

Year 5 Geography Unit - North America

Context

- North America is a continent in the Northern Hemisphere.
- The main countries are Canada, USA and Mexico plus there are over 40 other smaller countries and territories in 'Central America' and the Caribbean.
- The far north of is polar and cold all year. The far south is tropical, hot and wet.

Key vocabulary and places

The New World - the term given to most of the Americas when they were discovered by Europeans.

North America - this continent includes Canada in the far north right down to Panama in the south. All but the most southerly Caribbean islands are included too.

Pan-American Highway - this is a road that runs the length of North America from the state of Alaska in the North right down to Panama.

Prudhoe Bay - an Arctic town in the far north of Alaska that produces oil for much of the USA.

Arctic - any land north of the Arctic Circle.

Biome - the environment and life that exists in a place because of its climate.

Tundra and Permafrost - a permanently frozen biome e.g. around Prudhoe Bay.

Hot desert - a biome where there are high temperatures and very low precipitation.

Death Valley - a national park in California, USA. The hottest place on Earth!

Phoenix - the Capital city of the state of Arizona in the USA. A 6 hour drive from Death Valley.

Migration / Migrants - people who travel to another location to live and work. South of the USA, North America is poorer, so people migrate north to the USA.

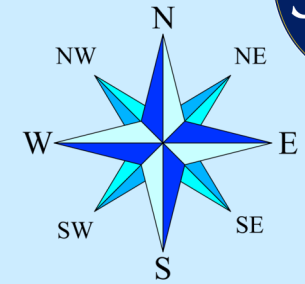
Panama Canal - a canal dug across Panama to join the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Darien Gap - The Pan American Highway doesn't reach South America because the Darien Gap at the end of Panama is too swampy and impassable to build a road.

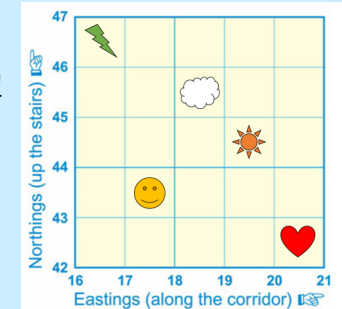


Geography Skills

- You should be confident in using an 8 point compass to describe locations in North America.



- Use 4 figure (number) grid references to locate points and squares on a map. Eastings first, then Northings.



- Ordnance Survey (OS) is a widely used mapping company in UK.
- You should be able to use a key to recognise symbols on an OS map of Birmingham
- You should be able to draw a sketch map of Phoenix using some OS symbols.



Something to reflect on...

If you were living in poverty and difficulty in Central America, would you leave everything to migrate north to the USA?

Was the human cost in building the Panama Canal worth it for how useful it is?

Thinking about climate, where would you visit in North America?