



# Amazing Americas



The Americas (collectively called America) comprise the totality of the continents of North and South America. Together, they make up most of the land in Earth's western hemisphere and comprise the New World. Along with their associated islands, they cover 8% of Earth's total surface area and 28.4% of its land area. The topography is dominated by the American Cordillera, a long chain of mountains that runs the length of the west coast. The flatter eastern side of the Americas is dominated by large river basins, such as the Amazon, St. Lawrence River / Great Lakes basin, Mississippi, and La Plata. There are 50 states which make up the United States of America.

## Key Knowledge

### Alaska

Alaska is the largest US state by far. It's twice as big as the next largest state, Texas.

The capital of Alaska (Juneau) does not connect with the rest of Alaska (or any part of the USA) by land, you can only get there by boat or plane.

Alaska is the coldest state but parts of it get hot in the summer. Mount Mckinley is the tallest mountain in all of North America.

### The Everglades

The Everglades are a unique Florida wetland that covers over 750 square miles.

The Everglades have a **subtropical climate**, which means it has hot, humid summers and cool, mild winters.

The Everglades, also known as the 'River of Grass,' is home to over 700 species of plants and animals.

### Death Valley

Located in eastern California, Death Valley is one of the hottest places in the world.

The highest mountain in the park, 11,049-foot **Telescope Peak**, lies only 15 miles from Badwater Basin, the lowest point in the U.S. The vertical drop from the peak to Badwater Basin is twice the depth of the Grand Canyon.

The valley is a long, low depression set in largely barren and unpopulated country of desert plains and rocky ridges, east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It is over 130 miles long, but only 12 miles wide, running roughly north-south near the border with Nevada.

**North America** - third largest of the world's continents, lying for the most part between the **Arctic Circle** and the **Tropic of Cancer**. It extends for more than 5,000 miles (8,000 km) to within 500 miles (800 km) of both the **North Pole** and the **Equator** and has an east-west extent of 5,000 miles.

**South America** - fourth largest of the world's continents. It is the southern portion of the landmass generally referred to as the New World, the **Western Hemisphere**, or simply the Americas.

## Key Vocabulary

<b>Amargosa River</b>	An intermittent waterway, 185 miles (298 km) long, in southern Nevada and eastern California in the United States.	<b>Lake Okeechobee</b>	the largest freshwater lake in the state of Florida
<b>Amazon Rainforest</b>	A moist broadleaf tropical rainforest in the Amazon biome that covers most of the Amazon basin of South America.	<b>lines of latitude</b>	A geographic coordinate that specifies the north-south position of a point on the Earth's surface. Latitude is an angle which ranges from 0° at the Equator to 90° (North or South) at the poles.
<b>Atacama Desert</b>	A desert plateau in South America covering a strip of land on the Pacific coast, west of the Andes mountains. The Atacama desert is one of the driest places in the world.	<b>Machu Picchu</b>	A 15th-century Inca citadel, located in the Eastern Cordillera of southern Peru, on a 2,430-metre (7,970 ft) mountain ridge.
<b>Badwater Basin</b>	An endorheic basin in Death Valley National Park, Death Valley, Inyo County, California, noted as the lowest point in North America, with a depth of 282 ft (86 m) below sea level.	<b>population</b>	the whole number of people or inhabitants in a country or region
<b>Canada</b>	A country in the northern part of North America. Its ten provinces and three territories extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific and northward into the Arctic Ocean.	<b>Rio Carnival</b>	A festival held every year before Lent and considered the biggest carnival in the world with two million people per day on the streets.
<b>Caribbean</b>	consists of the Caribbean Sea, its islands and the surrounding coasts	<b>Salt Creek</b>	A small coastal stream in southern Orange County in the U.S. state of California.
<b>colonisation</b>	A process by which a central system of power dominates the surrounding land and its components.	<b>Tropics of Cancer</b>	Most northerly circle of latitude on Earth at which the Sun can be directly overhead.
<b>continent</b>	A large landmass made up of many countries.	<b>Tropics of Capricorn</b>	Most southerly circle of latitude on Earth at which the Sun can be directly overhead.
<b>Grand Canyon</b>	A steep-sided canyon carved by the Colorado River in Arizona, United States.	<b>Western Hemisphere</b>	A geographical term for the half of Earth which lies west of the prime meridian (which crosses Greenwich, London, United Kingdom) and east of the antimeridian.
<b>Great Lakes</b>	A series of interconnected freshwater lakes primarily in the upper mid-east region of North America.	<b>Yukon river</b>	A major watercourse of northwestern North America. The river's source is in British Columbia, Canada, from which it flows through the Canadian Yukon Territory.
<b>Hawaiian Islands</b>	An archipelago of eight major islands, several atolls, numerous smaller islets, and seamounts in the North Pacific Ocean.		

## North America



## South America



## The Geography of Alaska

**Total Size:** 571,961 sq. miles (source: 2003 Census)

**Geographical Low Point:** Pacific Ocean at Sea Level (source: U.S. Geological Survey)

**Geographical High Point:** Mount McKinley (Denali) 20,320 ft (6194 m)

**Central Point:** Located approx. 63 N., 152 W., 60 miles northwest of Mt. McKinley (source: U.S. Geological Survey)

**Counties:** 16 Boroughs (source: National Association of Counties)

**Bodies of Water:** Pacific Ocean, Arctic Ocean, Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska, Yukon river, Kuskokwim River, Iliamna Lake, Becharof Lake, Teshekpuk Lake

## The United States of America

