



PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE EARTH

IMPORTANT PHYSICAL FEATURES OF NORTH AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA

Physical





- U.S. Geologic Provinces**
- Pacific Mountain System
 - Columbia Plateau
 - Basin and Range
 - Rocky Mountain System
 - Colorado Plateau
 - Interior Plains
 - Laurentian Upland
 - Ouachita-Ceask Highlands
 - Atlantic Plain
 - Appalachian Highlands

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

- Only 80 million years old, this western range gets its name from the shape of its peaks.

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS

- North America's older mountain ranges rise near the east coast; over 400 million years old, they are worn down and rounded due to weathering.

CANADIAN SHIELD

- a raised but relatively flat plateau; extends over eastern, central, and northwestern Canada

SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS

- Part of the Western ranges, these mountains stretch from the southwestern United States to Honduras.

CASCADE MOUNTAINS

- The youngest of the mountain ranges, with some peaks only a million years old; runs through the Pacific Northwest

THE GREAT PLAINS

- “Breadbasket of North America,” grassland region of North America, between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River; used for beef and dairy cattle and for growing of wheat and corn.

THE GREAT LAKES

- A series of interconnected freshwater lakes located in the upper mid-east region on the Canada–United States border, connects to the Atlantic Ocean through the Saint Lawrence River. Superior, Michigan, Huron Erie, and Ontario

MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEM

- The system consists of the river itself and its major tributaries: the Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio and Red rivers.

THE PIEDMONT

- Geographic region in the east; lying between the Appalachian Mountains (west) and the Atlantic Coastal Plain (east)

THE GULF- ATLANTIC COASTAL PLAIN

- Extends from river, marsh, and wetland regions east of the mountains toward the sandy beaches of the Atlantic coast.

NORTH AMERICAN TUNDRA

- Stretching along the northern borders; low temperatures and precipitation levels hinder tree growth. The tundra is characterized by permafrost—soil that is frozen for two or more years.

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

- A large river in the middle latitudes of North America; flows in a roughly north-easterly direction, connecting the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean.

GULF OF MEXICO

- An ocean basin and a marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean, largely surrounded by the North American continent; often referred to as the "Third Coast"

HUDSON BAY

- A large body of saltwater in northeastern Canada; the second-largest bay in the world.

ARCTIC OCEAN

- The smallest and shallowest of the world's five major oceans; located mostly in the north polar region in the middle of the Northern Hemisphere; almost completely surrounded by Eurasia and North America.

PACIFIC OCEAN

- The largest and deepest of the Earth's oceanic divisions. It extends from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Southern Ocean in the south and is bounded by Asia and Australia in the west and the Americas in the east.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

- The second largest of the world's oceans; separates the "Old World" from the "New World," connected in the north to the Arctic Ocean, to the Pacific Ocean in the southwest, the Indian Ocean in the southeast, and the Southern Ocean in the south.