



Year 6

South America

Key end points of this unit, South America are:

- To explain human and physical features of South America.
- Identify countries in South America.
- Identify the Andes Mountains
- Explain the significance of Machu Picchu.
- Describe the challenges caused by human interaction with the Amazon Rainforest.

Building on children's understanding of the seven continents from Year 1 and subsequent world geography including studies of Europe, Australia, Asia and North America, in this unit children will study the human and physical geography of South America.

Within this unit children will use **maps** of South America to identify key countries and key physical features, including the Andes Mountains. They will use different maps to identify landscapes, biomes, industry and population distribution. Children will secure locational knowledge as they identify countries within South America. They will build on their knowledge of geology from previous units (such as mountains in Year 5 Geography and rocks in Year 3 Science) and will explore why geologists and scientists think South America and Africa were joined many millions of years ago.

In this unit, children will learn about the Inca Empire, building on their knowledge of empires from history. This content has been included in this geography unit because it will help children to understand the significance of Machu Picchu (an Inca citadel located high in the Andes mountains) and also to understand how the Inca overcame the challenge of the terrain to build an empire across the Andes Mountain range.

Children will explore the interconnection between humans and the environment when they study the Amazon Rainforest and the forest fires that have occurred there in recent years. They will consider the impact human activity has on the environment and the threat it can cause to biodiversity. This conceptual understanding will be built upon in the Year 6 Africa unit when children learn about desertification.

Lesson Sequencing:

The sequence of lessons in this unit has been designed to build on prior knowledge and introduce new material in small manageable steps.

In **Lesson 1** children will build on their previous knowledge of the world and name and locate the continents and oceans of the world. They will reconnect to knowledge from the previous unit focused on North America. They will locate the hemispheres of the earth South America is located in and will locate the equator. They will learn that geologists believe South America was joined to Africa in a prehistoric supercontinent called Pangaea. They will annotate a map of South America, identifying the countries within the continent. They will learn that population is not spread evenly, that there are cities with both wealthy and poverty-stricken populations. They will learn that urbanisation can be a challenge for South American cities. This first lesson acts as an introduction to the continent of South America.

Lesson 2 introduces a historical aspect of South America; the Inca Empire. This links to children's prior learning in Year 5 Australia when they learned about the British colonisation of Australia. Children will learn about the spread of the Inca Empire, the common language, Quechua, and a communication tool called Quipu. They will learn that the empire spread over geographically challenging terrain including mountains, deserts and rainforests and that the Inca build thousands of kilometres of roads, walls and irrigation systems, some of which still remain today. Children will learn about the impact of Spanish colonisation of South America on the Inca, the spread of disease and the conflict that led to the fall of the empire. Children will reflect on how the geography of an area can either challenge or assist people, using examples from their prior learning such as the Nile and its silt that aided farming from the Ancient Egypt history unit in Year 3. This lesson purposefully brings in history and geography so children can see how the two are inextricably linked.

In **lesson 3** children will learn about the Andes Mountain range and the Atacama Desert. They will build on their knowledge of mountains from Year 5 and look closely at how mountain ranges are formed. They will learn about plate boundaries and subduction zones which will provide foundational knowledge when children learn more about this in KS3 geography. Children will learn that the Andes mountain range has several volcanic zones due to the mountain formation process at the subduction zone. They will contrast the terrain of the Andes mountains with the Atacama Desert, one of the driest places in the world. They will learn the desert is a plateau with



high altitude. Children will draw a diagram showing the formation of the Andes mountains and for depth, will consider what geologists do and what they can tell us about the world.

In **lesson 4** children will build on their knowledge of South America and will focus in on Brazil. They will study Brazil's industry and agriculture. Children will build on their understanding of trade and learn about Brazil's exports. They will learn that Brazil's economy relies on agriculture (farming) and large proportions of the land are dedicated to farming crops and animals. Children will learn that populations within a country consume energy, e.g. electricity, so countries either need to produce energy, or import it, or both. They will learn that Brazil is the largest energy consumer in South America, but that it also produces coal, oil and hydroelectric power too. Building on their knowledge of mining from Year 5- Australia, children will learn that Brazil has mines around the country extracting minerals such as iron, copper, gold and aluminium. Children will use a map showing farming and industry in Brazil and will annotate their own map to show farming regions and mineral extraction. For depth, children will consider how the climate effects the economy of a country using Brazil as an example and any other countries they know about. This gives children a chance to link back to their knowledge of Mediterranean Europe from Year 4 where they learned about which crops grow successfully in the region.

In **lesson 5** children will build on their knowledge of biodiversity from Year 5 Australia and learn about the Amazon Rainforest. This lesson also builds on conceptual understanding of deforestation that was first taught in Year 1 Science- Taking Care of the Earth. They will learn about the slash and burn process that clears land for pastoral farming. They will learn about forest fires and the impact on the environment. They will look at maps of the rainforest that show the change in area over time. For depth they will look at the following quote and discuss the meaning; *'Humanity is burning the library of life.'*

Finally children will complete an assessment task to show what they understand about South America. Two options for extended writing are suggested either a task to compare and contrast North and South America, or a task that requires children to describe the human and physical features of the continent. Teachers should choose an appropriate task and provide models and scaffolds to support children's writing. These assessments have slightly different focusses but all three require locational knowledge, place knowledge and some application of geographical skills such as using maps. Children's writing could be extended by asking them to use data in their answers.

Key substantive concepts focused on in this unit are **location** and **biodiversity**.

Key disciplinary concepts focused on are **interconnection and diversity**.