World Geography

GEOGRAPHY

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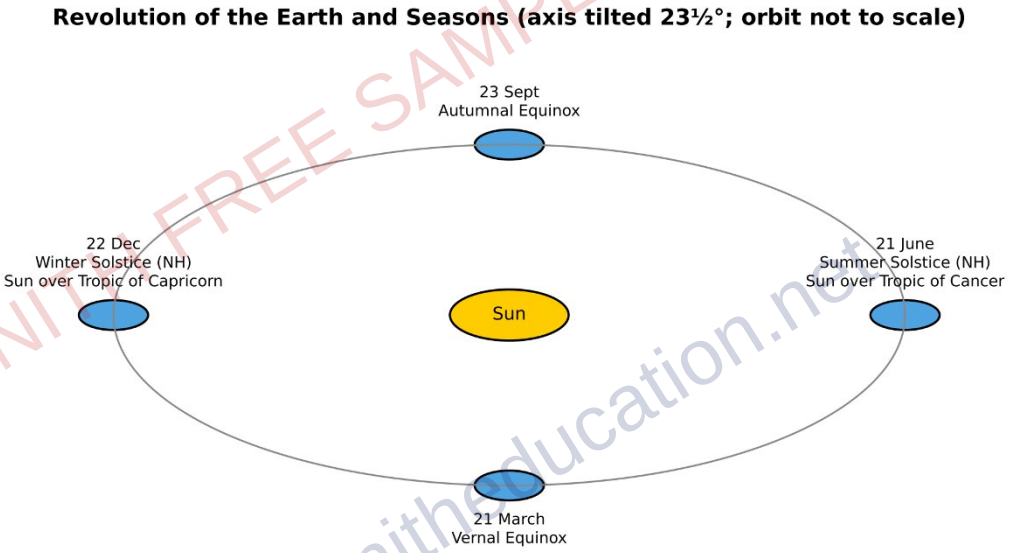

Figure 1.7: Revolution of the Earth, solstices and equinoxes

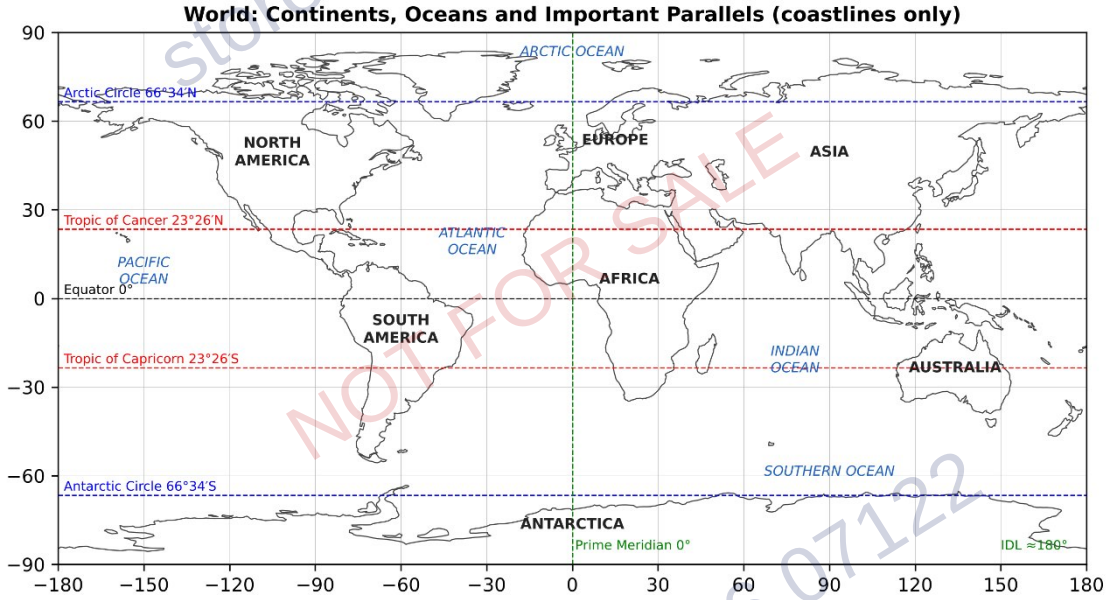

Figure 1.1: World — continents, oceans and important parallels (coastlines only)

Definition

- **Physical Geography** - study of Earth's natural features, processes and systems (landforms, atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere) and their interrelationships.

Exam relevance / PYQ focus

- Definition-style questions, concept differences (physical vs. human geography), interlinkages (e.g., climate ↔ vegetation).
- Expect diagrammatic labelling, short notes, and multi-part questions testing terminology and system interactions.

Tectonics & associated features

- **Plate tectonics** - plate boundaries: divergent (mid-ocean ridges), convergent (subduction zones, mountain building), transform (strike-slip faults).

Examples / Notes

- Mid-Atlantic Ridge = divergent boundary; Andes = subduction mountain chain.

Exam tips

- Memorize plate names, major boundaries, and characteristic features; be ready for map-based questions and cause-effect linkage questions (e.g., why earthquakes frequent in Pacific Rim).

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Coordinate notation & precision

- Degrees (°), minutes (′), seconds (″); decimal degrees in GIS applications.

Exam focus

- Locate places using coordinates; convert DMS ↔ decimal; explain significance of standard meridian for a country (e.g., India Standard Time - 82°30′E).

International Date Line (IDL)

- Roughly follows 180° longitude; crossing causes date change (+/- one day).

Time zone calculation

- Earth rotates 360° in 24 hours → 15° longitude = 1 hour difference.

Examples / Notes

- India Standard Time (IST) = GMT/UTC +5:30; IST derived from 82°30′E (15°×5 + 7°30′ = 82°30′).

Exam pointers

- Solve time difference problems, crossing IDL scenarios, and explain reason for fractional offsets (e.g., +5:30).

1. Cylindrical (Mercator) - conformal; preserves angles; distorts area especially near poles.

- Useful for navigation; not for area comparisons.

2. Topographic maps

- Contours, relief, slope, drainage patterns interpretation.

3. Exam tasks

- Identify suitable projection for a purpose; interpret contour maps and slope/aspect questions; compute ground distance using scale and latitude corrections.

1. Rotation

- Rotation period ≈ 24 hours; causes day & night, diurnal motion, apparent deflection (Coriolis effect).

2. Revolution

- Orbital period ≈ 365.2422 days; elliptical orbit; causes seasons in combination with axial tilt (23°26′).

3. Seasons

- Solstices (longest/shortest day) and equinoxes (equal day & night).

4. Precession & Nutation

- Long-term astronomical cycles affecting climate on geological time scales (Milankovitch cycles relevant to palaeoclimate).

5. Application

- Explain season differences between hemispheres, variation in day length with latitude; link to climatic zones.

1. Solar radiation & heat distribution

- Insolation highest at subsolar point; latitude governs angle of incidence & day length.

2. Major climatic belts

- Tropical (ITCZ), Subtropical (high pressure belts), Mid-latitude westerlies, Polar zones.

3. Exam emphasis

- Relate latitude to climate types; conceptual questions on why tropics are warm and poles cold.

1. Diagram tasks

- Sketch Earth showing tilt, solstices/equinoxes, and explain sun's declination.

2. Map tasks

- Given coordinates, locate and give climatic/physical description.

3. Problem solving

- Time zone calculations, distance-by-scale, contour-profile construction.

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1. Direct definition / Short note

- "Define latitude and longitude with a labelled diagram."

2. Map reading

- "Locate the position 23°30′N, 82°30′E and state the climatic characteristics."

3. Problem

- "If it is 0600 IST at 82°30′E, what is UTC time? If a city lies at 15°W, what is its local time?"

4. Conceptual

- "Explain why Mercator projection is unsuitable for comparing area between Greenland and Africa."

5. Diagrammatic

- "Draw Earth's position during equinox and explain duration of day/night at 60°N."

GIS & Remote Sensing

- Growing use in mapping, map projections, precise coordinate systems (WGS84).

GPS/GNSS

- Global navigation for precise location - practical for geospatial questions.

Climate linkages

- Understanding Earth motions is essential to explain seasonal variability in modern climate-change context.

Memorization

- "EQTAP" - Equator, Tropics, Arctic/Antarctic circles, Poles - remember relative latitudes.

Quick checks

- Always convert minutes to decimal for GIS (e.g., 30′ = 0.5°).

Answering technique

- Start with definition → principle/theory → labeled diagram → 1-2 examples → exam linkage (PYQ pattern).

Central node: "Physical Geography - Introduction" (use Earth icon)

- **Primary branches:** Earth Structure; Latitude/Longitude; Time Zones; Map Projections; Earth Motions; Climatic Zones; Practical Tasks; PYQs & Exam Strategy.
- **Secondary nodes:** under Earth Structure - crust, mantle, core; under Map Projections - Mercator, Conic, Azimuthal, Equal-area; under Practical - diagrams, time problems, contour interpretation.
- **Visual cues:** use different colours for spheres (blue for hydrosphere, green for biosphere, brown for lithosphere), arrows for cause-effect (e.g., tilt → seasons).

CONTINENTS OVERVIEW

Definition

- **Continent** - a vast, continuous landmass separated by oceans or major geographical boundaries; represents a primary division of Earth's land area.

Position & Hemisphere

- Asia, Europe, Africa - mainly Eastern Hemisphere.
- North & South America - Western Hemisphere.
- Australia - Southern & Eastern Hemisphere.
- Antarctica - centered on South Pole.

Exam Focus

- Questions on relative size, hemisphere position, unique features, continental boundaries.

Shield areas (ancient cratons)

- Canadian Shield, Brazilian Shield, African Shield, Indian Peninsular Shield, Australian Shield.

Young fold mountains (Cenozoic)

- Himalayas, Alps, Andes - result of plate convergence.

Volcanic belts

- "Ring of Fire" - Pacific rim; Rift Valley in Africa.

Longest rivers by continent

- Asia - Yangtze; Africa - Nile; Europe - Volga; North America - Mississippi-Missouri; South America - Amazon; Australia - Murray-Darling; Antarctica - Onyx River (seasonal).

Lakes

- Superior (freshwater), Caspian (largest enclosed water body), Baikal (deepest).

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Exam Focus

- Questions on physiographic identification, “match the following” with continents and features.

Area & Extent

- Largest continent (~30% of world land area). Lies mainly in Northern & Eastern hemispheres.

Climatic Zones

- Arctic tundra (north), continental interior (Siberia), monsoon (south-east), desert (Arabia, Gobi).

Rivers

- Yangtze, Ganga, Indus, Tigris-Euphrates, Ob, Lena.

Economic Highlights

- Largest population; monsoon agriculture; industrial hubs (China, Japan, India).

PYQ Relevance

- Questions on Himalayan formation, monsoon climate, and resource distribution.

Area & Extent

- Second largest; straddles equator; almost symmetrical in N/S extent.

Physiographic Features

- Plateau continent; Great Rift Valley; Atlas & Drakensberg Mountains; Sahara (largest desert).

Rivers & Lakes

- Nile (world’s longest), Congo, Niger, Zambezi; Victoria & Tanganyika lakes.

Climate

- Tropical - equatorial, savanna, steppe, desert.

Resources

- Rich in minerals - gold, diamonds, oil; hydroelectric power (Congo Basin).

Human Geography

- Colonial boundaries, diverse ethnic distribution, rapid population growth.

PYQ Focus

- Sahara, Rift Valley, equatorial climate, river systems.

Area & Extent

- Smallest after Australia; part of Eurasian landmass; lies entirely in Northern Hemisphere.

Physiography

- Western uplands, Northern plains, Central mountains (Alps, Carpathians, Pyrenees).

Rivers

- Volga, Danube, Rhine, Thames, Seine.

Climate

- Marine West Coast (NW), Continental (East), Mediterranean (South).

Human Geography

- Dense population, high urbanization, advanced industry (UK, Germany, France).

PYQ

- Industrially important regions, rivers & cities correlation, climatic influence on agriculture.

Physiographic Divisions

- Western Cordilleras (Rockies, Sierra Nevada), Central Plains, Eastern Highlands (Appalachians).

Rivers

- Mississippi-Missouri, St. Lawrence, Colorado.

Climate

- Arctic to tropical range; rain shadow in interior plains.

Economic Geography

- Highly industrialized (USA, Canada); agricultural belts - corn, wheat, cotton.

Trade Blocks

- NAFTA (now USMCA).

PYQ

- Physical divisions, Great Lakes, agricultural belts.

Physiography

- Andes (young fold mountains), Amazon Basin (world’s largest rainforest & drainage), Brazilian Highlands, Pampas plains.

Climate

- Equatorial, tropical savanna, desert (Atacama - driest).

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Resources

- Minerals (Chile copper, Brazil iron); hydroelectric potential (Paraná, Amazon).

Human Occupation

- Low density except coastal cities; agriculture - coffee, soybean, sugarcane.

PYQ

- Amazon Basin ecology, Andes orogeny, Atacama desert.

Physiography

- Western Plateau, Eastern Highlands (Great Dividing Range), Central Lowlands.

Climate

- Arid interior, tropical north, temperate south-east.

Rivers

- Murray-Darling system (seasonal flow).

Vegetation

- Eucalyptus forest, grassland, desert scrub.

Economy

- Mineral-rich (iron, coal, bauxite); high livestock density; tourism.

PYQ

- Great Barrier Reef, deserts, unique fauna.

Area

- ~14 million sq. km; ice-covered (98%).

Geography

- Trans-Antarctic Mountains divide East and West Antarctica.
- Vincent Massif (highest peak).

Climate

- Coldest, driest, windiest; polar desert.

Research Stations

- India - Maitri & Bharati; global - McMurdo (US), Vostok (Russia).

Environmental Significance

- Ozone hole discovery; Antarctic Treaty (1959).

PYQ

- Ice shelves, climate extremes, international treaties.

Exam Relevance

- “Match the boundary with the continents” type PYQs.

5. Comparative Table (Quick Facts)

Continent	Highest Peak	Longest River	Largest Country	Major Desert	Notable Feature
Asia	Mt. Everest	Yangtze	Russia/China	Gobi	Himalayas
Africa	Kilimanjaro	Nile	Algeria	Sahara	Rift Valley
Europe	Elbrus	Volga	Russia	None major	Alps
N. America	Denali (McKinley)	Mississippi	Canada	Sonoran	Great Lakes
S. America	Aconcagua	Amazon	Brazil	Atacama	Andes
Australia	Kosciuszko	Murray-Darling	Australia	Great Victoria	Great Barrier Reef
Antarctica	Vinson Massif	Onyx (seasonal)		Polar ice	Cold desert

Population Density Patterns

- High in river valleys, coasts (Asia, Europe); low in deserts, high mountains.

Urbanization Trends

- Europe & North America - highly urbanized (>75%).
- Africa & Asia - rapid urban growth, uneven distribution.

Economic Regions

- Manufacturing belts, agricultural zones, resource-based economies.

PYQ

- Correlate population with climate; reasons for dense settlement near rivers.

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7. Map Orientation & Memory Points

- Asia - Himalayas (south-central), Gobi (north), Siberia (north).
- Africa - Equator bisects, Nile NE flow, Kalahari south.
- Europe - Peninsula continent; Alps central; British Isles NW.
- North America - Rockies west, Great Plains central, Appalachians east.
- South America - Andes west, Amazon central.
- Australia - desert core, Great Barrier Reef NE.
- Antarctica - circular, ice dome.

Chronological / Comparative

- Arrange continents by size/population.

Map-based

- Identify deserts, rivers, and plateaus.

Match type

- Continents vs. characteristic features.

Multi-statement

- Statements on continental drift or plate arrangement.

Alfred Wegener (1912)

- Proposed "Pangaea" - single supercontinent; drifted apart over time.

Supporting Evidences

- Fossil similarity, geological fit, paleoclimatic evidence.

Modern View

- Plate tectonics - lithospheric plates move on asthenosphere.

Relevance

- Explains distribution of continents, mountain ranges, and seismic belts.

Primary branches

- Definition & Classification
- Physical Features
- Individual Continents
- Boundaries & Comparative Table
- Human Geography
- PYQs & Theories

Secondary Nodes

- Under Physical - Mountains, Plateaus, Plains, Rivers.
- Under Theories - Continental Drift, Plate Movement.

Visual Suggestion

- Use world map background; color-code each continent.

ASIA: PHYSICAL, POLITICAL & ECONOMIC

Area & Location

- Largest continent - ~44.6 million sq. km (30% of land area).
- Occupies both Northern & Eastern Hemispheres; extends from 10°S to 80°N latitude and 25°E to 170°W longitude.
- **Boundaries**:

Physical Extremes

- **Highest point**: *Mt. Everest (8848 m, Nepal).
- **Lowest point**: *Dead Sea (-430 m).
- **Largest country**: **Russia.**
- **Smallest country**: **Maldives.**

Exam Focus

- Boundary recognition, extremes, relative location, and geopolitical features.

2.1 Northern Lowlands

- Siberian Plain - world's largest continuous plain.
- Extensive permafrost; major rivers: Ob, Yenisei, Lena (flow northward to Arctic).
- **Climate**: severe continental, tundra, and taiga regions.

2.2 Central & Southern Mountains

- Young fold mountains - Himalayas, Tien Shan, Kunlun, Pamir Knot.

Himalayas: youngest & highest; 3 parallel ranges - Himadri, Himachal, Shiwalik.

- **Plateau regions**:

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Tibetan Plateau: "Roof of the World"; average height ~4500 m.

- *Iranian Plateau, Anatolian Plateau, Mongolian Plateau.

2.3 Southern Peninsulas

- Indian, Arabian, Indochinese, Malay, Korean Peninsulas.
- High population & dense agriculture zones.

2.4 Western Asia

- Arid and semi-arid climate; deserts (Arabian, Syrian); oil-rich region.
- **Plateaus**: Anatolia, Iran, Arabian Peninsula; rivers Tigris-Euphrates.

2.5 Islands & Archipelagos

- Indonesia (world's largest archipelago), Philippines, Japan, Sri Lanka, Maldives.
- Volcanic activity (Ring of Fire).

3.1 Major Rivers (Region-wise)

Region	River	Origin	Drains Into	Features
South Asia	Ganga, Indus, Brahmaputra	Himalayas	Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea	Monsoon-fed, deltaic plains
East Asia	Yangtze, Huang He	Tibetan Plateau	Pacific Ocean	Flood-prone, fertile plains
SE Asia	Mekong, Irrawaddy, Salween	Tibetan Plateau	South China Sea, Andaman Sea	Rice cultivation regions
West Asia	Tigris, Euphrates	Taurus Mts.	Persian Gulf	Irrigation in Mesopotamia
North Asia	Ob, Yenisei, Lena	Central Siberia	Arctic Ocean	Freeze during winter

Exam Focus

- Source-mouth questions, delta formation, trans-boundary river systems.

Latitude Range & Monsoonal Dominance

- Covers Arctic → Equatorial belts → major climatic diversity.

Important Winds

- Monsoon winds (Southwest & Northeast Monsoons), Westerlies, Trade Winds.

Exam Tips

- "Match the climate with the region" type; monsoon mechanism questions common.

Vegetation belts (N→S)

- Tundra (moss, lichens)
- Taiga (coniferous forests)
- Temperate deciduous forests
- Tropical monsoon forests
- Equatorial rainforests
- Desert & semi-desert scrub

Natural Resources

- Oil & Gas (SW Asia), Coal (China, India), Iron (India, Kazakhstan), Tin (Malaysia, Thailand).
- **Forests**: Siberia (timber); Hydropower: Himalayas & SE Asia rivers.

Exam Focus

- Identify resources with regions; forest type correlation with climate.

Political Systems

- Democracies (India, Japan), Monarchies (Saudi Arabia, Thailand), Communist (China).

Exam Focus

- Groupings like ASEAN, SAARC, SCO; boundary-based and location-based questions.

Major Crops

- Rice (SE Asia, India, China, Japan).
- Wheat (China, India, Pakistan).
- Tea (India, Sri Lanka, China).
- Cotton (India, Pakistan).
- Rubber (Malaysia, Indonesia).

Agricultural Systems

- Subsistence & Monsoon-dependent in South Asia.

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- Intensive agriculture in East Asia (terrace farming, irrigation).
- Plantations in SE Asia.

PYQ Focus

- "Rice bowl of the world" (SE Asia), irrigation patterns, crop zones.

Industrial Regions

- Japan (Tokyo-Osaka), China (Manchuria-Shanghai), India (Delhi-Mumbai-Chennai corridor).

Mineral-rich zones

- China (coal, iron), SW Asia (oil, gas), India (manganese, mica).

Energy resources

- Oil - Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq.
- Coal - China, India.
- Hydroelectric - Himalayas, Mekong, Yangtze.

Exam Focus

- Location-based industry & resource questions; "map the region" type.

7.3 Trade & Transport

- **Major ports**: Shanghai, Singapore, Mumbai, Yokohama, Dubai.
- **Trade blocs**: SAARC, ASEAN, SCO.
- Silk Route revival - Belt & Road Initiative (China).
- **PYQ**: Identify major ports, economic corridors.

Population

- Asia houses ~60% of world's population.
- High densities in river valleys (Ganga, Yangtze, Mekong).

Major Occupations

- Agriculture (primary), industry & services (East & South Asia).

Urbanization

- High in East Asia (Japan, South Korea), low in South-Central Asia.
- **Megacities**: Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai, Mumbai, Jakarta.

Demographic Patterns

- High birth rate in South Asia, aging population in East Asia.

PYQ

- "Why is population concentrated in monsoon Asia?"

9. Environmental Issues in Asia

- Deforestation (SE Asia), desertification (China, Iran), glacial retreat (Himalayas).
- Air pollution (Delhi, Beijing), water scarcity (SW Asia).
- Earthquake zones - Himalayas, Japan trench.
- Volcanic regions - Philippines, Indonesia, Japan (Ring of Fire).
- Conservation initiatives - Green Belt China, afforestation in India, ASEAN environmental accords.

PYQ

- "Ring of Fire countries," "Causes of floods in monsoon Asia."

Choke Points

- Strait of Malacca, Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb, Bosporus - critical for global trade.

Conflicts & Borders

- Middle East conflicts, South China Sea disputes, Kashmir region, Korean divide.

Regional Cooperation

- SAARC, ASEAN, SCO, OPEC.

Exam Focus

- Questions on strategic straits, alliances, regional trade groups.

Match Type

- River vs. Country (Yangtze-China, Mekong-Vietnam, Ganga-India).

Multi-Statement

- Identify correct sequence of mountain formation & river flow.

Chronology

- Arrange monsoon arrival sequence across regions.

Map-Based

- Locate "Ring of Fire," "Pamir Knot," "Strait of Malacca."

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Primary Branches

- Physical Features
- Climate & Rivers
- Resources & Economy
- Population & Settlement
- Environmental Issues
- Political & Geopolitical Aspects

Secondary Branches

- Mountains, Plateaus, River Systems, Industrial Zones, Trade Routes.

Visual Suggestion

- Use elevation gradients; mark monsoon & desert zones in color codes.

AFRICA - GENERAL OVERVIEW

Area & Extent

- Second largest continent (~30.3 million sq. km).
- Occupies both Northern & Southern Hemispheres, nearly bisected by the Equator.
- Lies between 37°N - 35°S latitudes and 17°W - 51°E longitudes.

Physical Extremes

- **Highest point**: **Mt. Kilimanjaro (5895 m, Tanzania)**
- **Lowest point**: **Lake Assal (-155 m, Djibouti)**
- **Largest lake**: **Lake Victoria**
- **Longest river**: **Nile (6650 km)**

Exam Focus

- PYQs on Africa's symmetry, desert dominance, Great Rift Valley, and drainage system.

2.1 Plateau Character

- Africa - "Plateau Continent" due to extensive highlands covering most interior parts.

Coastal Plains

- Narrow and discontinuous except in North Africa and Guinea coast.

Great Rift Valley

- Extends from Jordan (SW Asia) to Mozambique (SE Africa).
- Formed due to tectonic divergence - "cradle of humanity."
- Contains lakes - Tanganyika, Malawi, Turkana.

Volcanic Peaks

- Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), Kenya, Elgon.

3.1 Major Rivers

River	Origin	Flow Direction	Mouth	Key Features
Nile	Lake Victoria region	Northward	Mediterranean Sea	Longest in world; Aswan Dam
Congo (Zaire)	Katanga Plateau	Clockwise loop west	Atlantic Ocean	Largest discharge; rainforest basin
Niger	Guinea Highlands	Northward-then southward	Gulf of Guinea	Inland delta
Zambezi	Zambia	Eastward	Indian Ocean	Victoria Falls
Orange	Drakensberg Mts.	Westward	Atlantic Ocean	Desert crossing
Limpopo	Transvaal	Eastward	Indian Ocean	Seasonal flow

3.2 Lakes

- Victoria (largest), Tanganyika (deepest), Malawi (elongated rift lake), Chad (shrinking inland basin).

PYQ Focus

- Match the river-location-mouth; identify Great Rift Valley lakes.

Sahara Desert (North)

- World's largest hot desert (~9 million sq. km); erg (sand), reg (gravel), hamada (rocky).

Kalahari Desert (South)

- Semi-arid, savanna-like ecosystem.

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