

South America Study Guide

Altiplano - high plateau in Peru and Bolivia

Amazon basin - all the land drained by the Amazon River

amend - make changes to a constitution

canopy - the upper leaves of rain forest trees

cordillera - range of mountains that parallels another range

diversified economy - economy that depends on a variety of exports or products

ecosystem - group of plants and animals that depend on each other and their environment for survival

El Nino - warming of ocean water along the west coast of South America

ethanol - sugar cane-based fuel

favela - Brazilian slum

insurgent - rebel

Latin America - areas of the Americas influenced by the cultures of Spain, France, or Portugal

literacy - ability to read and write

Llanos - lowland plains in Colombia and Venezuela

market economy - economy in which individual consumers and producers make all economic decisions

MERCOSUR - trading bloc of the South American countries Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, formed in 1991

referendum - vote held to reject or accept a law

representative democracy - democracy in which people elect representatives to make the nation's laws

savanna - park-like landscape of grasslands with scattered trees that can survive dry spells, found in tropical areas with dry seasons

social services - programs designed to help the poor

subduct - movement of one part of Earth's crust under another

subsidence - sinking of the ground

terraced farming - sculpting the hillsides into different levels for crops

urban planning - the planning of a city

vertical climate zones - climate zones in a region that change according to elevation

1) What are some natural resources in the Caribbean South America region? (p. 265)

Some natural resources in the Caribbean South America region are oil, minerals, and fertile soil.

2) What are the major ethnic groups in the Caribbean South America region? (p. 271)

The major ethnic groups in the Caribbean South America region are Spanish, French, English, Indian, African, Native American, and Asian.

3) How is the oil industry affecting Venezuela's environment? (p. 272)

The oil industry causes pollution, oil spills, leakage, and land subsidence.

4) What industries might help Venezuela to diversify its economy? (p. 275)

Tourist and high-tech industries would help Venezuela diversify.

5) How were the Andes formed? (p. 283)

The Andes were formed by the collision of the Nazca Plate with the South American Plate.

6) Why are there so many ecosystems in the Andes? (p. 285)

There are so many ecosystems in the Andes because the higher up you travel, the cooler and wetter it gets. This variation in climate creates a variety of ecosystems.

7) In what ways are people changing the landscape today in the Andes and Pampas region? (p. 289)

People are changing the landscape of the Andes and the Pampas by farming, ranching, mining, dams, and logging. Cities also cause change.

8) What environmental problems affect the Andes and the Pampas? (p. 298)

Environmental problems include damage to and loss of rain forest (deforestation), smog and air pollution, and oil pollution.

9) Which are the richer and the poorer nations of the Andes and the Pampas? (p. 300)

The richest nations of the Andes and the Pampas are Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. The poorest nations are Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Paraguay.

10) What cultural features help unify the Andes and the Pampas region? (p. 301)

Spanish language, art, architecture, dance, music, and the Catholic religion unify the region.

11) Where does the Amazon River begin, and where does it end? (p. 309)

The Amazon River begins in the Andes and empties into the Atlantic Ocean near Belem.

12) What causes flooding in the Amazon lowlands? (p. 313)

Flooding is caused by seasonal rains falling to the north and south of the equator.

13) Why is it important to protect the Amazon rain forest? (p. 322)

It is important to protect the Amazon rain forest because it absorbs carbon dioxide and produces oxygen. It also holds potential medicines.

14) What is the basic structure of Brazil's national government? (p. 325)

The government has 3 branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.

15) What is the most serious environmental issue facing Brazil? (p. 325)

The most serious environmental issue facing Brazil is rain forest destruction.