

Finn's South American Expedition: Mapping the Continent

Learning objective: To identify and describe the key geographical features, climate zones, and biomes of South America.

Finn the dolphin has been mapping the South American coastline and its vast interior. Use the provided word bank to label the map grid and complete the analytical challenges below. For each question, provide a detailed explanation of how the physical geography influences the environment.

Word bank: Amazon Rainforest · Andes Mountains · Atacama Desert · Equator · Patagonia · Tropic of Capricorn · Rio de la Plata · Angel Falls

1. The Andes Mountains run along the western edge of the continent. Explain why this mountain range acts as a significant climate barrier for the regions to the east. (2 marks)

2. The Amazon Rainforest is often described as the 'lungs of the planet'. Justify why the climate of this region is essential for global weather patterns. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the climate of the Atacama Desert with the climate of the Amazon Basin. What physical factors cause these two areas to be so different? (3 marks)

4. If a traveller were to journey from the Equator down to the southern tip of Patagonia, what changes in vegetation and temperature might they experience? Justify your answer. (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the local ecosystem if the flow of the Amazon River were significantly reduced by human activity? (2 marks)

6. Imagine a trade route crossing the Andes. What geographical challenges would engineers face when building roads or railways through such steep, high-altitude terrain? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section diagram of South America showing the elevation change from the Pacific coast, up over the Andes Mountains, and down into the Amazon Basin. Label the areas of high and low precipitation.



Extension challenge: Research a specific country in South America and create a 'Travel Fact File'. Include the currency (converted to £), the main language spoken, and a detailed description of how the landscape dictates the local economy (e.g., farming, tourism, or mining).