

LATIN AMERICA**Landforms and Resources**

In this section, you will learn about the physical features and resources of Latin America, and how they shape life in the region.

All questions require at least
THREE sentences on own paper.

PLACES & TERMS

Andes Mountains mountains in South America; part of a chain of ranges that runs down the Pacific coast of North, Central, and South America

llanos grassy plains in Colombia and Venezuela; used for grazing and farming

cerrado grassy plains in the interior of Brazil; undeveloped, but suitable for grazing and farming

pampas grassy plains in Argentina and Uruguay; used for grazing and farming

Orinoco River river that winds through the northern part of the continent, mainly in Venezuela

Amazon River one of the world's greatest river, flows about 4,000 miles from west to east across the continent

Paraná River a river with origins in the highlands of southern Brazil

Mountains and Highlands

Latin America stretches from the southern borders of the United States down to the southernmost tip of South America—almost 7,000 miles. It is bounded by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea.

The **Andes Mountains** of South America are part of a chain of mountain ranges that runs down the Pacific coast of North, Central, and South America. There are many active volcanoes throughout the Andes.

The Andes Mountains have made settlement along the Pacific coast more difficult. They are a barrier to movement from the coast into the interior. As a result, more settlement in South America has occurred along the eastern and northern coasts.

Highlands are the mountainous or hilly sections of a country. The Guiana Highlands are in the

northeast of South America. The Brazilian Highlands are in southeastern Brazil.

1. How did the Andes Mountains affect settlement of South America?

Answer in at least **THREE SENTENCES** on own paper.

Plains for Grain and Livestock

South America has areas of wide plains. The plains offer rich soil for growing crops and abundant grasses for grazing livestock. The vast, grassy, and treeless plains of Colombia and Venezuela are called **llanos**.

In Brazil the plains are called **cerrado**. A flat terrain and moderate rainfall make them suitable for farming. The government of Brazil is

encouraging settlers to move into the interior and develop this land.

In Argentina and Uruguay, the plains are known as pampas. The main products are cattle and wheat grain.

2. Why does Brazil's government want people to move into the country's interior?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

The Amazon and Other Rivers

South America has three major river systems. The Orinoco River flows more than 1,500 miles to the Atlantic. It flows partly along the Colombia-Venezuela border.

The Amazon River is one of the world's greatest rivers. It flows about 4,000 miles eastward, across the central lowlands. The Amazon River is fed by more than 1,000 smaller rivers. The Amazon carries more water to the ocean than the next seven largest rivers of the world combined.

The Paraná River has its origins in the highlands of southern Brazil. It travels about 3,000 miles south and west through Paraguay and Argentina. It empties into the Atlantic.

3. Why is the Amazon one of the world's greatest rivers?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

Major Islands of the Caribbean

The Caribbean islands consist of three major groups: the Bahamas, the Greater Antilles, and the Lesser Antilles. These islands together are sometimes called the West Indies.

The Bahamas are made up of hundreds of islands. They lie off the southern tip of Florida and north of Cuba. They extend southeast into the Atlantic Ocean

The Greater Antilles are made up of the larger islands of the Caribbean. These include Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico.

The Lesser Antilles are the smaller islands in the region southeast of Puerto Rico.

4. Why are Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico part of the Greater Antilles?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

Resources of Latin America

The mineral resources of Latin America include gold, silver, iron, copper, bauxite, tin, lead, zinc, and nickel. In addition, mines in this region produce precious gems, titanium, and tungsten. Many of these minerals are exported to other parts of the world.

Oil, coal, natural gas, uranium, and *hydroelectric* power are plentiful. Venezuela and Mexico have major oil reserves. Mexico is able to export oil to other countries.

Brazil is rich in hydroelectric power because of its many rivers and waterfalls. It is also rich in oil and gas. Trinidad has discovered vast reserves of natural gas. These have attracted manufacturers to the island.

In addition, Latin America is rich in agricultural resources and timber.

5. What resources does Latin America's export?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.