


# ASIA

## End of Unit Question: What are human and physical geographical features of Asia?

### Map and Overview








-Asia is the largest continent in the world. It covers about 44.5 million km<sup>2</sup>. This is about 30% of the earth's land surface area.

-It is also the most populous continent in the world – it has a population of about 4.5 billion people (about 60% of the world's population).

-It is mainly located in the Eastern and Northern hemispheres.

-Many of the world's first civilisations began in Asia.

Human Geography Features			
<b>Languages</b>		Hundreds of languages are spoken across Asia. Mandarin Chinese is the most spoken language in the world, with over 1.1 billion speakers. Sometimes countries share languages, for example Arabic in the Middle East.	<b>Why?</b> People across Asia emerged from many different tribes and groups. <b>Key Fact:</b> In some Asian countries, there are many languages – India has 22 major languages!
<b>Foods</b>		As one might expect from such a vast continent, there are a huge variety of cuisines. Most are produced from local resources (e.g. fish in Japan). Some, e.g. Chinese, Thai & Indian dishes, have inspired food cultures across the world.	<b>What?</b> South Asia is famed for its many varieties of curry. <b>Key Fact:</b> The healthy Japanese diet is believed to be a cause of their high life expectancy.
<b>Politics/ Government</b>		From the early 20th century onwards, several Asian countries became Communist states (e.g. USSR, Vietnam) – some remain so to this day. In the middle east, most countries remain absolute monarchies (e.g. Saudi Arabia).	<b>Where?</b> China, Laos and Vietnam are Communist in the present day. <b>Key Fact:</b> The Sultan of Brunei was the richest man in the world in the 90s.
<b>Festivals</b>		Many Asian countries enjoy rich cultures, with numerous festivals and celebrations. The most famous amongst these are Diwali in India, the Taiwan Festival of Lanterns, Thaipusam in Malaysia and Chinese New Year.	<b>When?</b> Chinese New Year takes place in Jan/Feb of each year. <b>Key Fact:</b> In Thailand, parties are held to celebrate of the full moon each month.
<b>Wars/ Conflicts</b>		Notable wars include the Vietnam and Korean Wars of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century. Asian countries fought in WWII – the USA dropped the first atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, in Japan.	<b>Where?</b> Wars still rage in countries like Yemen and Iraq. <b>Key Fact:</b> The Korean War technically never ended!

### Regions & Countries of Asia

**Top 5 largest Asian countries**


- Russia – 17.1 million km<sup>2</sup>
- China – 9.5 million km<sup>2</sup>
- India – 3.2 million km<sup>2</sup>
- Kazakhstan – 2.7 million km<sup>2</sup>
- Saudi Arabia – 2.15 million km<sup>2</sup>

There are 48 countries in Asia, 3 of which (Russia, Turkey and Kazakhstan) also have part of their land in Europe. Because Asia is so big, it is often segmented into the sub-continent listed below.

**Top 5 most populous Asian countries**


- China – 1.4 billion
- India – 1.3 billion
- Indonesia – 255 million
- Pakistan – 208 million
- Bangladesh – 163 million

**Northern and Central Asia**




Northern Asia is dominated by Russia, the largest country in the world by area. It sprawls from Europe in the west right across to the Pacific Ocean in the east. Some parts of Russia, including Siberia, are exceptionally cold. Central Asia contains several large, sparsely populated countries, for example Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

**Eastern Asia**




By far the largest country in Eastern Asia is China. China is also the most populous country in the world. The area also includes technologically advanced Japan, in which life expectancy is the highest in the world. Japan contains the world's largest city – Tokyo. The two Koreas (North and South) are also in Eastern Asia.

**Southern/ South Eastern Asia**


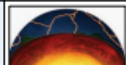






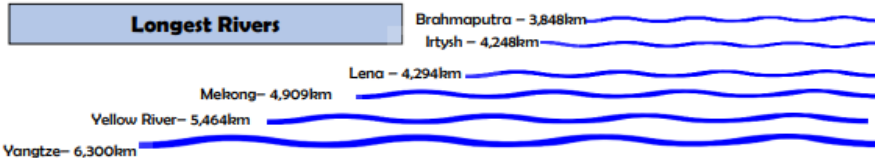
Southern Asia refers to the Indian subcontinent (e.g. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and is a part of the Eurasia landmass. Much of South Eastern Asia encompasses peninsula/ island countries (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia). Countries in these regions are amongst the most densely populated in the world.

**Western Asia/ The Middle East**

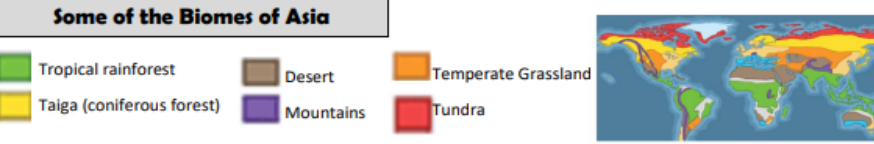


Western Asia (or the Middle East) contains much of the world's Arabic speaking population. A large proportion of this land area is desert. The largest country by area in the region is Saudi Arabia. Many of the oil-rich gulf states contain large skyscrapers, e.g. the Burj Khalifa in the UAE.

Physical Geography Features			
<b>Temperature Extremes</b>		Asia contains some of the most extreme temperatures on the planet. The temperature has reached 53.9°C in Israel, and can drop to -67.8°C in Siberia, northern Russia.	<b>How?</b> Asia stretches from the far north through the equator. <b>Key Fact:</b> Asia has the widest continent temperature extremes.
<b>Plate Tectonics</b>		Most of Asia is on top of the Eurasian tectonic plate. However, this does not include much of the Asian subcontinent, meaning that areas lie on volatile fault lines.	<b>What?</b> The ends of plates are where earthquakes take place. <b>Key Fact:</b> The 2011 Japan tsunami was caused by a 9.1 earthquake on coastal fault lines.
<b>Deserts</b>		Vast areas of the Middle East and Central Asia are hot, dry deserts. Some of the largest deserts are the Arabian Desert and the Gobi Desert.	<b>What?</b> The Arabian desert covers 2.3 million km <sup>2</sup> . <b>Key Fact:</b> The vast Gobi desert is elevated 151m above sea level.
<b>Animals</b>		Asia has some of the most diverse and unique wildlife species in the world. Examples include the Siberian tiger, the Asian elephant, the giant panda and the Japanese Macaque.	<b>Where?</b> Even the hottest Asian deserts contain wildlife. <b>Key Fact:</b> There are just over 1,800 pandas left in the wild.
<b>The Three Rivers</b>		The flat, sandy wetland of the Tibetan Plateau is where the 3 major rivers (Yangtze, Yellow, and Lancang) begin, fed by water from the glaciers of the Himalayas.	<b>Where?</b> Tibetan Plateau, China <b>Key Fact:</b> These become Asia's largest rivers.
<b>The Himalayas</b>		The Himalayas contain several of the world's highest peaks, including the highest (Mount Everest). It has over 50 mountains that exceed 7,200m, and 10 over 8,000m – in contrast, the highest outside Asia is 6,961m.	<b>Where?</b> Located across many countries – mainly Nepal, China and India. <b>Key Fact:</b> In the Sanskrit language, Himalayas means 'abode of snow.'



### Some of the Biomes of Asia



- Tropical rainforest
- Desert
- Temperate Grassland
- Taiga (coniferous forest)
- Mountains
- Tundra

Key Vocabulary: Language, government, population, culture, The Himalayas, conflict, plateau, states, sub-continent