Chapter 13
Countries of South America
Chapter 13: Countries of South America

Section 1: The Northern Tropics

Section 2: The Andean Countries

Section 3: The Southern Grassland Countries
• How has migration made the Guianas culturally distinct from the rest of the nations in South America?
• How do Venezuela’s physical characteristics and climate regions influence the nation’s economic activities?
• What are the problems of a one-crop agricultural system in Colombia?
Guyana and Suriname are former British and Dutch colonies, and French Guiana is a department of France.

Europeans brought Africans, and later Asians, to work on sugar plantations.

People of Asian descent make up half the population of Guyana, many speaking the languages of India.

Many people in Suriname and French Guyana are mulattoes, people of mixed African and other ancestry.

Fishing and farming dominate economy.

Miners extract bauxite, a mineral used in making aluminum, from the hills of Guyana and Suriname; Guyana is the world’s largest exporter of bauxite.
Chapter 13, Section 1

Venezuela

- **Tierra Helada** (below 20°F)
  - 14,000 feet (4,267 m)
- **Puna** (20°–55°F)
  - 10,000 feet (3,048 m)
- **Tierra Fría** (55°–65°F)
  - 6,000 feet (1,829 m)
- **Tierra Templada** (65°–75°F)
  - 3,000 feet (914 m)
- **Tierra Caliente** (75°–80°F)
  - Sea Level

- Snow Line
- Tree Line
- Grazing

- Potatoes
- Wheat
- Barley
- Apples
- Coffee
- Corn
- Citrus Fruit
- Bananas
- Cacao
- Sugar Cane
- Rice
• Andean highlands stretch across northern Venezuela, and southern Venezuela is dominated by Guiana Highlands.
• The tropical grassland area between the mountains, called the llanos, is important for grazing cattle.
• Venezuela lies in the tropics, but climate depends more on elevation.
• Venezuelan farmers grow different crops at different elevations.
• Petroleum dominates the economy of Venezuela, which is one of the top 10 oil producers in the world.
• Like Venezuela, Colombia has mountains, highlands, and llanos, and most people live in the valleys between cordilleras, or parallel mountain ranges of the Andes.
• Colombia’s farmers depend heavily on the export of coffee.
• Most farmland is owned by a few wealthy families who rent out small amounts of land at high prices to campesinos, or tenant farmers.
• Campesinos are often barely able to grow enough food for their families because of their focus on growing coffee.
• Growing and exporting illegal crops of marijuana and cocaine is extremely profitable for a small minority of Colombians.
• The Colombian and United States governments are working together to stop the drug trade and associated violence.
• Colombia has suffered from a long history of civil strife and continues to struggle with the challenges that result from social inequality.
A large number of people in Guyana come from which region?
   a) India
   b) Greece
   c) Italy
   d) Australia

Which of these countries is one of the world’s top oil producers?
   a) Guyana
   b) French Guiana
   c) Venezuela
   d) Colombia

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• How have the physical characteristics of the Andean countries affected the people who live there?

• How are the economies of Ecuador and Peru similar and different?

• How do climatic conditions affect the people of Bolivia and Chile?
Chapter 13, Section 2

Physical Characteristics

Coastal Plain
- Narrow plain between mountains and ocean stretches along entire Pacific coast of South America.
- Atacama Desert, the driest place on earth, occupies the coastal plain of northern Chile.
- Archaeologists have found perfectly preserved ancient artifacts in the Atacama Desert.

Highlands
- Andes rise inland from the coastal plain, and highland valleys and plateaus lie between cordilleras.
- Plateaus have different names in different countries: *altiplano* in Peru and Bolivia, and *páramos* in Ecuador.
- Alpine tundra grows above the *timber line*, the boundary above which forest vegetation cannot grow.

Tropical Forests
- Inland from the Andes are forested tropical lowlands.
- The tropical forests, called the *selva* in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, are the beginning of the rain forests of the Amazon River basin.
Ecuador

- Indians practice subsistence farming in the highlands.
- About half of the population are mestizos who work in urban factories or on plantations in the coastal lowlands growing bananas, cacao, and coffee for export.
- People of European background own the largest farms and factories.
- Oil was discovered in the selva lowlands in the 1960s and has become the country’s most important export.

Peru

- Indians live in the highlands, practicing subsistence farming or herding llamas and alpacas.
- Most other Peruvians are mestizos who live in urban areas or near the coastal plain.
- Most of the population either works for low wages in factories or on plantations growing cotton, sugar cane, and rice.
- A minority of people of European descent control most of the country’s wealth.
Bolivia

- Bolivia is landlocked, without coastal ports or factories.
- Bolivia has many minerals, but the best ores have already been mined.
- Most of the population is Indian.
- In the highlands, people practice subsistence farming or herd alpacas and llamas.

Chile

- Chile is a narrow ribbon along the west coast of South America.
- The Atacama Desert is uninhabited.
- Three fourths of the population live in the Central Valley between the Andes and coastal ranges.
- Fruits, vegetables, and wine grapes are produced in the Central Valley for export to the United States and Europe.
- Most of Chile’s cities and factories are in the Central Valley.
What has most greatly affected the economy of Ecuador?
   a) The discovery and export of oil.
   b) The herding of llamas and alpacas.
   c) The depletion of mineral wealth.
   d) The lack of coastal ports.

Which region is home to most of Chile’s economic activity?
   a) Selva
   b) Atacama Desert
   c) Central Valley
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Chapter 13, Section 3

The Southern Grassland Countries

• What are the physical characteristics of the southern grassland countries?
• How have political conditions in Paraguay and Uruguay changed in recent years?
• How has urbanization affected life in Argentina?
• Río de la Plata is an estuary, or broad river mouth where a flooded river valley meets the sea, that is fed by four rivers: the Uruguay, the Pilcomayo, the Paraguay, and the Paraná.
• The Andes in the west give way to a piedmont, or foothills, region.
• The Gran Chaco is an interior lowland of savanna and dense shrub in parts of Paraguay, Argentina, and Bolivia with mild temperatures and seasonal rain.
• The pampas of Argentina and Uruguay are temperate grasslands where grain is grown and where gauchos, or cowboys, once herded cattle.
• South of the pampas is the desolate, cold plateau of Patagonia, a region well suited for raising sheep and with rich deposits of oil and bauxite.
Both countries were ruled by the military for years, but today are democracies with free elections.

Paraguay
- Although Paraguay is landlocked, it has ocean access through the Plata River system.
- The economy is based on agriculture.
- Paraguay and Brazil cooperated to build the Itaipú Dam on the Paraná River.

Uruguay
- The economy is based on raising livestock and making related products.
- Uruguay must import most goods, since it produces no fuel and few consumer goods.
- Uruguay has a large middle class and few slums in the cities.
Argentina

- Argentina is Latin America’s wealthiest country in terms of per capita GNP.
- About 13 million people live in the capital Buenos Aires, which looks to Europe for its fashions and lifestyle.
- Buenos Aires is a center of industry, which results in heavy air pollution and draws many rural people looking for jobs and a better way of life.
- Argentina was ruled by a series of military dictators from the mid-1940s until 1983, the best known of whom was Juan Domingo Perón.
- All of the dictators were repressive and tried to give the appearance of progress by borrowing money from foreign banks to build dams, factories, and roads.
- Military rule was particularly repressive in the “dirty wars” of the 1970s.
- After defeat in the Falklands War in 1982, the military agreed to allow free elections.
What physical characteristic of the region binds the different countries together?

a) the Andes Mountains.
b) the Río de la Plata river system
c) the plateau of Patagonia
d) the pampas

How are the political histories of the grassland countries similar?

a) All have had unbroken, peaceful democratic governments.
b) All are ruled by hereditary monarchs.
c) All are ruled by military dictators.
d) All were ruled by military dictators, replaced by democratic governments.

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Section 3 Review

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