The Land
Forests cover much of North America.

Near the North Pole, the land and ocean are often frozen. The flat land in the central plains is great for farming.

In the southwest, you’ll find deserts and rocky canyons. Steamy jungles grow in the southern part of the continent.

The Countries
The most of any continent

Of all the continents, Africa is divided into the most countries. The newest country is South Sudan. It was created in 2011.

Some cities are very crowded. But most Africans live in smaller villages and farms.

Africa has 18,500 miles (30,000 km) of coastline.
The world may feel like a very big and unfamiliar concept if you have never traveled beyond your town or state. Maps and facts can help you understand other places and how they are similar and different.

Let’s start by looking at “The Land” map of North America. This is called a physical map because it shows the natural geography. A political map shows how people have divided the land into countries, states and other man-made boundaries. From north to south (top to bottom of the map), the countries in North America are Canada, the United States, Mexico, many smaller countries in the area called Central America, and several Caribbean Islands in the area called the West Indies. Look at the map key which shows the different habitats (places where plants and animals live) in North America.

1/ How many habitats are found in North America? Which type of habitat seems to appear most on the map? See if you can find examples of each type of habitat on the map.

2/ Look at the pictures and read the text. Can you point to the places on the map where the land and water are often frozen? Where will you find deserts and rocky canyons? Look at the “Facts” box on the map and see if you can point to some of these places.

3/ Name some wild animals that live in North America.

Now let’s look at a place far from where you live, Africa. On this example of a political map, you can see all 54 countries on the continent of Africa. This continent has no cold-weather environments, so most places are very hot, especially the deserts of the north and south. Most of the big animals that travelers like to see live in the grasslands and rainforests of central Africa.

4/ The newest country in Africa was formed when one country split into two. What is that country, and can you find it on the map? What runs through that country, and why might it be important?

5/ How many languages are spoken in Africa? Can you name any languages that people speak around the world?

6/ Name some wild animals that live in Africa.

**FUN FACTS**

1/ Basketball was invented in North America in 1891.

2/ Pyramids were built thousands of years ago in both Africa and North America.

3/ One of the world’s great natural wonders, Africa’s Victoria Falls creates mist that can be seen from 12 miles away.

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