

Name _____ Date _____

Continents

The Seven Continents

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. 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.

Notes

2. 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.

Notes

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.

Notes

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.

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.

Notes

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.

5. North America contains the countries of the United States, Mexico and Canada, as well as Central America and many Caribbean islands.

Notes

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.

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.

Notes

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.

Notes

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.

Notes