## World Geography

# GEOGRAPHY

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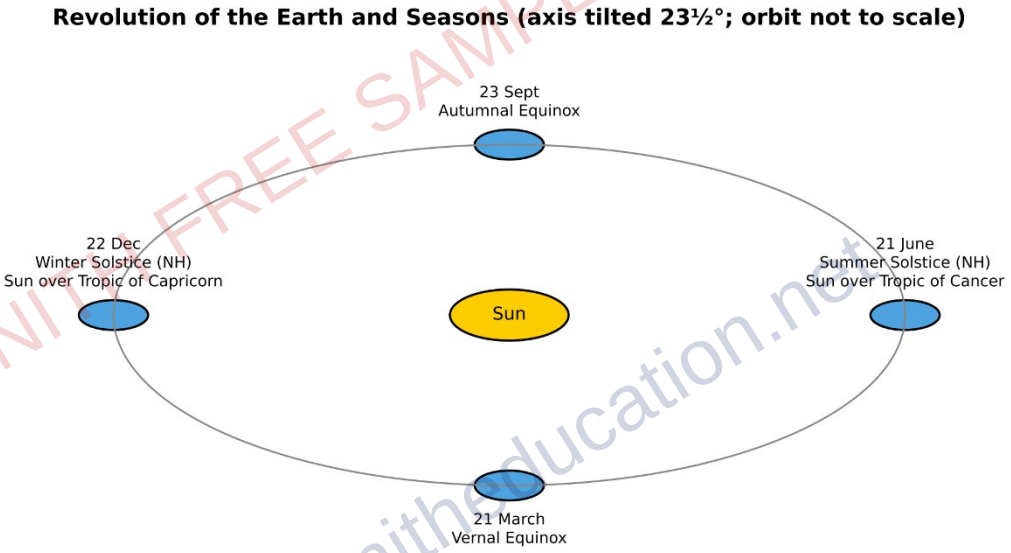


**Figure 1.7**: Revolution of the Earth, solstices and equinoxes

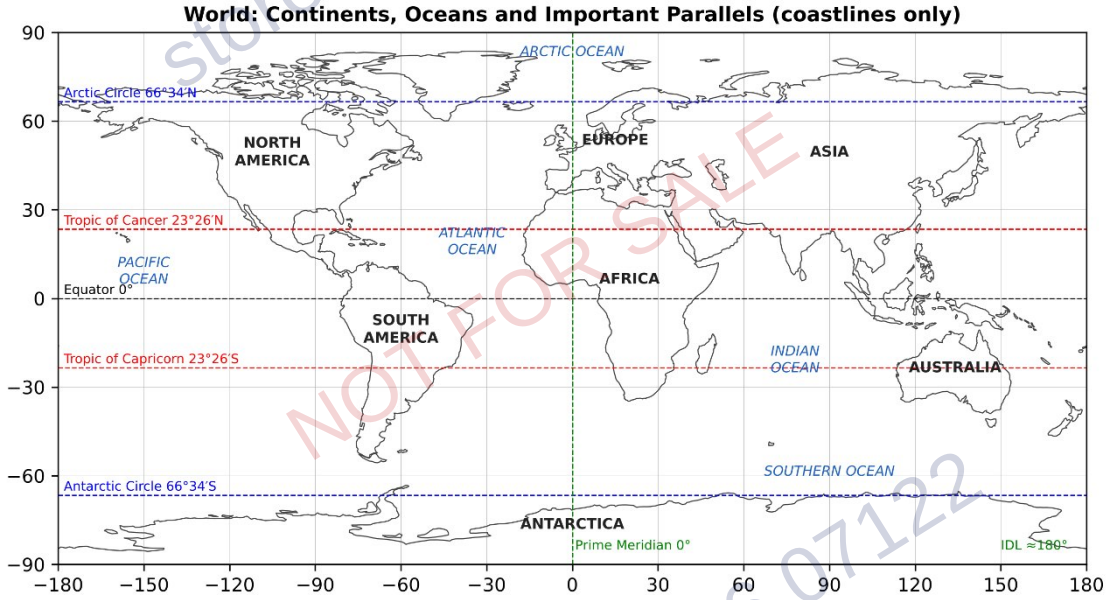


**Figure 1.1**: World — continents, oceans and important parallels (coastlines only)

### *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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