



NORTH AMERICA: THE PHYSICAL LAND

CN: You will probably need to use some colors more than once.
Use your lightest colors for S-X and 2-6 (the land regions to the right).
(1) Use one color for all five Great Lakes (O); color Great Slave Lake (G') and Lake Winnipeg (P') the same color as the rivers that fill them.
(2) Use gray for the mountain peaks on the right and the names of the bodies of water on the large map.

PRINCIPAL RIVERS

ARKANSAS_A
CHURCHILL_B
COLORADO_C
COLUMBIA_D
FRAZER_E
MACKENZIE_F
SLAVE_G
PEACE_H
MISSISSIPPI_I
MISSOURI_J
NELSON_K
OHIO_L
RED_M
RIO GRANDE_N
ST. LAWRENCE_O
N. & S. SASKATCHEWAN_P
SNAKE_Q
YUKON_R

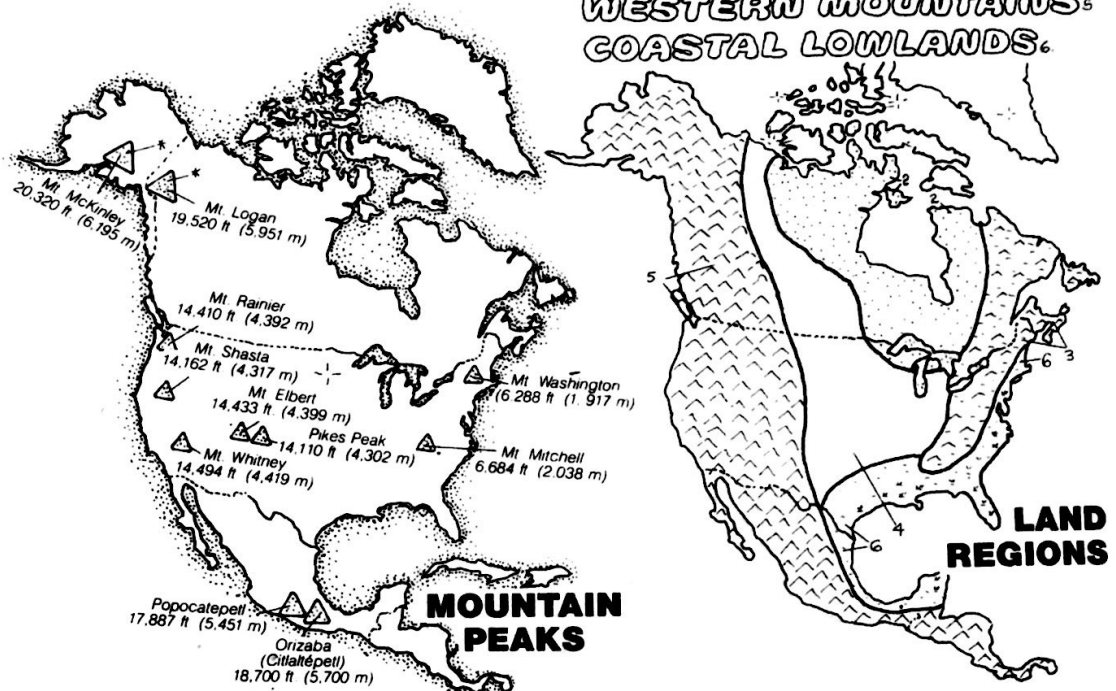
PRINCIPAL MOUNTAIN RANGES

APPALACHIAN MTS._S
CASCADE RANGE_T
COAST MTS._U
ROCKY MTS._V
SIERRA MADRE (E)_W (W)_W
SIERRA NEVADA_X

PRINCIPAL LAKES

THE GREAT LAKES₊
L. SUPERIOR_O
L. HURON_O
L. MICHIGAN_O
L. ERIE_O
L. ONTARIO_O
GREAT BEAR L._O
GREAT SLAVE L._{G'}
GREAT SALT L._Z
L. WINNIPEG_{P'}
L. NICARAGUA₁

CANADIAN SHIELD₂
EASTERN UPLANDS₃
CENTRAL PLAINS₄
WESTERN MOUNTAINS₅
COASTAL LOWLANDS₆



Pikes Peak, Mt. Elbert, and over 70 other peaks in the Colorado Rockies are higher than 14,000 ft. (4,268 m). Mt. McKinley is the tallest peak on the continent. Popocatepetl is the tallest of the many active volcanoes in Mexico and Central America.

The Canadian Shield is a vast area of rock that is the remains of an ancient, completely worn down range. It is a storehouse of largely untapped minerals. The thin layer of soil over it can support forests, but not farming. The water of Hudson Bay fills a large depression in the Shield.

North America, the continent with the longest coastline, has a widely varied landscape and climate: frozen wastes in Greenland and northern Canada, evergreen forests in central Canada and the western U.S., towering peaks in the Rocky Mountains, barren deserts in the southwestern U.S., palm-covered islands in the Caribbean Sea, and steamy jungles in Central America. Even the shape of the continent is unusual: a broad expanse of 4,900 miles (7,840 km) from Alaska to Newfoundland narrows to a mere 30 miles (48 km) at the Isthmus of Panama. Variations in temperature between the polar north and the tropical south can exceed 200° F (93° C). Parts of Greenland (85% of which is covered with ice) and the Yukon have recorded temperatures as low as -105° F (-76° C). Death Valley, California, the lowest point on the continent, at 282 feet (86 m) below sea level, has baked in 134° F (57° C) heat.

The continent has three basic physical regions: an Eastern Uplands of very old, low, worn-down mountains; a much younger, steeper, and more rugged series of Western Mountains that cover a third of the continent, from Alaska to Central America; and a broad, flat area in between, which is further broken down into the Central Plains, Canadian Shield, and Coastal Lowlands areas (see the small map, marked Land Regions).

There are three large river systems: (1) The Mississippi-Missouri complex forms the continent's longest river (3,872 miles; 6,195 km), flowing south to the Gulf of Mexico. (2) The Great Lakes (including Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake) and the St. Lawrence River and Seaway flow to the Atlantic Ocean. (3) The Mackenzie and Nelson systems flow to northern Canadian waters. Most river flow in North America is directed by the crest of the Rocky Mountains, the Great Divide. (Such a watershed region is called a continental divide.) North American rivers flow west to the Pacific, east to the Atlantic, north to Hudson Bay or the Arctic Ocean, or south to the Gulf of Mexico, depending on which side of the Great Divide are the headquarters of these rivers.