has over 100,000 species of plants and animals. The continent's native animals tend to be small; the tapir, which is the largest, is no bigger than a pony.

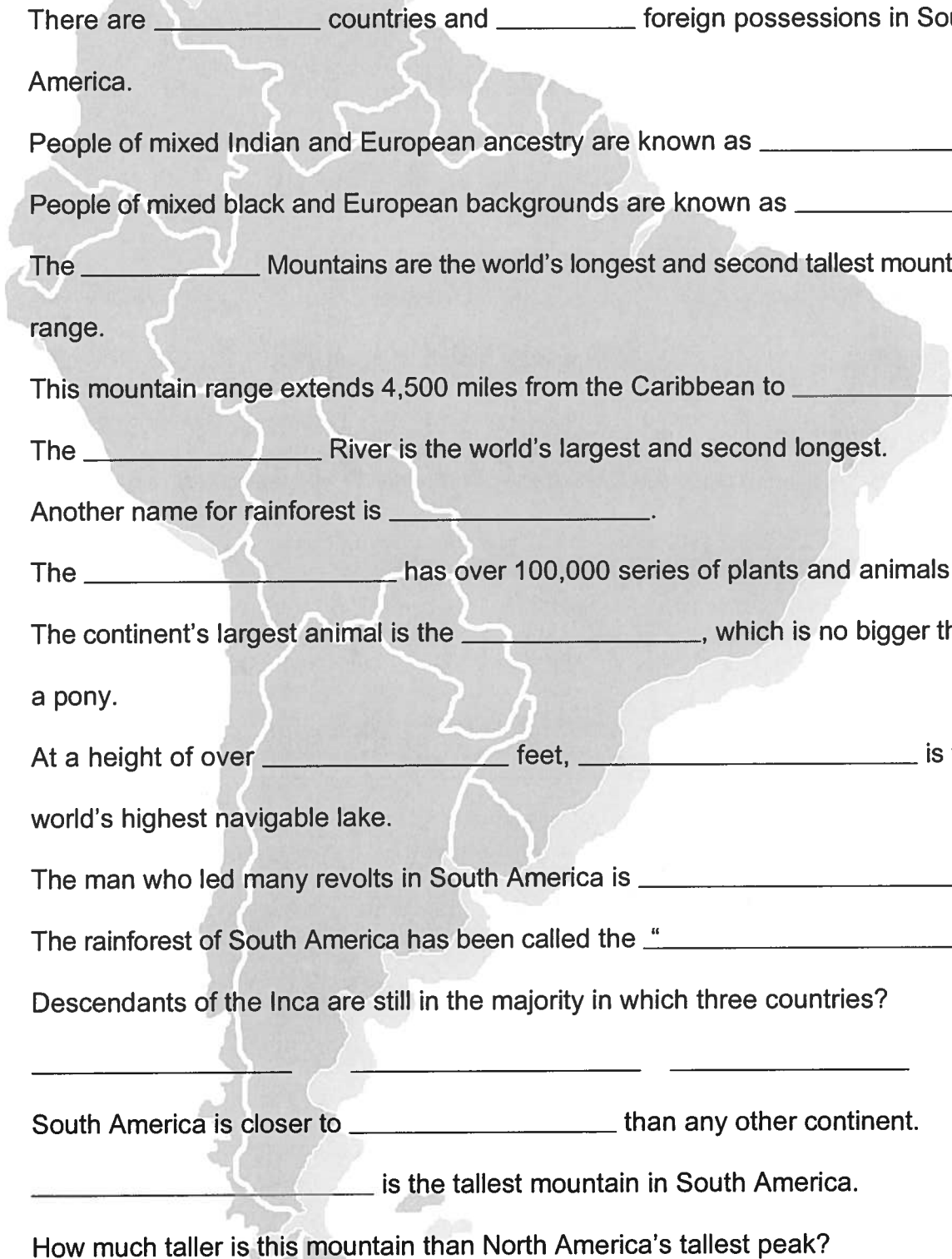
The continent's largest lake, Lake Titicaca, is in the Andes between Peru and Bolivia. It is at a height of over 12,000 feet and is the world's highest navigable lake.



# THE CONTINENTS



## SOUTH AMERICA

- 
1. There are \_\_\_\_\_ countries and \_\_\_\_\_ foreign possessions in South America.
  2. People of mixed Indian and European ancestry are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. People of mixed black and European backgrounds are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. The \_\_\_\_\_ Mountains are the world's longest and second tallest mountain range.
  5. This mountain range extends 4,500 miles from the Caribbean to \_\_\_\_\_.
  6. The \_\_\_\_\_ River is the world's largest and second longest.
  7. Another name for rainforest is \_\_\_\_\_.
  8. The \_\_\_\_\_ has over 100,000 series of plants and animals.
  9. The continent's largest animal is the \_\_\_\_\_, which is no bigger than a pony.
  10. At a height of over \_\_\_\_\_ feet, \_\_\_\_\_ is the world's highest navigable lake.
  11. The man who led many revolts in South America is \_\_\_\_\_.
  12. The rainforest of South America has been called the "\_\_\_\_\_".
  13. Descendants of the Inca are still in the majority in which three countries?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  14. South America is closer to \_\_\_\_\_ than any other continent.
  15. \_\_\_\_\_ is the tallest mountain in South America.
  16. How much taller is this mountain than North America's tallest peak?  
\_\_\_\_\_





# THE CONTINENTS



Find these geographical terms and names of continents in the word search. Use the word list below and circle your answers. The words may be read forward, backward, or diagonally.

A	U	S	T	R	A	L	I	A	H	E	A	D	W	A	T	E	R	S
S	W	G	R	C	H	O	H	R	B	P	O	T	V	D	V	A	T	O
I	V	I	J	R	E	L	B	I	C	A	N	Y	O	N	E	R	W	U
A	R	C	H	I	P	E	L	A	G	O	Y	V	I	L	A	L	F	T
N	O	R	T	H	A	M	E	R	I	C	A	L	R	I	L	I	T	H
T	C	G	L	A	C	I	E	R	A	I	E	S	T	U	A	R	Y	A
A	E	E	U	R	O	P	E	N	I	N	S	U	L	A	E	X	F	M
R	A	X	G	L	I	S	L	A	N	D	D	T	A	E	Z	G	T	E
C	N	I	J	N	F	V	H	A	M	E	S	A	F	R	I	C	A	R
T	C	O	N	T	I	N	E	N	T	A	L	D	I	V	I	D	E	I
I	U	D	N	F	O	K	T	Q	E	E	Z	C	N	G	P	Y	S	C
C	R	V	A	V	E	Y	Q	W	H	A	A	O	O	G	H	T	D	A
A	R	C	J	Z	Y	C	I	R	R	Q	O	U	N	H	H	Y	O	D
F	E	Q	A	C	R	F	W	H	B	G	M	C	M	M	D	Q	S	R
R	N	O	F	H	H	F	M	I	A	S	I	W	U	Z	R	U	O	O
W	T	K	T	P	G	E	C	L	Y	J	H	S	T	F	D	Y	V	J
U	S	C	W	F	P	I	O	B	O	E	I	J	L	O	G	M	M	F

AFRICA	ATOLL	CONTINENTAL DIVIDE	GLACIER	LAGOON	PENINSULA
AMAZON	AUSTRALIA	DELTA	GULF	MESA	PLATEAU
ANTARCTICA	BAY	ESTUARY	HEADWATERS	NILE	REEF
ARCHIPELAGO	CANYON	EUROPE	ISLAND	NORTH AMERICA	SOUTH AMERICA
ASIA	CAPE	FJORD	ISTHMUS	OCEAN CURRENTS	STRAIT



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## ABCs of the World

Use these “ABC”s about the continents to introduce some terms and facts about our world. Let the students make their own ABCs by finding facts that start with each letter of the alphabet.

<b>Africa</b>	The second-largest continent, with the third-largest population
<b>Baltic Sea</b>	A sea separating Sweden from continental Poland and the Baltic nations
<b>Canyon</b>	A deep, usually narrow depression in the earth’s surface
<b>Doldrums</b>	Regions of windless, stagnant air conditions, occurring in tropical oceans
<b>Europe</b>	The second-smallest continent, and the most densely populated
<b>Fjord</b>	A narrow, winding ocean inlet that penetrates a coastal mountain range
<b>Glacier</b>	A river of ice that moves very slowly down a mountain slope
<b>Hungary</b>	A central European country, between Austria and Romania
<b>Island</b>	A body of land, smaller than a continent, completely surrounded by water
<b>Judaism</b>	The oldest of the monotheistic religions to come out of the Middle East
<b>Kingston</b>	Capital of Jamaica
<b>Llanos</b>	South American term for tropical grasslands
<b>Minsk</b>	The capital of Belarus (a former Soviet republic)
<b>Nunavut</b>	A huge northern Canadian territory self-governed by Inuit, created in 1999
<b>Oslo</b>	Capital of Norway
<b>Pyrenees</b>	A mountain range that separate Spain from France
<b>Quebec</b>	Canada’s largest province
<b>Reef</b>	A narrow ridge of land or coral, connected to or lying off the coast
<b>Spanish</b>	The Latin-Romance language with the greatest number of speakers
<b>Tirana</b>	Capital of Albania
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	A former Soviet republic in central Asia between Turkmenistan and Tajikistan
<b>Volcano</b>	A conical mountain formed by the debris of past eruptions
<b>Wellington</b>	Capital of New Zealand
<b>Xi Jiang</b>	Chinese river that reaches the sea near Hong Kong
<b>Yellowstone</b>	The oldest national park in the United States
<b>Zagreb</b>	Capital of Croatia



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## AFRICA



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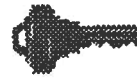
## ANTARCTICA



After reading the previous page on Africa, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

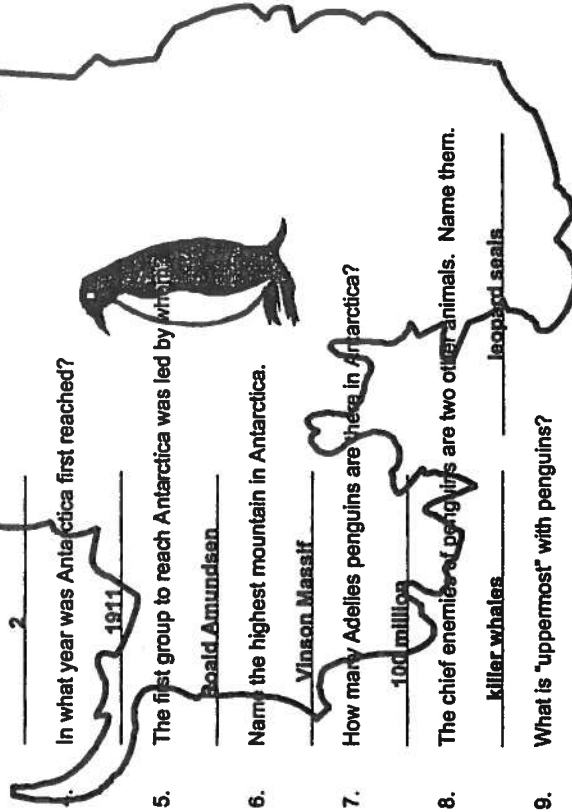
1. The continent is divided into how many racial and cultural zones?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who began establishing colonies in the 15th century?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Portuguese \_\_\_\_\_
3. What percentage of Africa lies between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 80 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Another name for the semi-arid grasslands is  
\_\_\_\_\_ savanna \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name the world's largest desert.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sahara \_\_\_\_\_
6. Give the true name for "ship of the desert."  
\_\_\_\_\_ camel \_\_\_\_\_
7. What was the world's highest shade temperature?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 136° \_\_\_\_\_
8. Name the world's 2nd largest lake.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Lake Victoria \_\_\_\_\_
9. Name the world's longest river.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Nile \_\_\_\_\_
10. 90% of the water that flows along the Nile through Egypt comes from what lake?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Lake Tana \_\_\_\_\_

# THE CONTINENTS



After reading the previous page on Antarctica, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. Antarctica is covered by an ice cap that averages how thick?  
\_\_\_\_\_ one mile \_\_\_\_\_
2. Some of the icebergs that are formed are as large as what state in the U.S.?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Connecticut \_\_\_\_\_
3. Antarctica receives less than how many inches of precipitation annually?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what year was Antarctica first reached?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1911 \_\_\_\_\_
5. The first group to reach Antarctica was led by whom?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Roald Amundsen \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name the highest mountain in Antarctica.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Vinson Massif \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many Adelie penguins are there in Antarctica?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 100 million \_\_\_\_\_
8. The chief enemies of penguins are two other animals. Name them.  
\_\_\_\_\_ killer whales \_\_\_\_\_ leopard seals \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is "uppermost" with penguins?  
\_\_\_\_\_ "survival" \_\_\_\_\_
10. What means of transportation was used by the first American women to reach the South Pole?  
\_\_\_\_\_ skis \_\_\_\_\_





## THE CONTINENTS ASIA



## THE CONTINENTS AUSTRALIA



After reading the previous page on Asia, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

After reading the previous page on Australia, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. About what percent of the world's population lives in Asia?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 60 \_\_\_\_\_
2. One out of every three human beings lives in one of two countries. Name the countries.  
\_\_\_\_\_ China \_\_\_\_\_ India \_\_\_\_\_

1. Australia is often referred to as what?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Land Down Under \_\_\_\_\_
2. For many years the only European settlers were from two countries in Europe. Name the countries:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Britain \_\_\_\_\_ Ireland \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name all of the "Little Dragons".  
\_\_\_\_\_ Hong Kong \_\_\_\_\_ Singapore \_\_\_\_\_ South Korea \_\_\_\_\_ Taiwan \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the planet's highest point?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Mt. Everest \_\_\_\_\_

5. The Plateau of Tibet is also called what?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Roof of the World \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is known as the Asian subcontinent?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Indian Peninsula \_\_\_\_\_

7. What river is China's most important river for transportation and commerce.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yangtze River \_\_\_\_\_

8. How tall is the world's tallest mountain?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 29,028 feet \_\_\_\_\_

9. What religion has the most followers worldwide?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Christianity \_\_\_\_\_

10. All of the world's major \_\_\_\_\_ originated in Asia. Put the answer below.  
\_\_\_\_\_ religions \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Name the original people in Australia.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Aborigines \_\_\_\_\_
4. Australia is the leading exporter of what minerals?  
\_\_\_\_\_ hauxite \_\_\_\_\_
5. Cattle do well on the relatively barren ranches that are known as what?  
\_\_\_\_\_ stations \_\_\_\_\_
6. The dry, hot interior of Australia is known as what?  
\_\_\_\_\_ outback \_\_\_\_\_
7. What percent of all Australians live in six coastal cities?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 70 \_\_\_\_\_
8. The world's largest monolith is known by what name?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ayers Rock \_\_\_\_\_
9. What city is the capital of Australia?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Canberra \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is a well-known ancient Aborigine invention?  
\_\_\_\_\_ boomerang \_\_\_\_\_

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## EUROPE

After reading the previous page on Europe, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. Europe is the most densely populated of all the continents.
2. Most people speak some form of 4 Indo-European languages.
3. Christianity is the principal religion of Europe.
4. There were 15 republics in the former Soviet Union.
5. The letters EC stand for European Community.
6. The EC has introduced a single unit of currency called the Euro.
7. The longest river in Europe is the Volga.
8. The Rhine River carries the most commercial traffic of any river in the world.
9. Mt. Elbrus is Europe's highest peak.
10. The Danube is 1,776 miles long and flows eastward through three capital cities.
11. Russia is the largest republic of the former Soviet Union.
12. The Strait of Gibraltar bears the entry of the deep, cold Atlantic currents into the Mediterranean Sea.
13. The Czech language belongs to which one of the four main languages spoken in Europe? Slavic
14. What is the reason why there is very limited fishing in the Black Sea?  
It is highly polluted.

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## NORTH AMERICA

After reading the previous page on North America, answer the following questions. Write the correct answers on the lines provided.

1. Population density in North America increases the farther south one goes.
2. Canada is the continent's largest and most northern nation.
3. The Vikings were the first Europeans to set foot on North America.
4. Mt. McKinley is the tallest peak on the continent of North America.
5. The true natives, named Indians by Columbus, were given that name because Columbus believed he had landed in the East Indies.
6. Pikes Peak and Mt. Elbert are higher than 14,000 feet.
7. North America extends over 4,800 miles from Alaska to Newfoundland.
8. At its narrowest point, North America extends only 30 miles at the Isthmus of Panama.
9. Lake Superior is the world's largest freshwater lake.
10. Death Valley, California, is the lowest point on the continent.
11. The Mississippi/Missouri River complex forms the continent's longest river extending 3,872 miles.
12. The tallest and most active volcano in all of Mexico and Central America is known as Popocatepetl.
13. North America has the longest coastline of any continent.

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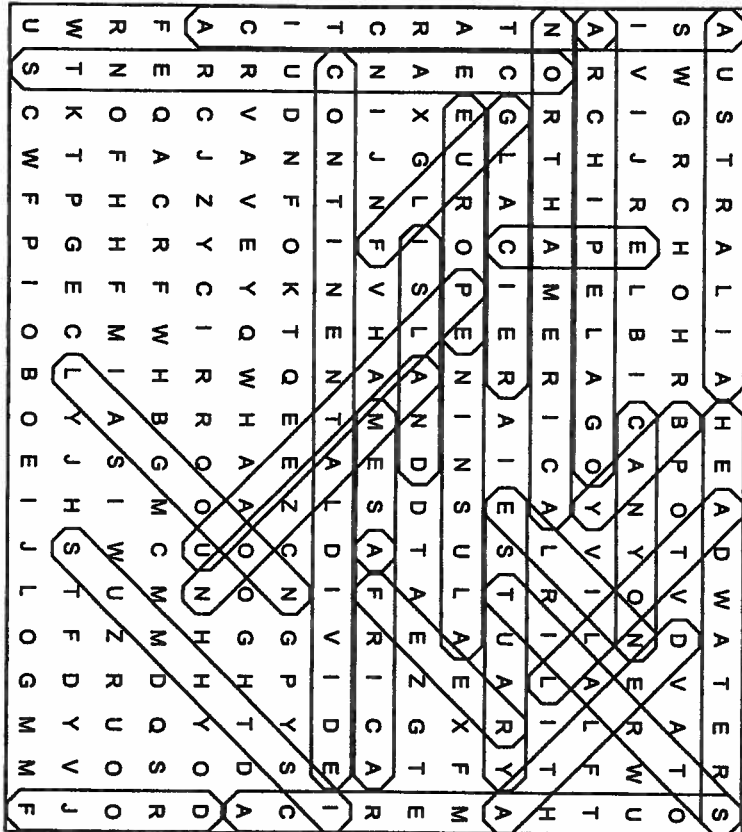
## THE CONTINENTS SOUTH AMERICA



## THE CONTINENTS

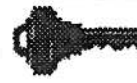


Find these geographical terms and names of continents in the word search. Use the word list below and circle your answers. The words may be read forward, backward, or diagonally.



AFRICA	ATOLL	CONTINENTAL DIVIDE	GLACIER	LAGOON	PENINSULA
AMAZON	AUSTRALIA	DELTA	GULF	MESA	PLATEAU
ANTARCTICA	BAY	ESTUARY	HEADWATERS	NILE	REEF
ARCHIPELAGO	CANYON	EUROPE	ISLAND	NORTH AMERICA	SOUTH AMERICA
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- There are 12 countries and 2 foreign possessions in South America.
- People of mixed Indian and European ancestry are known as mestizos.
- People of mixed black and European backgrounds are known as mulattos.
- The Andes Mountains are the world's longest and second tallest mountain range.
- This mountain range extends 4,500 miles from the Caribbean to Cape Horn.
- The Amazon River is the world's largest and second longest.
- Another name for rainforest is savva.
- The Amazon Basin has over 100,000 series of plants and animals.
- The continent's largest animal is the Jaguar which is no bigger than a pony.
- At a height of over 12,000 feet, Lake Titicaca is the world's highest navigable lake.
- The man who led many revolts in South America is Simon Bolivar.
- The rainforest of South America has been called the "Lungs of the earth".
- Descendants of the Inca are still in the majority in which three countries? Peru Ecuador Bolivia
- South America is closer to Antarctica than any other continent.
- Mt. Aconcagua is the tallest mountain in South America.
- How much taller is this mountain than North America's tallest peak? 2,511 feet

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