

## CONTINENTS AND OCEANS

### The Theory

Geologists, scientists who study the makeup of the earth, have a theory that millions of years ago, there was just one continent named Pangaea. Pangaea split into two plates and slowly spread apart to the present positions. This is called **continental drift**. This movement continues today but it is not felt because it is less than one inch per year.



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- **Asia** is the third largest continent in the world. It has the most countries. The tallest mountain in the world is Mt. Everest at 29,000 feet above sea level. Asia has the lowest spot on earth, The Dead Sea, which is about 1300 feet below sea level. Temperatures can be as high as 120 degrees F in the southwestern parts and 90 below freezing in the northern parts of Asia.

- **Africa** has 53 countries in 12,000,000 square miles. Most of Africa is in the tropics. The Sahara is the largest desert in the world. It is a desert of vast plains and rocky boulders. The Nile is the longest river. It is more than 4000 miles long. Africa has many plateaus, wide flat areas that rise up from the sea so there are not many harbors. Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa. Some countries in Africa are Egypt, Kenya, Libya, and Ethiopia.

- **North America** is 9,000,000 square miles. It is made up of Canada, the United States, Mexico, Central America, Greenland and Iceland. Lake Superior is the largest freshwater lake in the world. Greenland is the largest island.
- **South America** is 7,000,000 square miles. It includes the countries of Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador and others. Most of the continent is in the tropics but because it is about 4700 miles long, it has every kind of climate. On the western coast are the Andes Mountains. The Amazon River is the second longest river in the world. South America exports many minerals to the rest of the world. One fourth of the world's iron ore comes from Brazil. Silver, gold, copper, tin, emeralds, and diamonds are plentiful. The Amazon rain forest is the largest in the world. Portuguese and Spanish are the predominant languages.

- **Antarctica** is a small continent at the south pole. It is the only continent that has no permanent residents.

- **Europe** is a continent in the northern hemisphere. It is the second smallest continent.

- **Australia** is a continent in the southern hemisphere. It is the sixth largest continent.



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their stone age customs today. There are no high mountains or deep valleys. There are more than 40 different kinds of kangaroos in Australia. There are duckbilled platypus, dingoes, emus, and kookaburra living in here. Australia is sometimes referred to as **Oceania** which includes New Zealand and part of New Guinea.

## The Oceans

There are four major oceans which cover more than two thirds of the world.



- **Atlantic** -33,000,000 sq. miles - 11,370 feet average depth. Its deepest place is off the coast of Puerto Rico where it is more than 30,000 feet deep. The Atlantic may have been named for the ancient city of **Atlantis** which is said to have been suddenly swallowed up by the sea ages ago. At its widest point it is 10,000 miles wide. The eastern shore of North America is on the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Pacific** -63,800,000 sq. miles - 12,100 feet average depth. It is the deepest ocean. It is the largest ocean. There are many islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- **Indian** -68,700,000 sq. miles - 12,100 feet average depth. It is the second largest ocean. It is the warmest ocean. It is the most colorful ocean.
- **Arctic** - 5,000,000 sq. miles - average depth of 3400 ft. It is the Northwest Passage from Asia to Europe. It is an ice cap which includes the North Pole. The salt content is lower than the other oceans.



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### Try this!

Look on a globe or map of the world. Find each of the continents. Find each of the oceans.