

Name _____

Date _____

Continents - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

- The borders of countries are decided by people. But oceans usually form the borders of continents. What about islands? Islands are often considered part of the continent they are closest to. Greenland, for example, is politically part of Europe. However, it belongs geographically to the continent of North America. Oceania is a name used to describe many islands in the Pacific Ocean. Most of these islands aren't part of any continent. The islands of Oceania include Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Australia, a continent and a country, is bordered by the Indian Ocean to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the east. Of all the continents, Australia is the smallest. But, as a country, it is the sixth largest in the world. The biggest cities in Australia are Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Much of this continent is called the "outback." The outback is a remote and partly desert region in the interior, or away from the coast. Koalas, kangaroos, emus and platypus are some of the unique animals that call Australia home.

Which of these is a true statement?

- Australia is a continent that includes three countries.
- Australia is the sixth largest continent.
- No country is larger than Australia.



D.

No continent is smaller than Australia.

According to the text, "Of all the continents, Australia is the smallest."

- Asia is the continent with both the biggest landmass and the largest population. Over 4 billion people live in Asia. Because of its size and diversity, people often divide Asia into subregions. These subregions include North Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia is east of India and south of China. The countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand are located in Southeast Asia. The Middle East is where the continents of Africa, Europe and Asia meet. The Middle East includes the countries of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and Syria.

Which region most likely includes countries that are part of three continents?

- Southeast Asia



B.

The Middle East

According to the text, "The Middle East is where the continents of Africa, Europe and Asia meet." It therefore most likely includes countries that are part of three continents.

- East Asia

- South Asia

3. Europe is the second smallest continent. Unlike Australia, however, it contains many countries; over 40 of them! Countries in Europe include England, Spain, Germany, Norway, Iceland, Poland and Romania. Europe and Asia share a landmass. However, geographers generally see them as two separate continents because they have different histories and cultures. Europe is bordered by Asia to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

Why is Europe often considered separate from Asia?

- ✓ A. because Europe and Asia have different cultures and histories
- According to the text, even though "Europe and Asia share a landmass...geographers generally see them as two separate continents because they have different histories and cultures."*
- B. because Europe and Asia are on different landmasses
- C. because Europe contains a much larger area than Asia
- D. because Europe is bordered by oceans on all sides

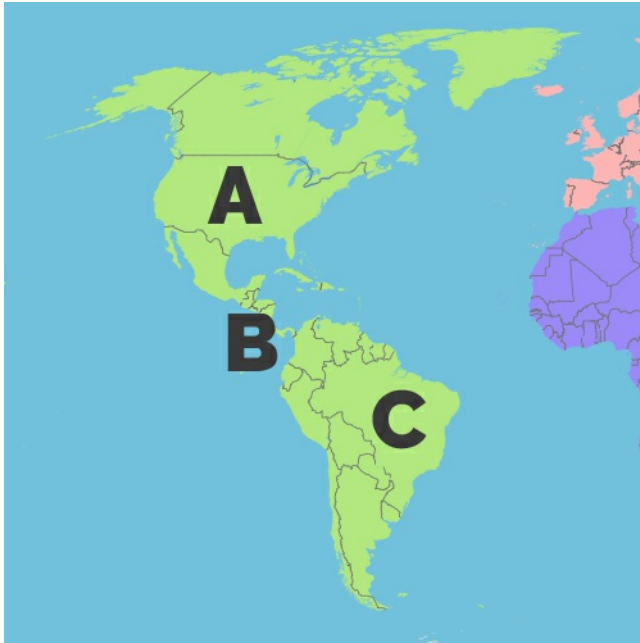
4. Africa is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Indian Ocean to the southeast and the Mediterranean Sea to the north. Africa is the second-largest continent and has the second-largest population. A few of Africa's more than 50 countries include: Nigeria, Egypt, Tanzania, Kenya and Algeria. South Sudan, in the northeast of Africa, is a relatively new country. It gained independence from Sudan in 2011. The Nile is the world's longest river. The Nile runs north through 11 African countries, including Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. The Sahara Desert covers almost one-third of the African continent and is the hottest desert on Earth.

Which of the following would most likely be true of a map of Africa made in 2009?

- A. It would not show the country of Nigeria.
- B. It would not show the Nile.
- ✓ C. It would not show the country of South Sudan.
- According to the text, "South Sudan, in the northeast of Africa, is a relatively new country. It gained independence from Sudan in 2011."*
- D. It would not show the Sahara Desert.

5. North America contains the countries of the United States, Mexico and Canada, as well as Central America and many Caribbean islands. Central America is an isthmus, or land bridge, connecting North and South America. Central America includes the countries of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. In Panama, a 48-mile-long, man-made canal crosses the country and connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This canal, called the Panama Canal, makes it possible for ships to travel from one ocean to the other much faster.

In the map below, which letter represents Central America?



A. A



B.

B

According to the text, “Central America is an isthmus, or land bridge, connecting North and South America.” In the map, B is a land bridge connecting two larger land masses: the continents of North America (A) and South America (C).

C. C

D. A and C

6. South America is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The countries of South America include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. Spanish is spoken in much, but not all, of this continent. In Brazil, the largest country of South America, Portuguese is the official language. In addition to Brazil, there are three other countries where Spanish is not the official language. English is spoken in Guyana, Dutch is spoken in Suriname and French is spoken in French Guiana. There are also many languages indigenous, or native, to South America that are still spoken today. Quechua, the language of the Incan empire, is the most common of these. It is spoken in Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Argentina.

Which of the following is true of Argentina, Chile and Ecuador?

- A. English is their official language. B. Portuguese is their official language.
C. Spanish is their official language. D. Quechua is their official language.

According to the text, Argentina, Chile and Ecuador are countries that are part of South America. "In addition to Brazil, there are three other countries where Spanish is not the official language." These are Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana, so Spanish must be the official language elsewhere, including in Argentina, Chile and Ecuador.

7. Antarctica is the coldest and windiest place on Earth. It has no capital city, no official currency and a population of zero! Though there are no permanent human residents, there are many animals living on this icy continent. Penguins, seals and fish have adapted to the cold environment in interesting ways. One species of fish found off the coast of Antarctica in the Southern Ocean has transparent blood. The South Pole, located in Antarctica, is the southernmost part of the globe. The South Pole experiences six months of darkness in the winter and six months of daylight in the summer.

Which of the following would you be ****least**** likely to see in Antarctica?

- A. people waiting in line at a supermarket B. a group of seals in the Southern Ocean

According to the text, Antarctica has "a population of zero," and "there are no permanent human residents." You would therefore be least likely to see people in line at a supermarket there.

- C. the sun staying up after midnight D. fish that have transparent blood

8. Some people define a continent as a continuous landmass surrounded by ocean. According to this definition, Europe and Asia would be considered one continent, called Eurasia. When we consider this landmass as two continents, we divide Europe and Asia along the Ural Mountains south to the Ural River and the Caspian Sea, and along the Caucasus Mountains to the Black Sea. Russia is the world's largest country. Three-quarters of Russia's land is in Asia and one-quarter is in Europe. However, most of the population lives in the European portion of the country.

Which of these can describe Russia?

- A. It is entirely in Europe.
- C. It is its own continent.

B. It is entirely in Asia.



D.

It extends across two continents.

According to the text, "Three-quarters of Russia's land is in Asia and one-quarter is in Europe."