

**World Geography Facts**  
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**Important Vocabulary**

1. **Geography** is the study of the earth's surface and the processes that shape it, the connections between places, and the complex relationships between people and their environments.
2. **Region** a broad geographical area distinguished by similar features.
3. **Diffusion** is the process by which a cultural element is transmitted from one group or individual to another.
4. **Bubonic Plague** is a contagious, often fatal epidemic disease transmitted from person to person or by the bite of fleas from an infected rodent, especially a rat, and characterized by chills, fever, vomiting, diarrheas, and the formation of buboes.
5. **Global Trade Patterns** are international networks for exchanging goods and services.
6. **Ecosystem** is the interaction of plant life, animal life, and the physical environment in which they live.
7. **Geology** is a science that deals with the history of the earth and its life especially as recorded in rocks.
8. **Latitude** measures in degrees the distance north or south from the equator (0°). On a map, the horizontal lines represent latitude.
9. **Longitude** measure in degrees the distance east or west from the Prime Meridian (0°) and the International Date Line (180°). On a map, the vertical lines represent longitude.
10. **Vegetation** is the plants of an area or a region; plant life.
11. **Databases** are collections of data arranged for ease and speed of search and retrieval--also called *data bank*.
12. **Field Interview** A conversation in which facts or statements are elicited from another in an area or setting of practical activity or application outside an office, school, factory, or laboratory.
13. **Population Pyramids** are two back-to-back bar graphs, one showing the number of males and one showing females in a particular population in five-year age groups. Males are conventionally shown on the left and females on the right, and they may be measured by raw number or as a percentage of the total population. A great deal of information about the population broken down by age and sex can be read from a population pyramid, and this can shed light on the extent of its development. There are two basic shapes of population pyramid-- Triangular population distribution and Rectangular population distribution.
14. **Demographic Data** is factual information and statistics characterizing human populations (or segments of human populations broken down by age or gender or income etc.), especially information organized for analysis or used to reason or make decisions.
15. **Population Distribution** is the study of the earth's people, and how they are spread or over an area.
16. **Hypotheses** are concepts that are not yet verified but that, if true, would explain certain facts or phenomena.
17. **Media Services** are video and audio production, editorial, interactive, multimedia design and development—to form integrated projects and creative solutions that help precisely target audiences and deliver messages for a specific purpose.
18. **Questionnaires** are forms containing a set of questions, especially one addressed to a statistically significant number of subjects as a way of gathering information for a survey.
19. **Aerial Photographs** is the taking of photographs from above with a camera mounted on an aircraft, balloon, rocket, kite or similar vehicle. It was first practiced by the French airman Nadar in 1858. Aerial photography is used in cartography, land-use planning, studies of the environment, espionage and other fields.
20. **Computer-based spreadsheets** call for defined row and column categories, and appropriate values in each cell, or a formula showing how the value in that cell should be derived from other values in the spreadsheet, and the spreadsheets ingest masses of numbers, perform calculations at dazzling speed, and spit out the answer. With this speed, spreadsheets can be put to a myriad of different uses.
21. **Primary Sources** are the original records of an event. They include eyewitness reports, records created at the time of an event, speeches, and letters by people involved in the event, photographs and artifacts.

22. **Secondary Sources** are the later writings and interpretations of historians and writers. Often secondary sources, like textbooks and articles, provide summaries of information found in primary sources.

### Earth's Physical Features

23. **Lithosphere** is the part of the earth that is land—rock and soil.
24. **Atmosphere** is the area of gasses that surrounds the earth.
25. **Hydrosphere** is the part of the earth that is made of water—includes rivers, lakes, oceans, etc.
26. **Biosphere** where life is found on earth, including parts of the **lithosphere**, **atmosphere**, and **hydrosphere**.
27. **Soil** is the upper layer of earth, mantle, that may be dug or plowed and in which plants grow.
28. **Physical Region** is studying the world in a systematic and manageable method by categorizing areas by similar soil types, climates, vegetations, and river systems.
29. **River Systems** are River valleys that have been important centers of civilization; they afford travel routes, and their alluvial soils form good agricultural lands. Navigable rivers are important in commerce and have influenced the location of cities. Rivers with sufficient velocity and gradient can be used to produce hydroelectric power. Among the most important river systems of the world are the Nile, the Congo, the Niger, the Zambezi, and the Orange-Vaal in Africa; the Amazon, the Orinoco, and the Paraguay-Paraná in South America; the Mississippi-Missouri, the St. Lawrence, the Rio Grande, the Colorado, the Columbia, the Mackenzie-Peace, and the Yukon in North America; the Danube, the Rhine, the Rhône, the Seine, the Po, the Tagus, the Thames, the Loire, the Elbe, the Oder, the Don, the Volga, and the Dnieper in Europe; the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Ob-Irtys, the Yenisei, the Lena, the Syr Darya, the Amu Darya, the Amur, the Huang He, the Chang (Yangtze), the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Ayeyarwady, and the Mekong in Asia; and the Murray-Darling in Australia.
30. **Landscape** is the scenery of a place including the physical characteristics and the human characteristics.

### Natural Processes

31. **Natural Resources** are a material source of wealth, such as timber, fresh water, or a mineral deposit, that occurs in a natural state and has economic value.
32. **Weather** is the condition of the bottom layer of the earth's atmosphere in a place over a short period of time.
33. **Climate** is determined by latitude, elevation, ocean currents, and location of mountains. The physical environment greatly affects people by determining which plants and animals survive, how accessible water sources are, and the types of shelter that humans build.
34. **Droughts** are a period of dryness, especially when prolonged, that causes extensive damage to crops or prevents their successful growth.
35. **Hurricanes** are a tropical cyclone with winds of 74 miles (118 kilometers) per hour or greater that occurs especially in the western Atlantic, that is usually accompanied by rain, thunder, and lightning, and that sometimes moves into temperate latitudes.
36. **Floods** are rising and overflowing of a body of water especially onto normally dry land.
37. **Ocean currents** are the part of a fluid body (as air or water) moving continuously in a certain direction, and the flow is marked by force or strength. Air over cold ocean currents brings cold air to land; air over warm ocean currents brings warm air to land.
38. **El Niño** is a warm ocean current off South America's northwestern coast that influences global weather patterns.
39. **Tectonic Plates** are the lithosphere of the earth is divided into a small number of plates which float on and travel independently over the mantle and collide into and drift apart from one another.
40. **Mountains** are landmasses formed from colliding tectonic plates, project conspicuously above its surroundings, higher than hills, and have an elongated ridge.
41. **Earthquakes** are a shaking or trembling of the earth that is volcanic or tectonic in origin and form from plates rubbing or separating from one another.
42. **Volcanoes** are a vent in the crust of the earth or another planet from which usually molten or hot rock and steam issue; they can also be a hill or mountain composed wholly or in part of the ejected material. They are formed along convergent tectonic plate boundaries.

43. **Islands** are tracts of land surrounded by water, smaller than a continent, and are formed from volcanic activity.
44. **Depositions** are items left behind from geological movements and are normally defined by the size of what was left behind.
45. **Erosion** Earth's formations are altered and material is worn away from the earth's surface due to weathering, dissolution, abrasion, corrosion, and transportation, e.g. exposure to wind, rain, volcanic eruptions, etc.
46. **Soil-building Processes** are the effects of adding or removing soil through mechanical and chemical weathering and erosion—water, wind, and glaciers—which alter the physical landscape and earth's appearance.
47. **Sun-Earth Relationship** The sun is the primary determinant in the Earth's seasonal climates. Survival on earth is completely dependent upon the sun, for example, a hemisphere's ability to grow plants depends upon the amount of sunlight it receives.

### Cultural Geography

48. **Culture** refers to people who share similar languages, religions, economies, political structures, and traditions.
49. **Cultural Region** is when geographers divide the world based upon its culture for the purposes of studying the world's population. The major cultural regions are: the United States and Canada, Latin America, Europe, Russia and the former Soviet Union, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and North Africa and the Middle East.
50. **Formal Region** is a group of places that have similar attributes.
51. **Cultural Diffusion** is one group's ideas, religions, inventions, and other aspects that spread to other groups through contact.
52. **Cultural Convergence** occurs when the skills, arts, ideas, habits, and institutions of one culture come in contact with those of another.
53. **Cultural Change** is a result brought about by innovation and diffusion as when someone immigrates to a new country.
54. **Cultural Divergence** is the limited cultural contact and the spread of ideas by restricting a culture from outside cultural influences.
55. **Religion** enables people to find a sense of identity because symbols and stories have shaped cultural expressions (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, dance) and influence aspects of daily life from the practice of moral values to the celebration of holidays and festivals. Some of the major world religions are Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

### Human Geography

56. **Human and Physical Geographic Characteristics** are characteristics which include climate, landforms, and vegetation, as well as language, religion and economic systems.
57. **Patriotism** is love for or devotion to one's country.
58. **Spatial Diffusion** is the concept of a phenomenon spreading through a geographic area, such as the spread of infectious disease, growth of an urban center, the spread of wildfires, and inventions.
59. **Functional region** is a group of places connected by movement.
60. **Perceptual region** is a group of places that is defined by people's feelings and attitudes, is usually based on a number of general criteria, and the exact boundaries are not sharply defined.
61. **Push-Pull Factors** are reasons people move, for example, war pushes people out of their home, and immigrants migrating (pulled) to a new home for new economic opportunities.
62. **Population Distribution** is the pattern of population in a country, a continent, or the world.
63. **Environment Adaptation** are humans adjusting to their surrounding areas so that they thrive, for example, growing certain crops appropriate to their environment and building different types of shelters for protection against the weather.
64. **Environment Modification** Human alteration of the lithosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere, and these act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival.
65. **Developed Countries** are wealthy countries who have high standards of living, high literacy rates, low infant-mortality rates, higher life expectancy rates, and democratic forms of government.

66. **Developing Countries** are poor countries who have low standards of living—low literacy rates, high infant-mortality rates, shorter life expectancy rates, and oppressive, dictatorial-type governments.
67. **Primary Economic Activity** is an economic activity that takes or uses natural resources directly, e.g., fishing and mining.
68. **Secondary Economic Activity** is an economic activity in which people use raw materials to produce or manufacture new products of greater value, e.g., timber into furniture.
69. **Quaternary Economic Activity** focuses on the acquisition, processing, and sharing of information—police work, education, research, etc.
70. **Tertiary Economic Activity** occurs when people do not directly gather or process raw materials but pursue activities that serve others—tour guide.
71. **Traditional Economy** is a system in which families produce goods and services for their own use, with little surplus and exchange of goods—also called **subsistence agriculture**.
72. **Command Economy** is a system that is controlled by a single, central government.
73. **Market Economy** is a system in which decisions about production, price, and other economic factors are determined by the law of supply and demand.
74. **Market-Oriented Agriculture** occurs in democratic nations who practice market economy (laws of supply and demand) and have significant agricultural production infrastructures that allow farmers to compete globally with other farmers by adjusting the cost of their products.
75. **Cottage Industries** are small-scale manufacturing operations using little technology, often located in or near people's houses.
76. **Commercial Industries** are large-scale manufacturing operations that employ many people and produce large quantities of goods.
77. **Free Trade Zones** is a part or parts of a country where tariffs and quotas are eliminated and bureaucratic requirements lowered to attract companies raise the incentives of doing business there. Usually, these zones are set up in underdeveloped parts of the host country, the rationale being that the zones will attract employers and thus reduce poverty and unemployment and stimulate the area's economy. These zones are often used by multinational corporations to set up factories to produce goods (such as clothing or shoes).
78. **Precincts** a part of a territory with definite bounds or functions often established for administrative purposes--a subdivision of a county, town, city, or ward for election purposes or a division of a city for police control.
79. **Migration** to move periodically from one country, place, or locality to another for feeding or breeding.
80. **Urbanization** is the growth of city populations with the densest concentrations being in East Asia, South Asia, and eastern North America.
81. **Interdependent** is a dynamic of being mutually responsible to and dependent on others. All countries (nation-states) are dependent at differing degrees with each other in the following areas: trade, technology, markets, communications, migration, and/or transportation.
82. **Free Enterprise System** is the freedom of private businesses to operate competitively for profit with minimal government regulation. Adam Smith was a key proponent of this philosophy.
83. **Capital** is wealth in the form of money or property owned or used in business.
84. **Standard of Living** is the level of development in a country, measured by factors such as the amount of personal income and levels of education.

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