

Exploring South America: The Continent of Extremes

Learning objective: To identify, locate, and explain the physical and human geographical features of South America, including biomes, climate zones, and key landmarks.

Use your knowledge of South American geography to answer the following questions. Provide detailed explanations where required to demonstrate your understanding.

South America is a continent of vast geographical diversity, stretching from the tropical warmth of the north near the Equator to the icy southern tip of Tierra del Fuego. Finn the dolphin has been mapping the coastline, while Nova the owl has been studying the unique climates that allow such incredible biodiversity to flourish. From the dense canopy of the Amazon to the towering, snow-capped peaks of the Andes, every region offers a unique challenge to those who live there.

Word bank: Amazon Rainforest · Andes Mountains · Atacama Desert · Tributary · Equator · Biodiversity · Plateau · Altitude

1. Finn the dolphin is travelling from the mouth of the Amazon River upstream. Explain why the Amazon River is vital to the continent's ecosystem and identify the geographical term for a smaller river that flows into a larger one. (3 marks)

2. The Andes Mountains run along the western edge of South America. How does high altitude affect the climate and the types of plants that can grow in this region compared to the Amazon basin? (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the climate of the Atacama Desert with the climate of the Amazon Rainforest. Why is the Atacama considered one of the driest places on Earth? (4 marks)

4. Nova the owl is observing the migration of birds across the Equator. Justify why South America has such a wide variety of biomes despite being on a single continent. (3 marks)

5. If a traveller wanted to purchase goods at a local market in a South American city, and they spent £15.75 on fruit and £12.40 on local crafts, calculate the total cost. If they paid with a £50 note, how much change would they receive? (2 marks)

6. What might happen to the local biodiversity if large areas of the Amazon Rainforest were cleared for farming? Explain the potential impact on the global climate. (3 marks)

Draw: Create a cross-section map of South America. Label the Andes Mountains, the Amazon River, and the Atacama Desert. Include a small drawing of a unique animal found in each of these three distinct biomes.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an explorer planning an expedition across South America. Write a persuasive diary entry justifying which biome you would choose to study for one month. In your entry, describe the equipment you would need, the weather conditions you expect to face, and the specific geographical features you hope to document.