



LIFE·PAC®

History & Geography



Alpha Omega Publications®

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 409

NORTH AMERICA

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NORTH AMERICA

This LIFE PAC® will teach the basic geography of North America. This will require you to memorize many names and places. You will learn the features of the continent and the countries. Then, when there is an oil spill near the Aleutian Islands, a volcanic eruption in Honduras, or a shipwreck near the Bahamas, you will know what the news reporter is talking about. You will also learn your U.S. states and capitals in this LIFE PAC. Many of the terms you have used this year will be reviewed and used to identify places on the continent. Places you need to be able to find on a map will be underlined. So, sharpen your brain and start learning your way around North America!

OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you should be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC.

When you have finished this LIFE PAC, you should be able to:

1. Name and find on a map many of the geographic features of North America.
2. Name the major countries/regions of North America.
3. Name the states on a blank map of the United States.
4. Match U.S. states and their capitals.
5. Tell about the geography, history, and people of the major countries/regions of North America.
6. Recognize the names of the countries of Central America.
7. Recognize the names of the major islands of the West Indies.

VOCABULARY

Study these new words. Learning the meaning of these words is a good study habit and will improve your understanding of this LIFE PAC.

abundance (ə bun' dəns). Great plenty; quantity that is more than enough.

butte (byüt). A steep hill that has a flat top and stands alone. A butte is usually smaller than a mesa and not as steep.

communist (kom' yə nist). Countries that believe in a system in which most or all property is owned by the state and is shared by all. The system was set up and kept by force during the Cold War.

contiguous (kən tig' yū əs). Being in actual contact; touching along a boundary or at a point.

continental divide (kon' tə nen' təl di vīd'). A divide separating streams that flow to opposite sides of a continent.

cordillera (kôr' dil yâr' ə). A group of mountain ranges, often consisting of a number of parallel chains. Usually the largest group on a continent.

estate (ə stāt'). A large piece of land, usually with a large house on it.

extension (ik sten' shən). An addition.

fault (fôlt). A break in the earth's crust, with the mass of rock on one side of the break pushed up, down, or sideways.

federation (fed ə rā' shən). A union by agreement.

heritage (her' ə tij). What is handed down from one generation to the next.

horizon (hə rī' zən). The line where earth and sky seem to meet.

lock (lok). The part of a canal in which the level of the water can be changed by letting water in or out, to raise or lower ships.

mainland (mān' land). The main part of a continent or country, not including islands or small peninsulas.

megalopolis (meg ə läp' ə ləs). A very large city.

mesa (mā' sə). A high, steep hill that has a flat top and stands alone.

migrate (mī' grāt). To move from one place to settle in another.

Northwest Passage (nôrth' west' pas' ij). A waterway around mainland North America through the northwest part of the continent.

occupy (ok' yə pī). To take possession of, as by conquest.

overwhelm (ō' vər hwelm'). To crush or defeat; overcome completely.

province (prov' ins). One of the main divisions of a country.

range (rānj). A row or line of mountains.

source (sôrs). A person or place from which anything comes or is obtained.

survey (sər vā'). To measure for size, shape, position, or boundaries.

turmoil (tér' moil). A commotion; disturbance; disorder.

uninhabited (un' in hab' ə təd). Not lived in; without people who live there.

Note: These words appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used in this LIFE PAC. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, review the definition.

Pronunciation Key: hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, īce; hot, ōpen, ôrder; oil; out; cup, pūt, rüle; child; long; thin; /ʒh/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /ə/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

I. GEOGRAPHY

North America is the third largest continent on earth. It stretches from inside the Arctic Circle to a point only 700 miles (1,126 km) from the equator. It is shaped sort of like a big triangle balanced on one corner. The continent includes Greenland,

Canada, the United States, Mexico, Central America (the countries south of Mexico), and the West Indies. The map on the next page shows the size, shape, and many of the important features of North America.

Review these objectives. When you have finished this section, you should be able to:

1. Name and find on a map many of the geographic features of North America.
2. Name the major countries/regions of North America.
5. Tell about the geography, history, and people of the major countries/regions of North America.

Review these words.

abundance	cordillera	heritage	source
lock	mainland	overwhelm	
migrate	province	range	

Land, Lakes, and Rivers

The Land. North America has a set of mountain **ranges** on both sides and a large plain in the center. All along western (left, on a map) Canada and the United States are a group of mountains called the **cordillera**. These mountains continue south to cover most of Mexico and Central America. On the eastern (right) side of Canada and the U.S. is another set of mountain ranges, the Appalachian Mountains and Laurentian Mountains. The Appalachians are south of the St. Lawrence River, while the Laurentians are to the north. Between the eastern and western mountain ranges spreads a huge, fertile plain.

The cordillera are better known by the names given to the different ranges. The Rocky Mountains are probably the best known range in the American cordillera. They are the mountains that seem to spring up out of the Great Plains when you travel west across America. Even further west, there are other ranges along the Pacific coast. Between the Rocky Mountains and the coastal mountains is the Great Basin.

The Great Basin is a desert area of bowl-shaped plateaus between the mountains. It is a desert because the mountains block moisture from



North America with its major features