



There are 23 countries in North America!

The countries of North America can be split into two groups: those on the mainland of the continent and those in the islands off the coast. The largest countries in North America which make up most of the mainland are the United States of America and Canada.



Because both of these countries are so large, they are divided into sections to make them easier to run. The USA is divided into 50 states (including Alaska which is off the northwest coast of Canada). Canada is divided into ten provinces and three territories.

Below the USA is Mexico and below Mexico, in the bridge between North America and South America, is a group of countries that are collectively known as Central America.



Key vocabulary	Definition
mainland	A continent or the main part of a continent as distinguished from an offshore island
climate	The long-term pattern of weather in a particular area
landscape	All the visible features of an area of land
Capital city	A capital city is the city from which the country is run. It is where the government meets and is the administrative centre for the country
Time zones	A geographic region within which the same standard time is used.
Human geography	Human geography studies how people affect the environments they live in. It includes aspects such as population, culture, religion, tourism, buildings and economic development.

The islands off the coast of the North America make up the rest of the countries. Most of these are classed as Caribbean islands.





We will explore the varied climate zones of North America.



Ice cap climate
Tundra climate
Subarctic climate
Warm temperate climate
Subtropical climate
Tropical climate

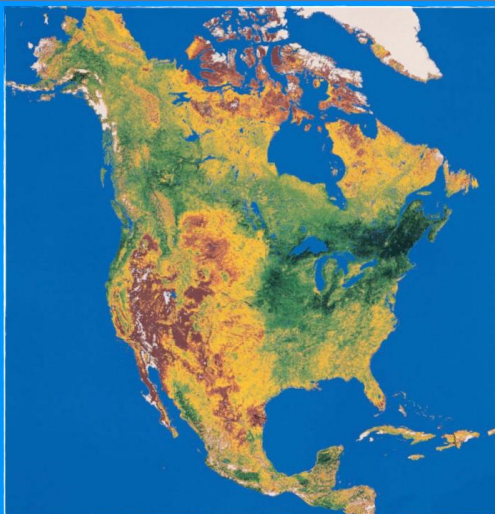
There is an imaginary line that runs down from the North Pole to the South Pole through the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, London which is known as the Greenwich Meridian. This line separates the east from the west in the same way that the equator separates the north from the south.



The Greenwich Meridian is linked to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). All the time zones in the world are calculated in relation to GMT and are either up to 12 hours ahead or 12 hours behind GMT.

We will compare our area to a region in North America. We will use human and physical geography when comparing the areas and discuss time zones.

North America is the third largest continent in the world and has an area of 24,247,039 km². As you would expect, an area this large has an extremely varied landscape. There are mountains, deserts, plains, rainforests, cliffs, waterfalls, glaciers and just about any other geographical feature you can name.



Human geography studies how people affect the environments they live in. It includes aspects such as population, culture, religion, tourism, buildings and economic development.



Physical geography studies the Earth itself. It includes weather, climate zones, seasons, mountains, hills, rivers, oceans, coasts, cliffs, and rocks.