

Key Physical Geography

Mountain Ranges: Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, Sierra Nevada.

Rivers: Mississippi, Missouri, Colorado, Yukon.

Lakes: Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario).

Landforms: Great Plains, Canadian Shield, Gulf of Mexico coast, deserts (Sonoran, Mojave).

Canada vs Panama: Physical Variation

Canada: Cold climate, tundra and forests, mountainous in west, thousands of lakes.

Panama: Tropical climate, rainforests, mountainous interior, narrow isthmus between oceans.

Weather Hazards

Hurricanes: Atlantic and Gulf coasts (e.g. Hurricane Katrina, 2005).

Tornadoes: Central USA in "Tornado Alley".

Wildfires: Western USA and Canada in dry, hot summers.

Tectonic Hazards

Earthquakes: Western USA (e.g. California) and Mexico—San Andreas Fault.

Volcanoes: Part of the Pacific Ring of Fire (e.g. Mount St. Helens).

Human Geography

Population Distribution: Dense around coasts and Great Lakes, sparse in interior and north.

Languages: English, Spanish, French.

Urban Areas: Megacities like New York, Mexico City, Los Angeles.

Comparing Economies

USA: Highly developed, global leader in tech, finance, defence.

Canada: High-income, resource-based economy with strong services.

Mexico: Newly industrialised, manufacturing and agriculture important.

Urban Growth: New York City

Growth Factors: Immigration, trade, finance hub, cultural appeal.

Challenges: Inequality, housing, pollution, transport congestion.

USA as a Superpower

Military: Largest defence budget.

Economic: Influential in global trade, finance and tech.

Cultural: Global media, brands, and entertainment ("soft power").

Paris Agreement (2015)

Aim: Limit global warming to below 2°C.

USA's Role: Signed under Obama, left under Trump, rejoined under Biden.

Importance: Encourages renewable energy and climate action.

Trans-Alaskan Pipeline

What: An 800-mile oil pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez.

Benefits: Provides jobs and energy.

Concerns: Environmental damage, oil spills, impacts on wildlife.

Canadian Tar Sands

Location: Alberta.

Pros: Economic growth, energy supply.

Cons: High carbon emissions, deforestation, water pollution.

Sustainability in North America

Improvements: Renewable energy in Canada/USA, protected areas.

Challenges: Oil dependence, urban sprawl, car culture.

Future: Balance between development and environmental care.

Key Terms

Isthmus: A narrow strip of land connecting two larger land areas.

Tornado: A rapidly rotating column of air in contact with the ground.

Urbanisation: The growth of cities.

Superpower: A nation with dominant global influence.

Sustainability: Living in a way that protects future resources.

Revision Questions

- 1) Name two major rivers in North America.
- 2) What makes Canada and Panama physically different?
- 3) What is Tornado Alley?
- 4) Why is California at risk of earthquakes?
- 5) How do the economies of Mexico and Canada differ?
- 6) What are the benefits and drawbacks of the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline?
- 7) Why are the Canadian tar sands controversial?
- 8) What is the Paris Agreement?
- 9) How has New York City grown over time?
- 10) In what ways is North America becoming more sustainable?

