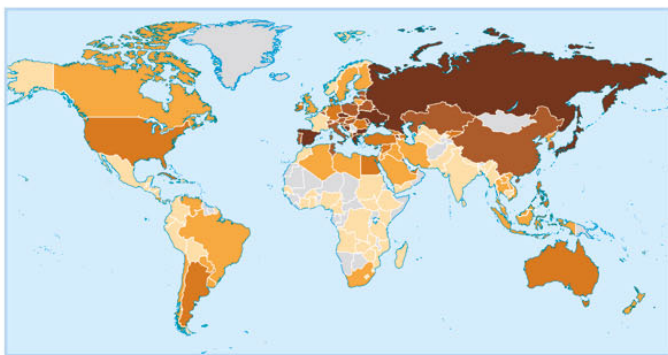


Smoking

Cigarette smoking—one of the most harmful activities to health—is common throughout much of the world. Smoking prevalence is generally highest in the richer, developed countries. However, awareness of the health risks has seen cigarette consumption in most of these countries stabilize or begin to fall. By contrast, more and more people, especially males, are taking up the habit in poorer developing countries.

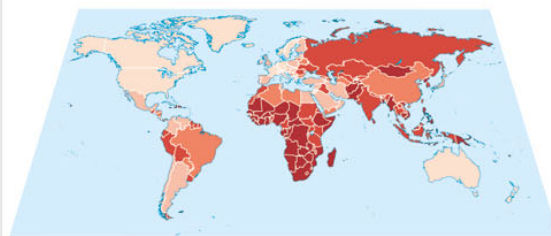


Annual cigarette consumption (per person)

above 2000	1000–1499	0–499	no data
1500–2000	500–999		

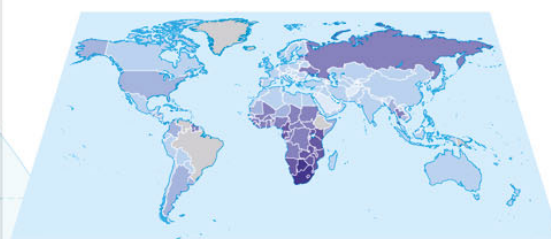
Communicable diseases

Despite advances in their treatment and prevention, infectious diseases remain a huge problem, especially in developing countries. Three of the most common and deadly are tuberculosis (TB), HIV/AIDS, and malaria. Of these, active TB affects about 25 million people (often as a complication of AIDS), with a particularly high prevalence in parts of Africa. HIV/AIDS has spread since 1981 to become a global pandemic. Malaria affects about 225 million people every year.



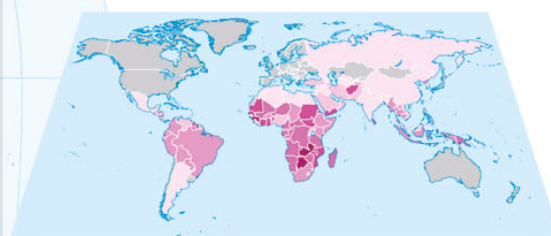
Estimated tuberculosis cases (per 100,000 per year)

above 300	50–100	below 10
100–300	10–50	



Adult (15–49) HIV prevalence rate (percent of population)

15–34	1–5	0.1–0.5	no data
5–15	0.5–1	below 0.1	



Malaria cases (per 100,000 per year)

above 25,000	1000–10,000	10–100	low risk
10,000–25,000	100–1000	below 10	

Preventive medicine

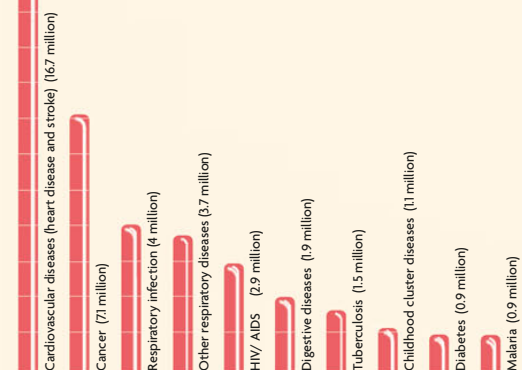
Throughout the world, doctors recognize that the prevention of disease and disease transmission is just as important as the treatment of illness. Preventive medicine has many aspects and includes advice about diet and nutrition; education about the avoidance of health-threatening behaviors such as smoking, excess alcohol consumption, and unprotected sex; and the use of vaccines against diseases such as typhoid, polio and cholera. In developing countries, some of the main priorities in preventive medicine are the provision of pure water supplies and proper sanitation, as well as measures against malaria, including the use of antimalarial drugs and mosquito nets.

The use of mosquito nets greatly reduces the transmission of malaria and the risk of infection.



TOP TEN KILLER DISEASES

The world's biggest killer diseases fall into two main groups. One group, which includes HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and childhood diseases such as measles, mainly kills people in poor countries. The other group includes cardiovascular diseases and cancer, the big killers in rich countries.



Water Resources

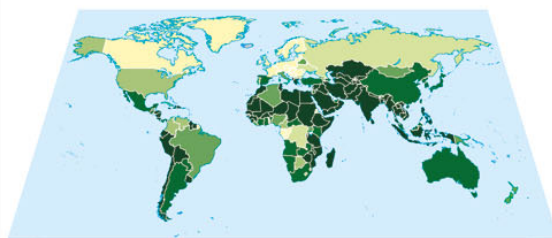
Water covers 71 percent of Earth's surface, but only 2.5 percent of this is fresh water, and two thirds of that is locked up in glaciers and polar ice sheets. Patterns of human settlement have developed around fresh water availability, but increasing numbers of people are now vulnerable to chronic shortage or interruptions in supply. Worldwide, fresh water consumption multiplied more than sixfold during the 20th century as populations increased and agriculture became more dependent on irrigation, much of it hugely wasteful because of evaporation and run-off. Industrial water demand also rose, as did use in the home, for washing, flushing, cooking, and gardening.



Amid the desert of Wadi Rum, Jordan, crops grow on circular patches of land irrigated with water from an underground aquifer.

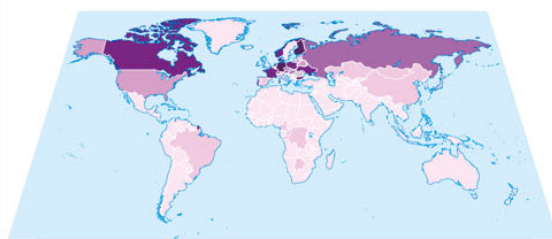
Water withdrawal

Agriculture accounts for 70 percent of water consumption worldwide. Industry and domestic use each account for 15 percent. Excessive withdrawal of water affects the health of rivers and the needs of people. China's Yellow River now fails to reach the sea for most of the year.



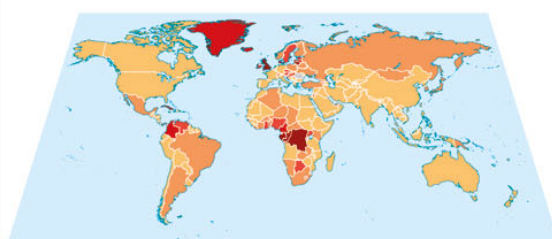
Percentage of freshwater withdrawal by agriculture

79–100 66–79 47–66 31–47 16–31 0–16



Percentage of freshwater withdrawal by industry

79–100 66–79 47–66 31–47 16–31 0–16



Percentage of freshwater withdrawal by domestic use

60–81 45–60 30–45 15–30 0–15 no data



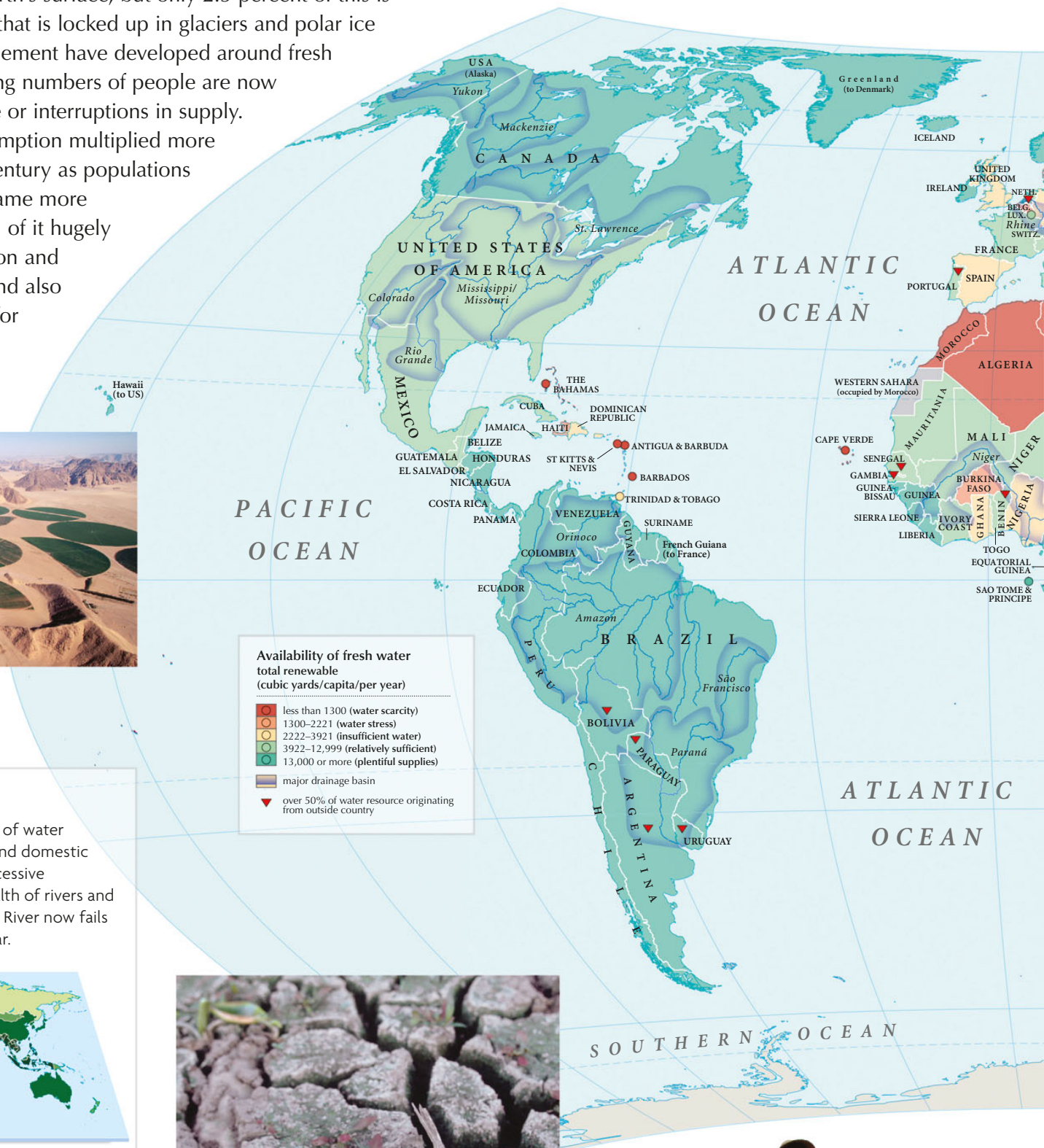
Drought

The disruption of normal rainfall patterns can cause drought problems even in temperate zones, with consequences ranging from domestic water usage restrictions to low crop yields to forest fires. In regions of the developing world where monsoon rains fail, or water is perennially scarce, drought is a life or death issue. Parts of central and east Africa, for instance, have suffered severe and recurring droughts in recent decades, with disastrous results including destruction of livestock, desertification, famine, and mass migration.



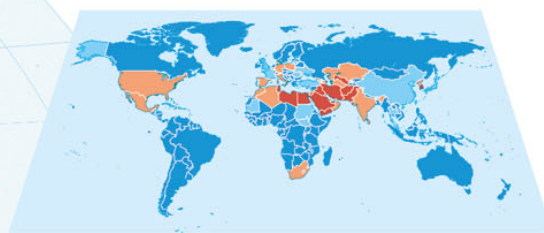
In a severe drought, river beds may dry up (above left), leaving stranded fish to die, as here in Florida.

A Chinese farmer waters dry fields (above) in China's southern province of Guangdong. This picture was taken in May 2002, but the image is timeless; it could be August 2006 in Sichuan province, to the northwest of here—or almost any year in water-stressed northern China.

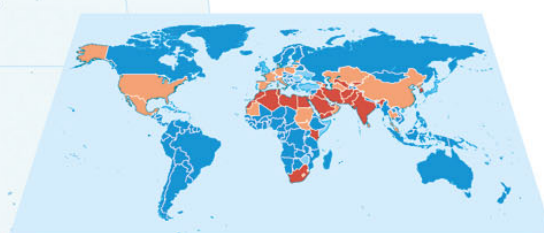


Water stress

A region is under “water stress” when the rate of water withdrawal from its rivers and aquifers exceeds their natural replenishment, so that people living there are subject to frequent shortages. Currently 1.7 billion people live in “highly stressed” river basins worldwide. This is a major potential cause of conflict, particularly when several countries share one river; the Euphrates, running through Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, or the rivers of southern China running south into Korea, are just two examples.



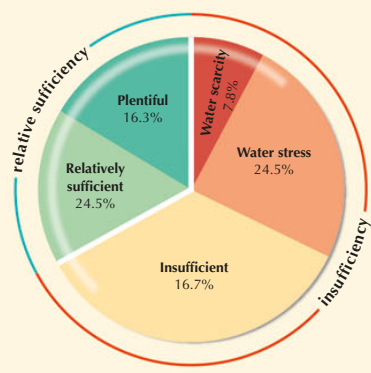
Freshwater stress in 1995 Water withdrawal (% of total available)



Freshwater stress in 2025 Water withdrawal (% of total available)

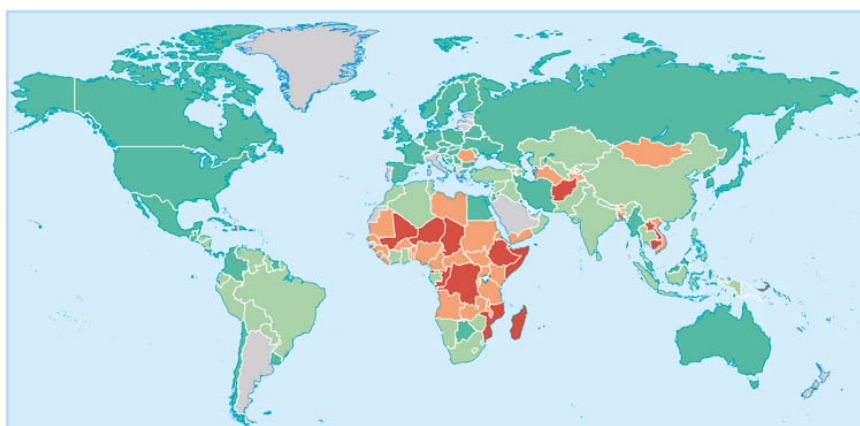
WATER AVAILABILITY

(by percentage of world's population)



Clean drinking water

Sub-Saharan Africa is among the most deprived regions for lack of access to safe drinking water. Worldwide, this terrible health hazard affects over a billion people—at least 15 percent of the population. One of the agreed United Nations “millennium goals” for international development is to halve this proportion by 2015, by tackling chemical pollution from agriculture and industry, and by introducing essential purification facilities and local supply systems. In the industrialized world, people have come to expect clean drinking water on tap, even if they face rising prices for its treatment and supply.



Mozambican children (*above*) fetch precious water in metal pans.

Gujarati villagers gather to draw water from a huge well (*above left*) in Natwarghad, western India. Many wells and village ponds ran dry in the severe drought of 2003, leaving local people to wait for irregular supplies brought in by state-run tankers.

Access to safe drinking water source (percentage of population)

91%–100% 76%–90% 50%–75% below 50% no data

Economic Systems

The world economy is now effectively a single global system based on “free market” capitalist principles. Few countries still cling, like North Korea, to the “command economy” formula developed in the former communist bloc, where centralized state plans set targets for investment and production. In the West, state ownership of companies has greatly diminished thanks to the wave of privatization in the last 25 years. Major companies move capital and raw materials around the globe to take advantage of different labor costs and skills. The World Trade Organization (WTO) promotes free trade, but many countries still use subsidies, and protect their markets with import tariffs or quotas, to favor their own producers.

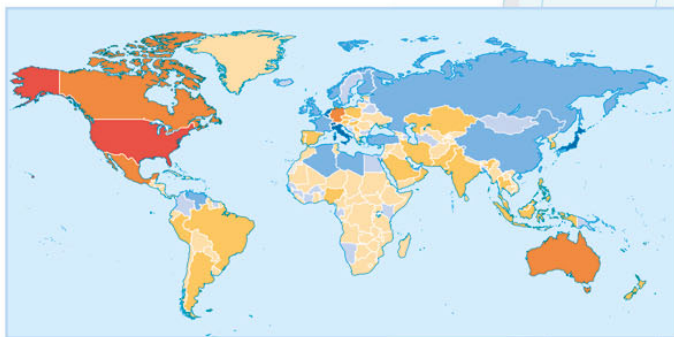
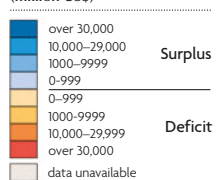


Enormous volumes of trade pass through the world's stock markets making them key indicators of the strength of the global economy.

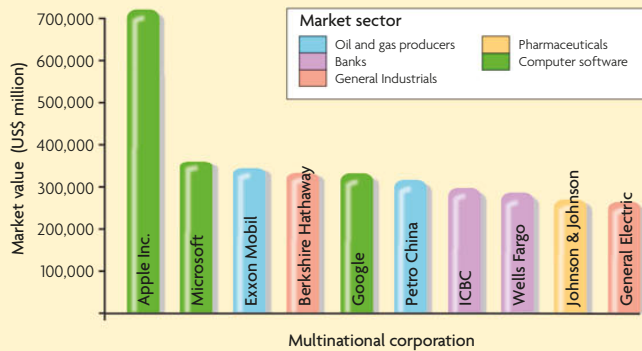
Balance of trade

Few countries earn from their exports exactly as much as they spend on imports. If the imbalance is persistently negative, it creates a potentially serious problem of indebtedness. The European Union's (EU) external trade is broadly in balance, but the US balance of trade has been in deficit since the 1970s, partly because it imports so many consumer goods. This deficit now stands at around US\$ 500 billion a year.

Balance of trade (million US\$)



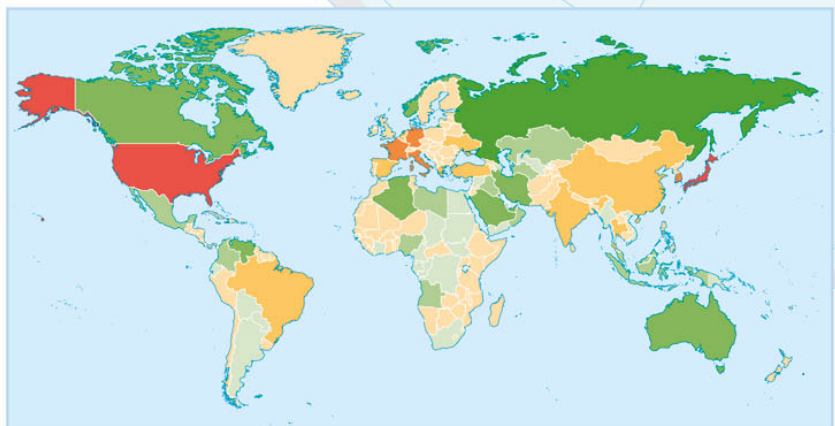
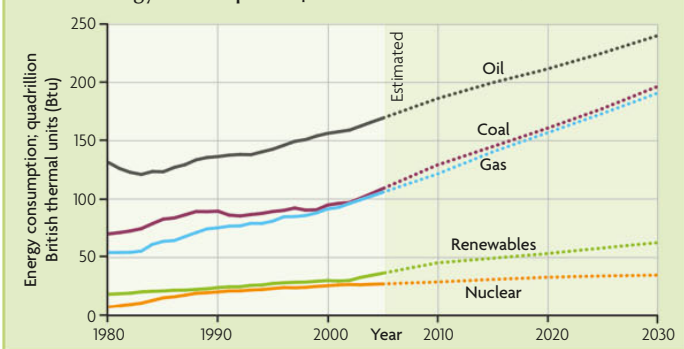
TOP TEN GLOBAL COMPANIES (2015)



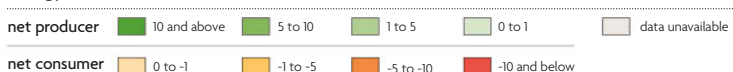
Energy

Countries with oil and gas to sell (notably in the Middle East and Russia) can charge high prices; trade in fuel was worth US\$ 1.4 trillion in 2005. The US and others are turning back to nuclear power (despite safety fears) for generating electricity. China relies heavily on (polluting) coal. Renewable technologies promise much, but so far make relatively minor contributions.

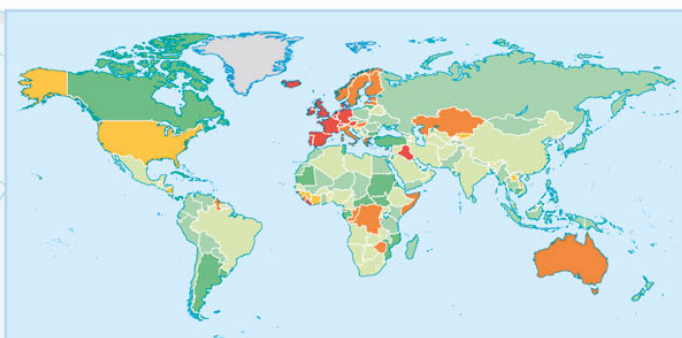
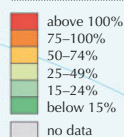
World Energy consumption (quadrillion British thermal units)



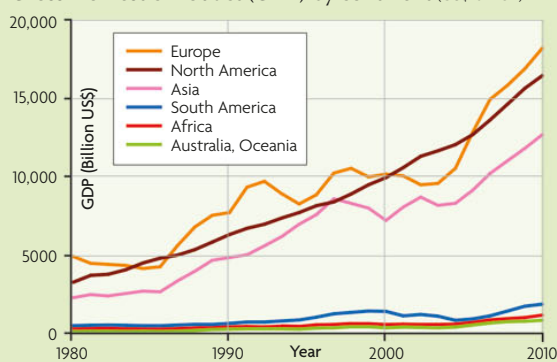
Energy balance (Quadrillion British thermal units)



International debt
(as percentage of GNI)



Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by continent (US\$ billion)

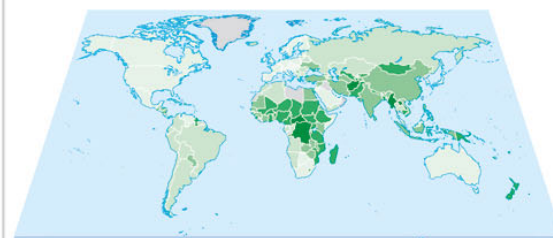


International debt

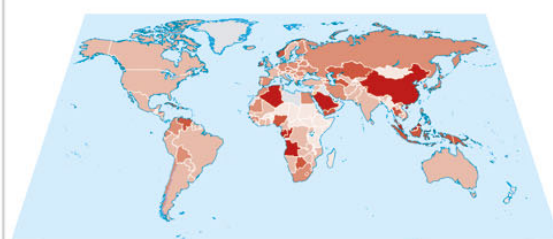
Saddled with crippling debts from past borrowing, the world's poorest countries are still paying off US \$100 million a day. This is despite recent successful campaigns to get some of their debts cancelled to allow them to use their limited resources for development. Most international debt, however, is owed by developed countries to one another. The US owes just over a trillion dollars, around 7% of its total debt, to China.

Trade sector

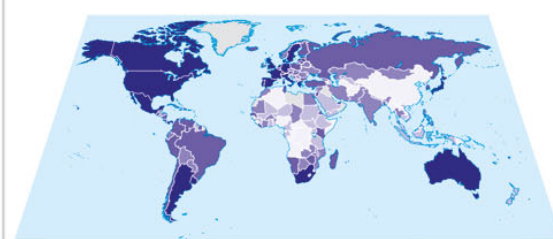
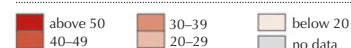
World trade in merchandise tops US\$ 10 trillion a year. The global pattern is uneven. Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Russia principally export "primary" goods (agricultural produce, mining and fuel). The "secondary" manufacturing sector includes iron and steel, machine tools, chemicals, clothing and textiles, cars and other consumer goods. The West still dominates the "tertiary" or non-merchandise sector, worth US\$ 2.4 trillion, in services such as insurance and banking.



Primary sector
Value added to the economy (percentage of GDP)



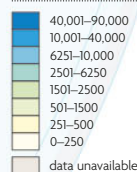
Secondary sector
Value added to the economy (percentage of GDP)



Tertiary sector
Value added to the economy (percentage of GDP)

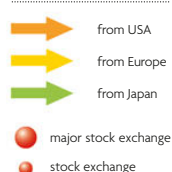


Gross Domestic Product (GDP*)
(nominal per capita US\$)

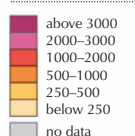


*Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is defined as the total market value of all final goods and services produced in a country.

Direct Foreign Investment

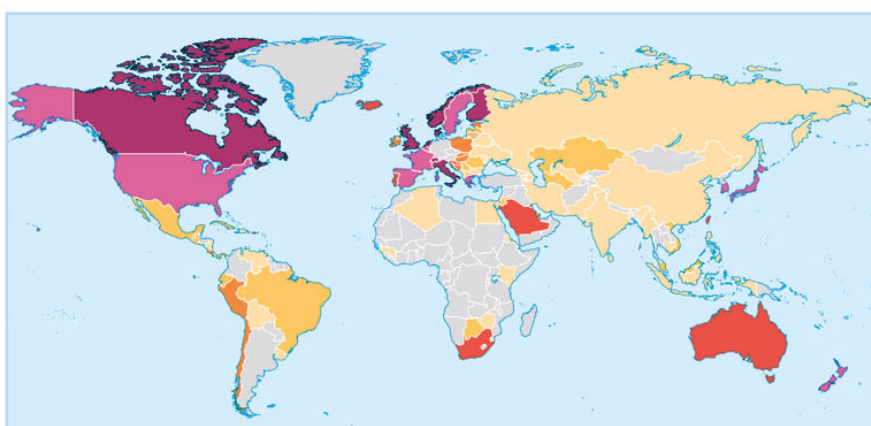


Average monthly salary
(US\$)



Labor

China's huge low-cost labor force promotes its conquest of world markets for manufactured goods. India's educated workforce attracts call centers and other service sector jobs, while the more economically developed countries's (MEDC) caring professions, and low-wage agriculture, draw in immigrant labor.



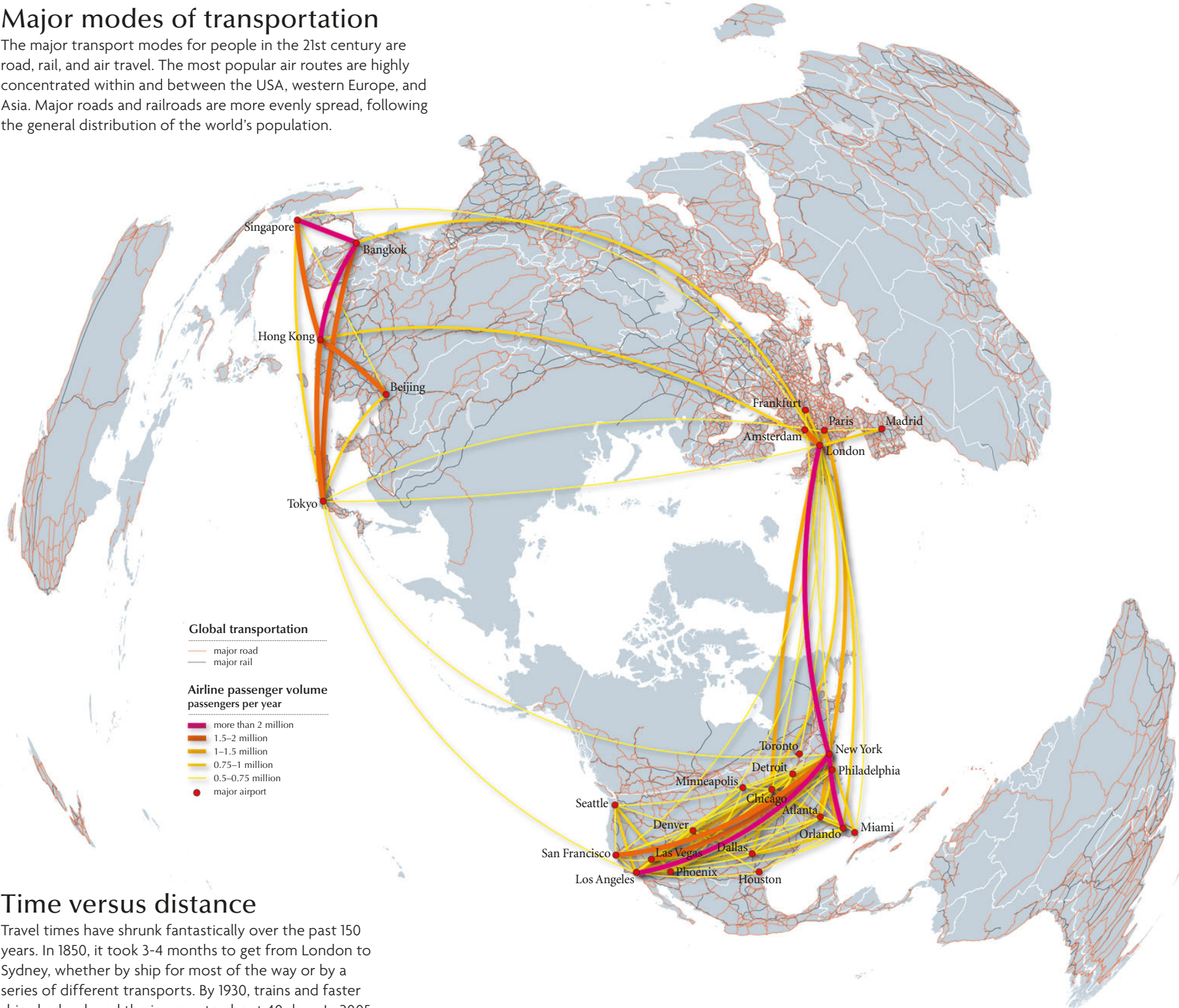
Mass travel is now a ubiquitous feature of all developed countries, and the provision of transport and tourism facilities one of the world's biggest industries, employing well over 100 million people. The travel explosion has come about, first, through major improvements in transportation technology; and second, as a result of increasing amounts of disposable income and leisure time in the world's wealthier countries. The main reasons for travel today include leisure pursuits and tourism (accounting for well over half of the total financial outlay), work and business, pilgrimage, migration, and visits to family and friends.



There are currently around 4.2 billion air travelers a year passing through over 1600 international and domestic airports. This figure is forecast to grow by 4 percent each year, leading to increased pressure on air traffic control and ground handling systems that, in many areas, are already close to maximum capacity.

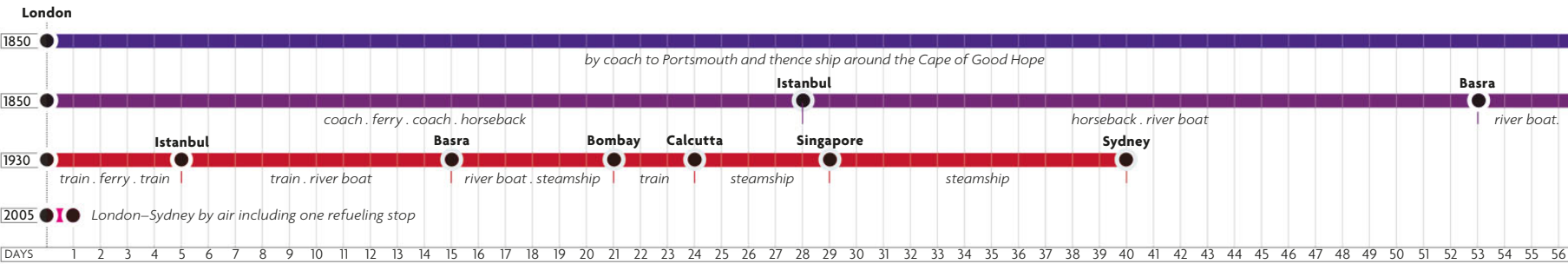
Major modes of transportation

The major transport modes for people in the 21st century are road, rail, and air travel. The most popular air routes are highly concentrated within and between the USA, western Europe, and Asia. Major roads and railroads are more evenly spread, following the general distribution of the world's population.



Time versus distance

Travel times have shrunk fantastically over the past 150 years. In 1850, it took 3-4 months to get from London to Sydney, whether by ship for most of the way or by a series of different transports. By 1930, trains and faster ships had reduced the journey to about 40 days. In 2005, the trip took just 21 hours by air.

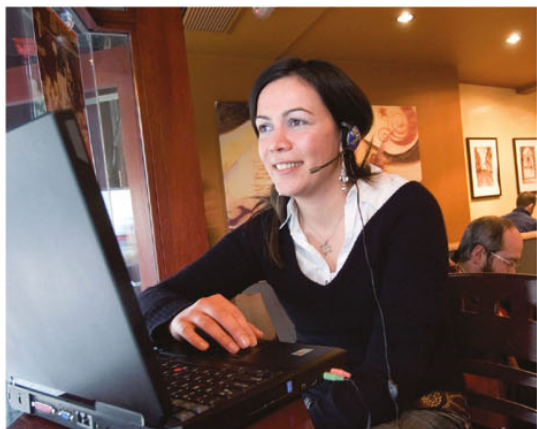
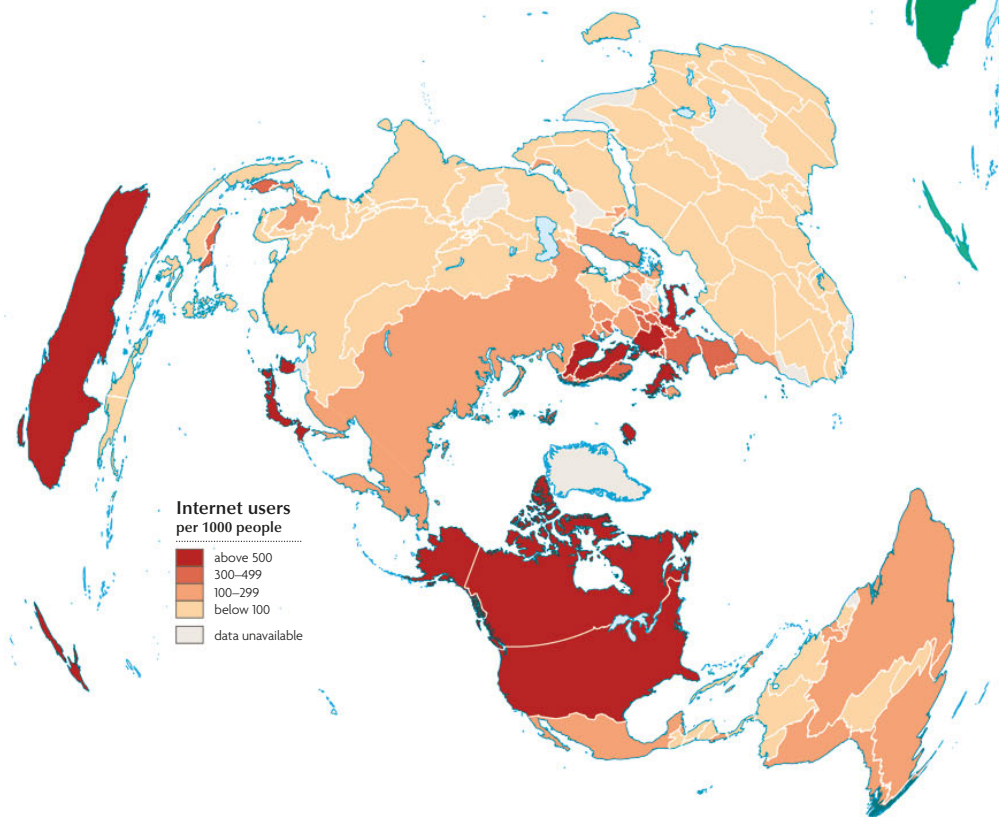


Media and Communications

Over the past 50 years, the term “media” has come to denote various means of communicating information between people at a distance. These include mass media—methods such as newspapers, radio, and television that can be used to rapidly disseminate information to large numbers of people—and two-way systems, such as telephones and e-mail. Currently, the communication systems undergoing the most rapid growth worldwide include mobile telephony and various Internet-based applications, such as web sites, blogs, and podcasting, which can be considered forms of mass media.

Internet usage

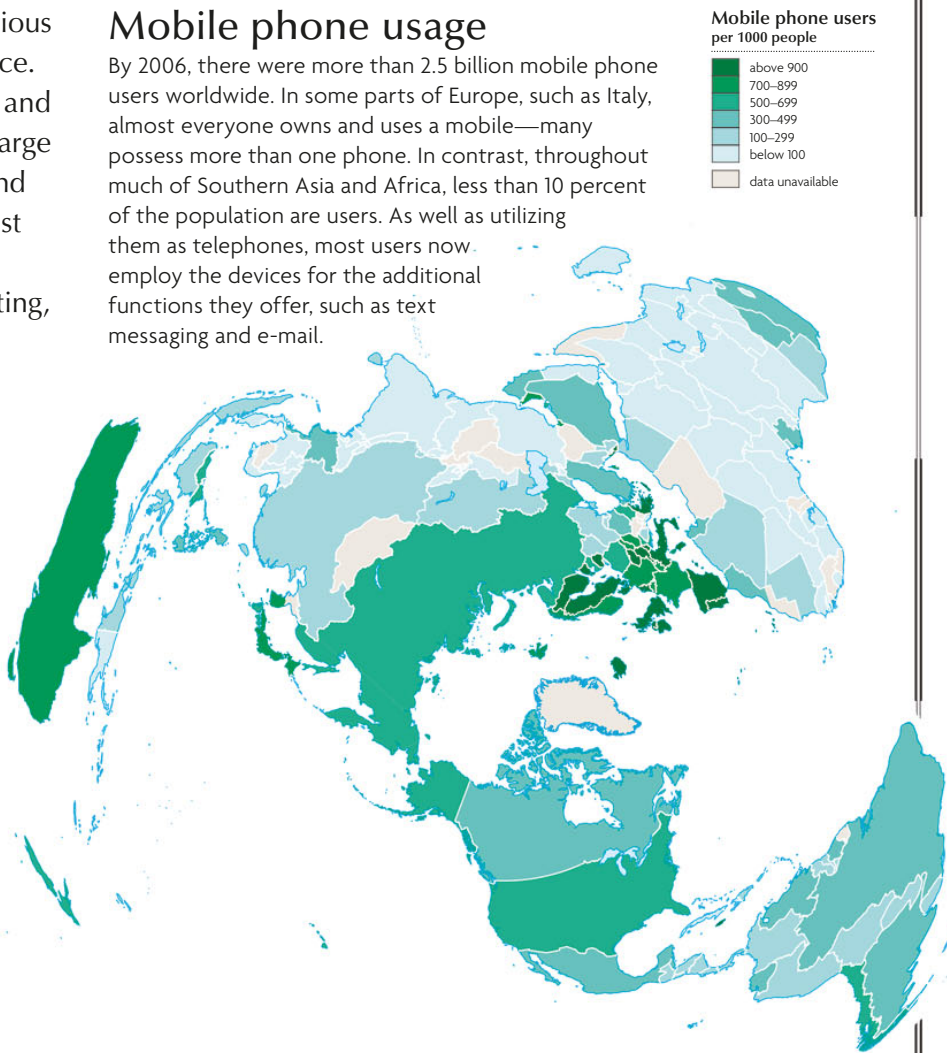
Internet usage has grown extremely rapidly since the early 1990s, largely as a result of the invention of the World Wide Web. Usage rates are highest in the USA (where about 80 percent of people were using the Internet in 2006), Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Finland. They are lowest in Africa, where on average less than 5 percent of the population were Internet users in 2006.



The internet emerged in the early 1990s as a computer-based global communication system. Since then massive growth has seen user numbers increase to around 1.1 billion people, or roughly 17 percent of the world's population.

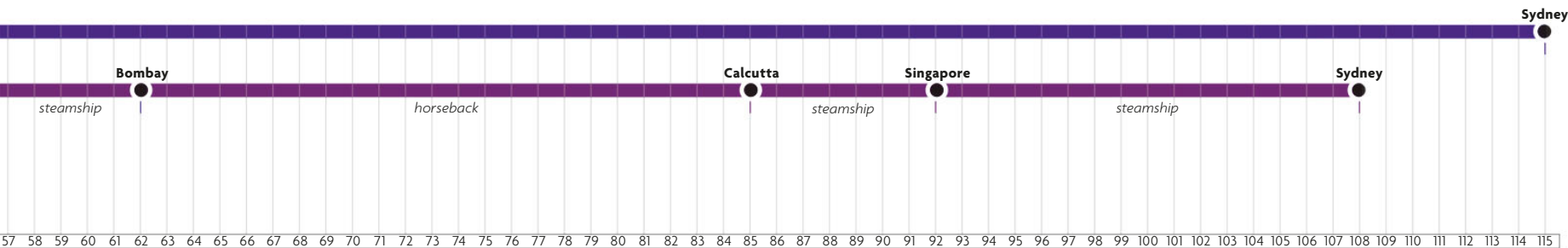
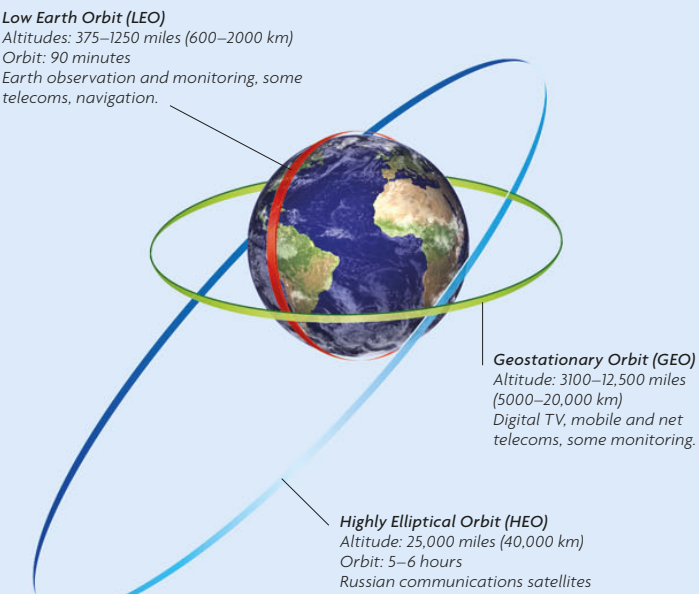
Mobile phone usage

By 2006, there were more than 2.5 billion mobile phone users worldwide. In some parts of Europe, such as Italy, almost everyone owns and uses a mobile—many possess more than one phone. In contrast, throughout much of Southern Asia and Africa, less than 10 percent of the population are users. As well as utilizing them as telephones, most users now employ the devices for the additional functions they offer, such as text messaging and e-mail.



Satellite Communications

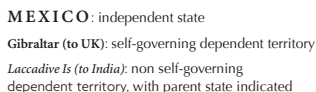
Modern communications satellites are used extensively for international telephony, for television and radio broadcasting, and to some extent for transmitting Internet data. Many of these satellites are deployed in clusters or arrays, often in geostationary orbits—that is, in positions that appear fixed to Earth-based observers.



THE WORLD

36

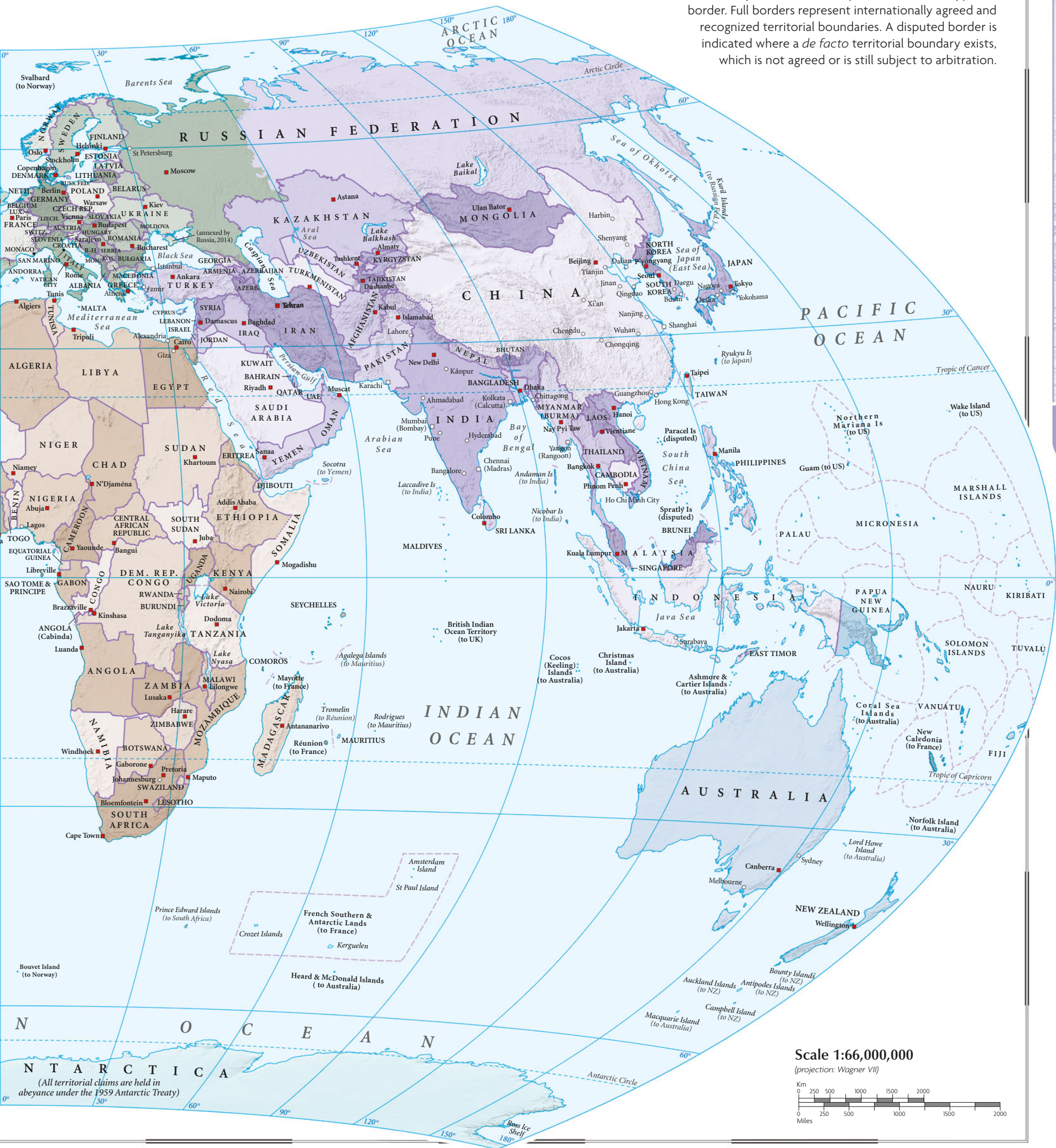
	Total area: sq miles	Total area: sq km	Total population
North & Central America	9,358,340	24,238,000	565.3 million
South America	6,886,000	17,835,000	406.7 million
Africa	11,712,434	30,335,000	1110.6 million
Europe	4,053,309	10,498,000	742.4 million
Asia	16,838,365	43,608,000	4298.7 million
Australia & Oceania	3,285,048	8,508,238	38.3 million



Countries	Largest country	Country with largest population
23	Canada 3,855,171 sq miles (9,984,670 sq km)	United States 323 million
12	Brazil 3,286,470 sq miles (8,511,965 sq km)	Brazil 202 million
54	Algeria 919,590 sq miles (2,381,740 sq km)	Nigeria 178 million
46	European Russia 1,527,341 sq miles (3,955,818 sq km)	European Russia 110 million
49	Asiatic Russia 5,065,394 sq miles (13,119,382 sq km)	China 1394 million
14	Australia 2,967,893 sq miles (7,686,850 sq km)	Australia 24 million

International borders

The world political map of today displays a complex pattern of boundaries that has evolved through history, and is still constantly changing as new countries emerge and disputes and territorial claims are slowly resolved. The map shows two main types of border. Full borders represent internationally agreed and recognized territorial boundaries. A disputed border is indicated where a *de facto* territorial boundary exists, which is not agreed or is still subject to arbitration.



Borders, conflicts and disputes

Conflict evolved in the 20th century from conventional land- or sea-based warfare to increasingly long-range airborne attacks. Nuclear arms from 1945 took this to the intercontinental scale. The Cold War presented a new type of conflict, underlined by the race for weapons capabilities between the US and the Soviet Union. In Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East and elsewhere, soldiers and civilians were exposed to deadly chemicals. International treaties aimed to prevent the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical “weapons of mass destruction”. Intercommunal conflict and “ethnic cleansing” reminded the world that horror needed no sophisticated weaponry. After 9/11, the US-led “war on terror” perceived conflict in a new light, where international terrorism knew no borders.

THE PEACEKEEPERS



Over 130 countries have contributed around a million troops to UN missions to monitor peace processes and help implement peace accords since 1948. Regional alliances such as NATO and the African Union (AU) are increasingly deploying their own multinational forces in trouble-spots, while Australia has intervened in a similar manner in nearby Pacific island states. Peacekeepers oversaw East Timor's elections in 2001 and subsequent celebration of independence (above). The US defines many of its activities as peacekeeping, despite the confrontational nature of some of its interventions.

DARFUR

African ethnic minorities in Darfur in western Sudan have suffered appalling violence since 2003 at the hands of genocidal Arab Janjaweed militias, for which the government in Khartoum denies responsibility. Displaced in their hundreds of thousands, refugees receive inadequate protection and aid from an international community unwilling to commit to full-scale intervention.



ISRAEL

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has been at war with its Arab neighbors. The Palestinians are fighting for a separate, viable state, comprising of at least East Jerusalem, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip, territories occupied by Israel in 1967. Their struggle (*intifada*) has attracted international support, but has been met by a hard-line response from Israel, which is backed by the US.

Arab-Israeli Wars 1947-2006

MAIN MAP: Arab-Israeli Wars

- Israel in 1949
- occupied by Israel after 1967 war
- occupied by Israel after 1973 war
- occupied by Israel after 1967 war reoccupied by Egypt after 1973 war
- demilitarized zone held by UN after Israel-Syria agreement, 1974, and 2nd Sinai agreement, 1975
- Hezbollah rocket attacks 2006
- Israeli rocket attacks 2006
- disputed border

INSET MAP 1: UN Partition plan in 1947

- border of British mandate 1923
- proposed Arab State
- proposed Jewish State
- proposed international zone

INSET MAP 2: West Bank security

- Palestinian responsibility for civil affairs and internal security
- Palestinian responsibility for civil affairs; Israel responsible for security
- Security Wall (existing and planned)



Conflicts and international disputes

- Major active territorial or border disputes
- Countries involved in internal conflict
- Active territorial or border disputes and internal conflict

Types of government

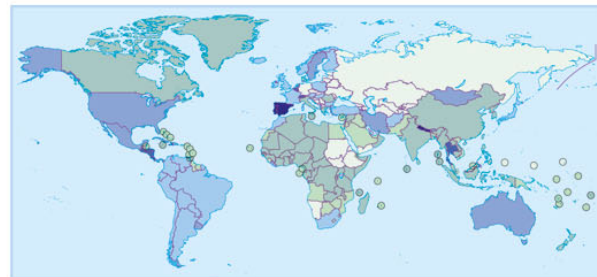
- Multiparty democracy for more than 10 yrs
- Multiparty democracy within last 10 yrs
- Single-party government
- Military regime
- Theocracy
- Monarchy
- Non-party system
- Transitional regime



Lines on the map

The determination of international boundaries can use a variety of criteria. Many borders between older states follow physical boundaries, often utilizing natural defensive features. Others have been determined by international agreement or arbitration, or simply ended up where the opposing forces stood at the end of a conflict.

WORLD BOUNDARIES



Dates from which current boundaries have existed

- 1990-present
- 1966-1989
- 1946-1965
- 1915-1945
- 1850-1914
- Pre-1800

POST-COLONIAL BORDERS



Independent African countries have largely inherited the earlier carve up of the continent by European colonial powers. These often arbitrarily divided or grouped differing ethnic and religious groups

which has, in turn, contributed to the tensions that underlie the many civil conflicts that have plagued post-colonial Africa.

ENCLAVES

Changes to international boundaries occasionally create pockets of land cut off from the main territory of the country they belong to. In Europe, Kaliningrad has been separated from the rest of the Russian



Federation since the independence of the Baltic States. Likewise, when Morocco was granted independence, Spain retained the coastal enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

GEOMETRIC BORDERS

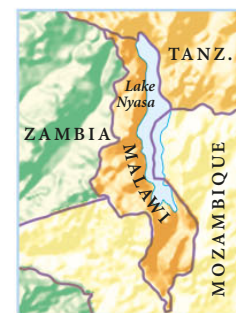


Straight lines and lines of longitude and latitude have occasionally been used to determine international boundaries: the 49th Parallel forms a large section of the Canada-US border, while the 38th Parallel roughly

divides the Korean Peninsula. Internal administrative divisions within Canada, the US, and Australia also use geometric boundaries.

PHYSICAL BORDERS

Rivers account for one-sixth of the world's borders: the Danube forms part of the boundaries for nine European nations. Changes in a river's course or disruption of its flow can lead to territorial disputes. Lakes and mountains also form natural borders.



Lake border (right)

Mountain border (below left)

River border (below right)



GULF CONFLICTS

Although the West armed Saddam Hussein in the brutal 1980s Iran-Iraq War, his unprovoked invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was decried the world over. A US-led coalition, including Arab states, repelled his troops but left him in power. A decade of sanctions followed until, in 2003, Saddam was finally toppled by US-led forces. Following elections in 2005, Iraq has struggled to contain a violent insurgency.



Conflict in the Persian Gulf

Iran-Iraq War (1980-88)

- Iraqi invasion force Sep-Nov 1980
- Iranian invasion force Oct 1984
- air strike 1980-88

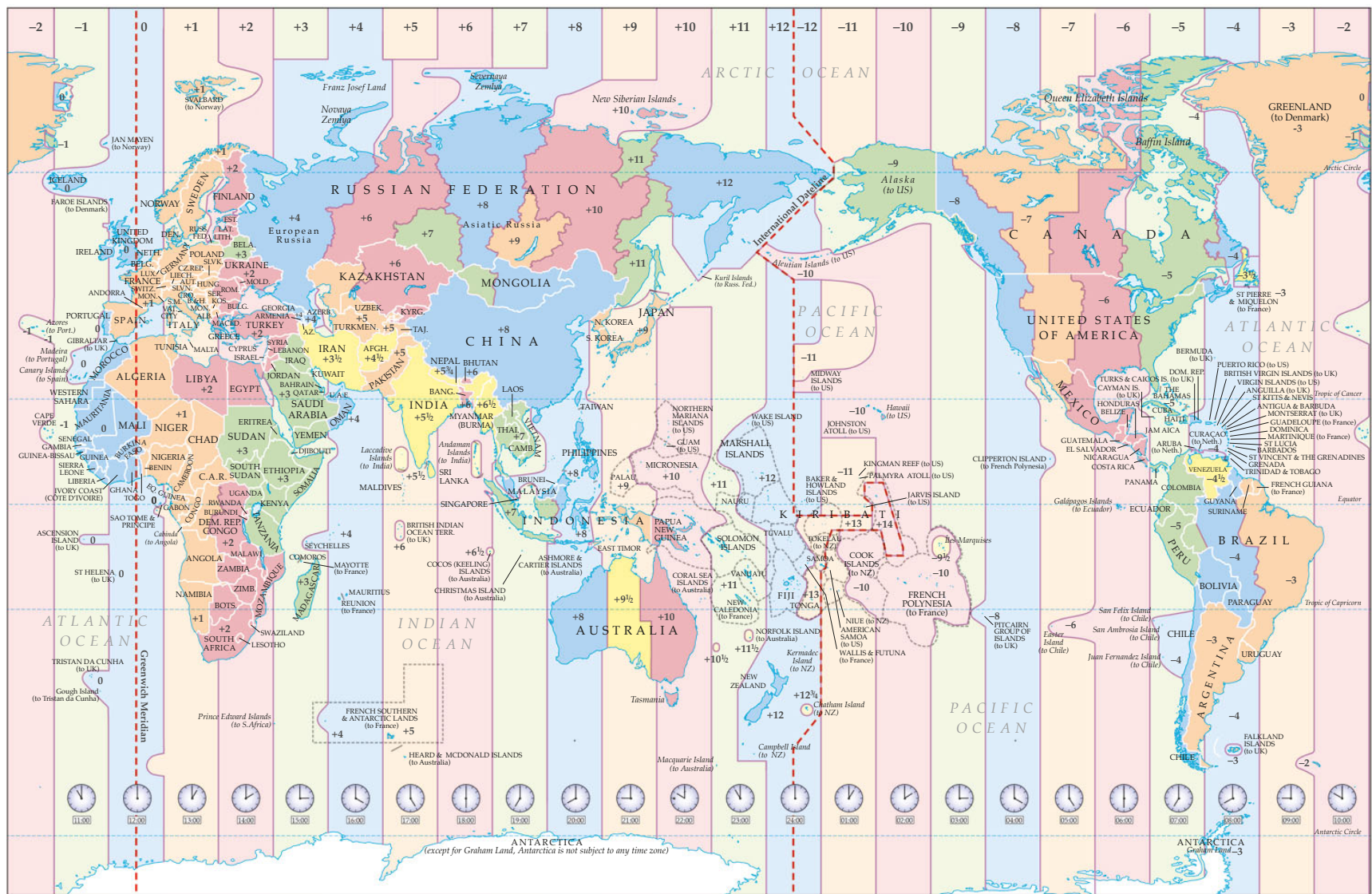
Persian Gulf War (1990-91)

- Iraqi invasion of Kuwait 1-2 Aug 1990
- Iraqi air base
- Allied air base
- SCUD installation
- Iraqi SCUD missile attacks
- Iraqi weapons plant
- US battleship
- US aircraft carrier
- Allied amphibious attack
- Allied airborne attack
- area of Allied ground combat
- Kurdish region

Iraq War from 2003

- Allied air exclusion zone (1991-2003)
- Allied land campaign 2003
- main centres of insurgency 2003-04

The World's Standard Time Zones



The numbers at the top of the map indicate how many hours each time zone is ahead or behind Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). The row of clocks indicate the time in each zone when it is 12:00 noon UTC.

TIME ZONES

Because Earth is a rotating sphere, the Sun shines on only half of its surface at any one time. Thus, it is simultaneously morning, evening and night time in different parts of the world (see diagram below). Because of these disparities, each country or part of a country adheres to a local time. A region of Earth's surface within which a single local time is used is called a time zone. There are 24 one hour time zones around the world, arranged roughly in longitudinal bands.

STANDARD TIME

Standard time is the official local time in a particular country or part of a country. It is defined by the time zone or zones associated with that country or region. Although time zones are arranged roughly in longitudinal bands, in many places the borders of a zone do not fall exactly on longitudinal meridians, as can be seen on the map (above),

but are determined by geographical factors or by borders between countries or parts of countries. Most countries have just one time zone and one standard time, but some large countries (such as the USA, Canada and Russia) are split between several time zones, so standard time varies across those countries. For example, the coterminous United States straddles four time zones and so has four standard times, called the Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific standard times. China is unusual in that just one standard time is used for the whole country, even though it extends across 60° of longitude from west to east.

COORDINATED UNIVERSAL TIME (UTC)

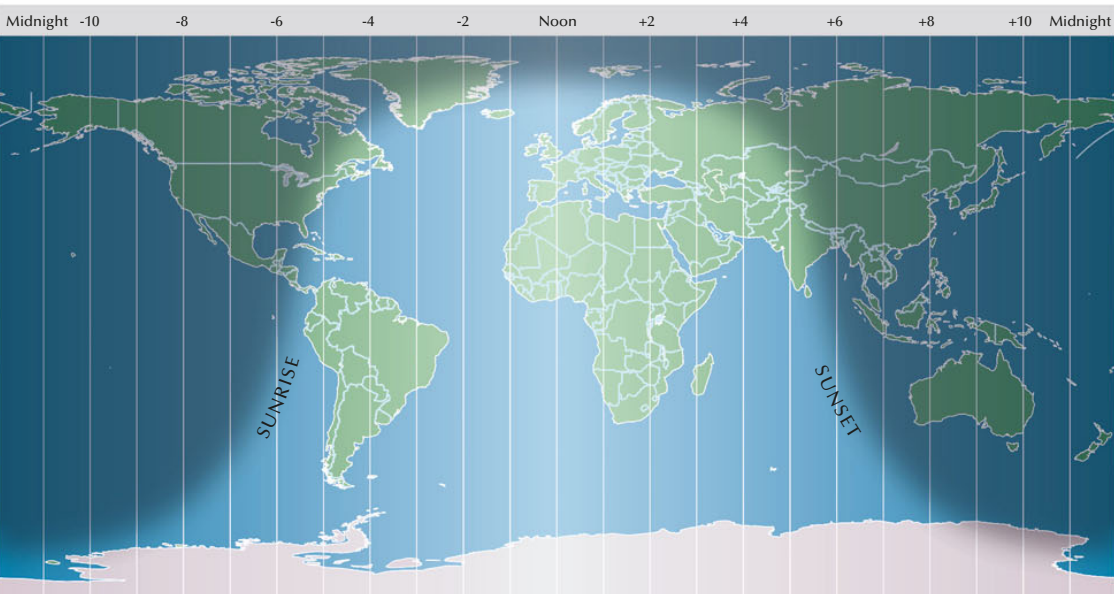
Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) is a reference by which the local time in each time zone is set. For example, Australian Western Standard Time (the local time in Western Australia) is set 8 hours ahead of UTC (it is UTC+8) whereas Eastern Standard Time in the United States is set 5

hours behind UTC (it is UTC-5). UTC is a successor to, and closely approximates, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). However, UTC is based on an atomic clock, whereas GMT is determined by the Sun's position in the sky relative to the 0° longitudinal meridian, which runs through Greenwich, UK.

In 1884 the Prime Meridian (0° longitude) was defined by the position of the cross-hairs in the eyepiece of the "Transit Circle" telescope in the Meridian Building at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, UK.



DAY AND NIGHT AROUND THE WORLD



THE INTERNATIONAL DATELINE

The International Dateline is an imaginary line from pole to pole that roughly corresponds to the 180° longitudinal meridian. It is an arbitrary marker between calendar days. The dateline is needed because of the use of local times around the world rather than a single universal time. When moving from west to east across the dateline, travelers have to set their watches back one day. Those traveling in the opposite direction, from east to west, must add a day.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Daylight saving is a summertime adjustment to the local time in a country or region, designed to cause a higher proportion of its citizens' waking hours to pass during daylight. To follow the system, timepieces are advanced by an hour on a pre-decided date in spring and reverted back in the fall. About half of the world's nations use daylight saving.

COMPLETE ATLAS OF THE WORLD

THE MAPS IN THIS ATLAS ARE ARRANGED CONTINENT BY CONTINENT, STARTING FROM THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE, AND MOVING EASTWARD. THE MAPS PROVIDE A UNIQUE VIEW OF TODAY'S WORLD, COMBINING TRADITIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES WITH THE LATEST REMOTE-SENSED AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY.



NORTH AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA

42





North America is the world's third largest continent with a total area of 9,358,340 sq miles (24,238,000 sq km) including Greenland and the Caribbean islands. It lies wholly within the Northern Hemisphere.

FACTFILE

- N** Most Northerly Point: Kap Morris Jesup, Greenland 83° 38' N
- S** Most Southerly Point: Peninsula de Azuero, Panama 7° 15' N
- E** Most Easterly Point: Nordostrundingen, Greenland 12° 08' W
- W** Most Westerly Point: Attu, Aleutian Islands, USA 172° 30' E

Largest Lakes:

- 1 Lake Superior, Canada/USA 31,151 sq miles (83,270 sq km)
- 2 Lake Huron, Canada/USA 23,436 sq miles (60,700 sq km)
- 3 Lake Michigan, USA 22,402 sq miles (58,020 sq km)
- 4 Great Bear Lake, Canada 12,274 sq miles (31,790 sq km)
- 5 Great Slave Lake, Canada 10,981 sq miles (28,440 sq km)

Longest Rivers:

- 1 Mississippi-Missouri, USA 3710 miles (5969 km)
- 2 Mackenzie, Canada 2640 miles (4250 km)
- 3 Yukon, Canada/USA 1978 miles (3184 km)
- 4 St Lawrence/Great Lakes, Canada/USA 1900 miles (3058 km)
- 5 Rio Grande, Mexico/USA 1900 miles (3057 km)

Largest Islands:

- 1 Greenland 849,400 sq miles (2,200,000 sq km)
- 2 Baffin Island, Canada 183,800 sq miles (476,000 sq km)
- 3 Victoria Island, Canada 81,900 sq miles (212,000 sq km)
- 4 Ellesmere Island, Canada 75,700 sq miles (196,000 sq km)
- 5 Newfoundland, Canada 42,031 sq miles (108,860 sq km)

Highest Points:

- 1 Mount McKinley (Denali), USA 20,332 ft (6194 m)
- 2 Mount Logan, Canada 19,550 ft (5959 m)
- 3 Volcán Pico de Orizaba, Mexico 18,700 ft (5700 m)
- 4 Mount St Elias, USA 18,008 ft (5489 m)
- 5 Popocatepetl, Mexico 17,887 ft (5452 m)

Lowest Point:

- Death Valley, USA -282 ft (-86 m) below sea level

Highest recorded temperature:

- Death Valley, USA 135°F (57°C)

Lowest recorded temperature:

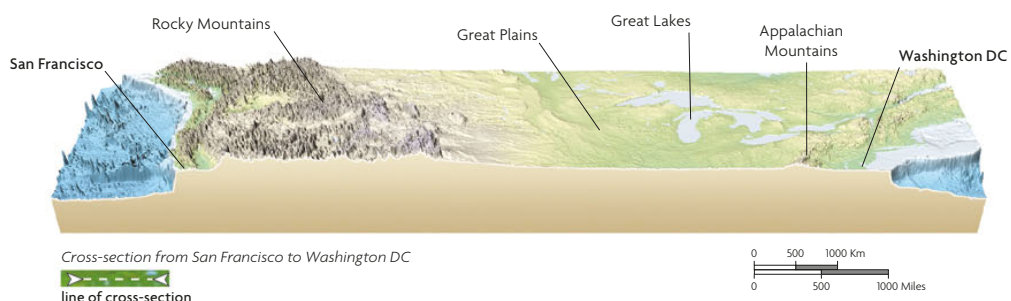
- Northice, Greenland -87°F (-66°C)

Wettest Place:

- Vancouver, Canada 262 in (6650 mm)

Driest Place:

- Death Valley, USA 2 in (50 mm)



NORTH AMERICA – Political

Political

Democracy is well established in some parts of the continent but is a recent phenomenon in others. The economically dominant nations of Canada and the USA have a long democratic tradition but elsewhere, notably in the countries of Central America, political turmoil has been more common. In Nicaragua and Haiti, harsh dictatorships have only recently been superseded by democratically-elected governments. North America's largest countries—Canada, Mexico, and the USA—have federal state systems, sharing political power between national and state or provincial governments. The USA has intervened militarily on several occasions in Central America and the Caribbean to protect its strategic interests.

Transportation

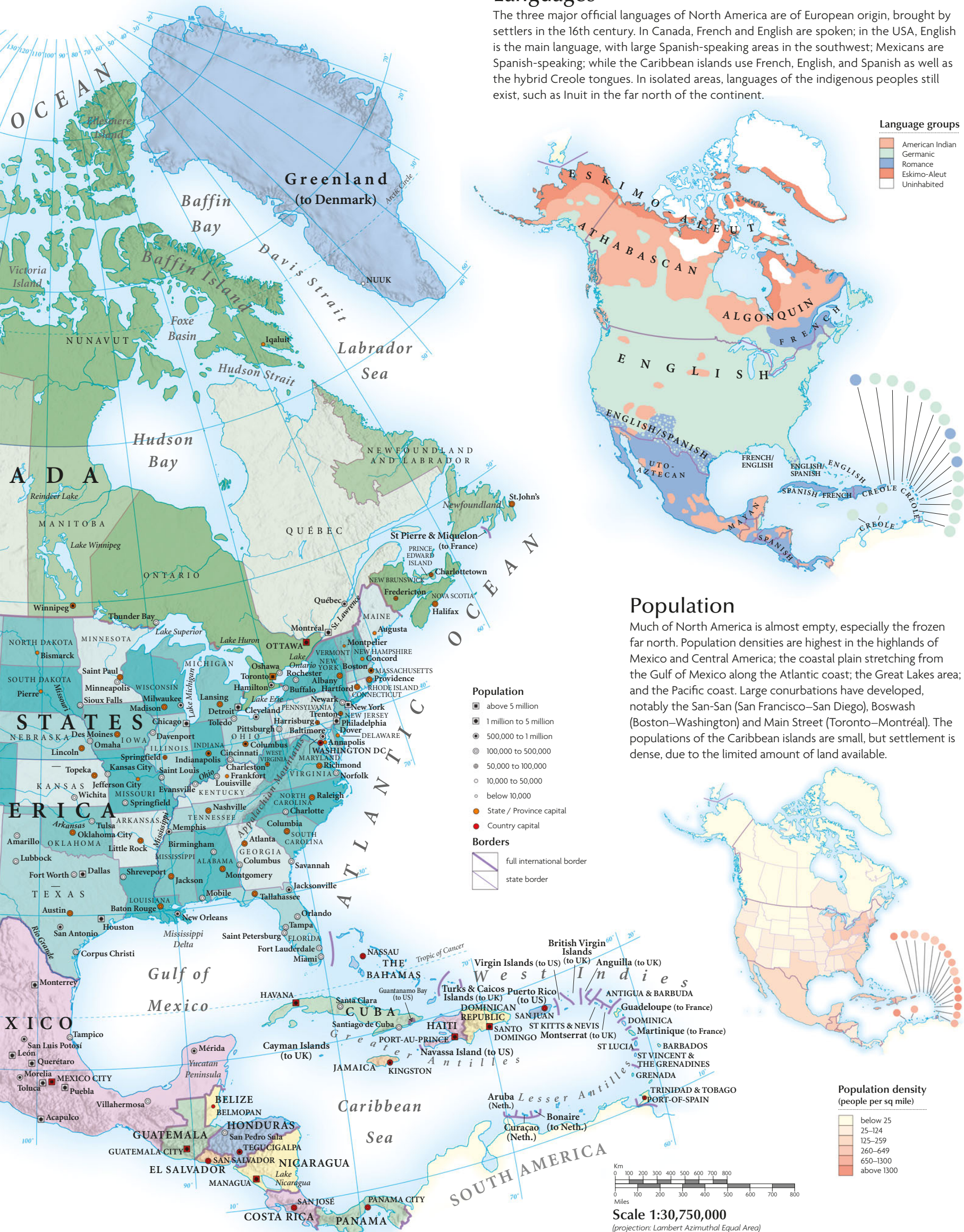
In the 19th century, railroads were used to open up the North American continent. Air transport is now more common for long distance passenger travel, although railroads are still extensively used for bulk freight transport. Waterways, like the Mississippi River, are important for the transport of bulk materials, and the Panama Canal is a vital link between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean. In the 20th century, road transportation increased massively in North America, with the introduction of cheap, mass-produced cars and extensive highway construction.





Languages

The three major official languages of North America are of European origin, brought by settlers in the 16th century. In Canada, French and English are spoken; in the USA, English is the main language, with large Spanish-speaking areas in the southwest; Mexicans are Spanish-speaking; while the Caribbean islands use French, English, and Spanish as well as the hybrid Creole tongues. In isolated areas, languages of the indigenous peoples still exist, such as Inuit in the far north of the continent.

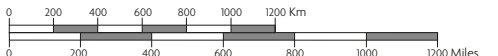


NORTH AMERICA – Physical



Scale 1:33,500,000

(projection: Lambert Conformal Conic)



Environmental Issues

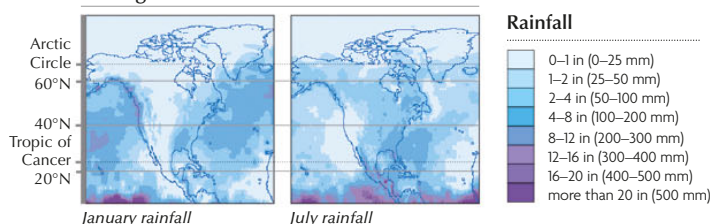
Many fragile environments are under threat throughout the region. In Haiti, all the primary rain forest has been destroyed, while air pollution from factories and cars in Mexico City is among the worst in the world. Elsewhere, industry and mining pose threats, particularly in the delicate arctic environment of Alaska where oil spills have polluted coastlines and decimated fish stocks.



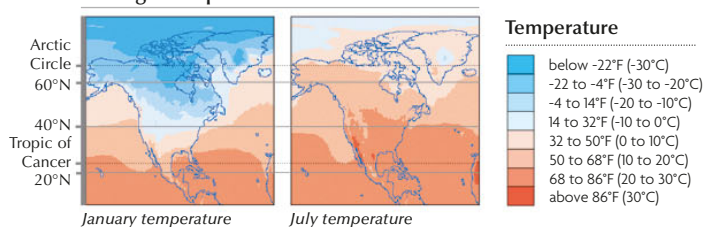
Climate

North America's climate includes extremes ranging from freezing Arctic conditions in Alaska and Greenland, to desert in the southwest, and tropical conditions in southeastern Florida, the Caribbean, and Central America. Central and southern regions are prone to severe storms including tornadoes and hurricanes.

Average Rainfall



Average Temperature



Land use

Abundant land and fertile soils stretch from the Canadian prairies to Texas creating North America's agricultural heartland. Cereals and cattle ranching form the basis of the farming economy, with corn and soybeans also important. Fruit and vegetables are grown in California using irrigation, while Florida is a leading producer of citrus fruits. Caribbean and Central American countries depend on cash crops such as bananas, coffee, and sugar cane, often grown on large plantations. This reliance on a single crop can leave these countries vulnerable to fluctuating world crop prices.



NORTH AMERICA



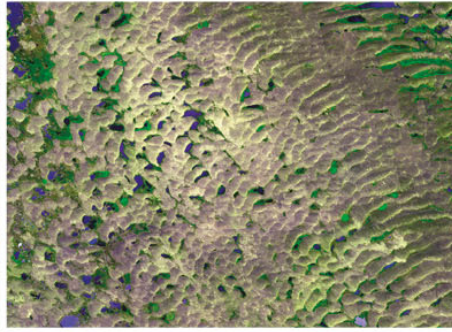
1 VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA
Canada's premier west coast city occupies the delta of the Fraser river, formed among the Coast Mountains.



2 MOUNT SAINT HELENS, WASHINGTON, USA
In 1980, this volcano's catastrophic eruption devastated 270 sq miles (700 sq km) of forest almost instantly.



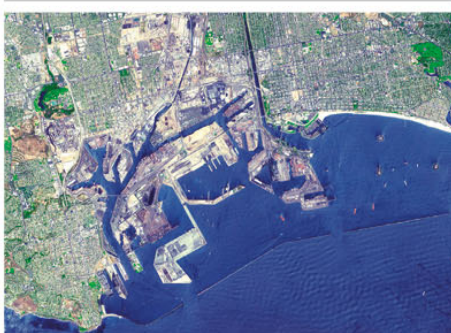
3 GREAT SALT LAKE, UTAH, USA
A causeway carries a railroad, blocking circulation between the northern and southern parts, the water reddened by bacteria in the more saline north.



4 SAND HILLS, NEBRASKA, USA
Forming the largest sand sea in the Western Hemisphere, these hills are not classified as desert because today's relatively wet climate has allowed grasses to take hold.



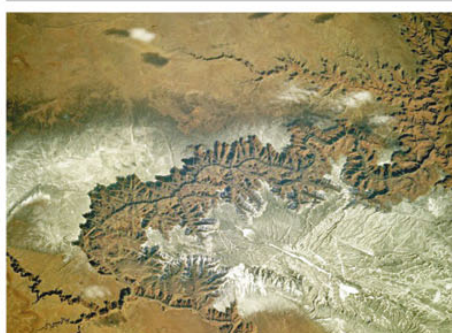
9 LOS ANGELES AND LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA
Taken together, these west coast cities constitute the busiest seaport in the United States.



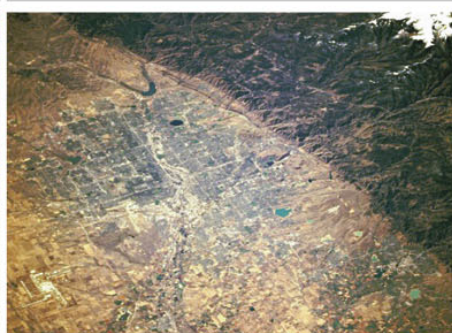
10 ISLA GUADALUPE, MEXICO
The volcanic island, 186 miles (300 km) off the west coast of Mexico, is a protected wildlife reserve.



11 GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA, USA
The 5250 ft (1600 m) deep canyon cuts through the Kaibab Plateau in this southwest-looking view.



12 DENVER, COLORADO, USA
Colorado's state capital nestles under the Rocky Mountains with the South Platte River running through its center.





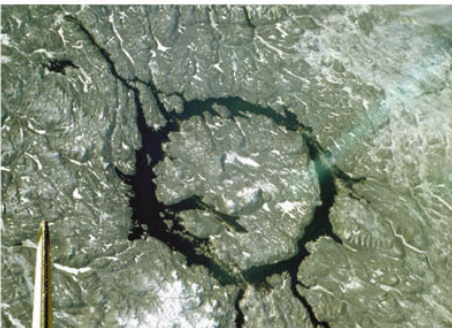
BELCHER ISLANDS, NUNAVUT, CANADA
These low-lying, treeless, and sparsely-populated islands lie icebound in Hudson Bay for much of the year.

5



MISSISSIPPI, MISSOURI, AND ILLINOIS RIVERS, USA
This Infrared image shows how these rivers burst their banks in many places after heavy rains in the summer of 1993, leading to the area's worst floods on record.

6



RÉSERVOIR MANICOUAGAN, QUÉBEC, CANADA
This unusual 62 mile (100 km) diameter annular lake occupies the low ground between the rim and central uplift of an ancient meteorite crater.

7



NEW YORK CITY, USA
The largest city in the United States, with a population of over 8 million, it is also the country's main financial center.

8



MISSISSIPPI RIVER DELTA, LOUISIANA, USA
This delta has developed a "bird's foot" shape due to the shifting course of the river over the last 6000 years.

13

FLORIDA, USA
This low-lying, subtropical peninsula is home to thousands of lakes that have formed among its limestone "karst" topography.

14

HAVANA, CUBA
Cuba's capital city is home to 2 million people and was founded by the Spanish in 1519 around a natural harbor.

15

BARRIER REEF, BELIZE
The world's second-longest barrier reef lies about 12 miles (20 km) off the coast of Belize.

16



Canada

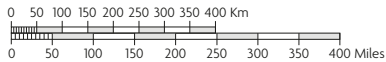
NORTH AMERICA

50



Scale 1:14,815,000

(projection: Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area)



Population

■ above 5 million

● 100,000 to 500,000

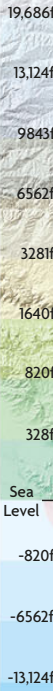
■ 1 million to 5 million

● 50,000 to 100,000

● 500,000 to 1 million

○ 10,000 to 50,000

○ below 10,000





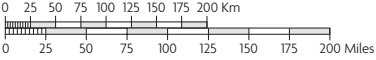
Northern Canada

NORTH AMERICA

52



Scale 1:7,500,000
(projection: Lambert Conformal Conic)

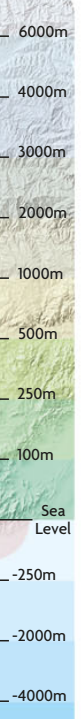




Western Canada

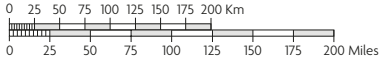
NORTH AMERICA

54



Scale 1:7,500,000

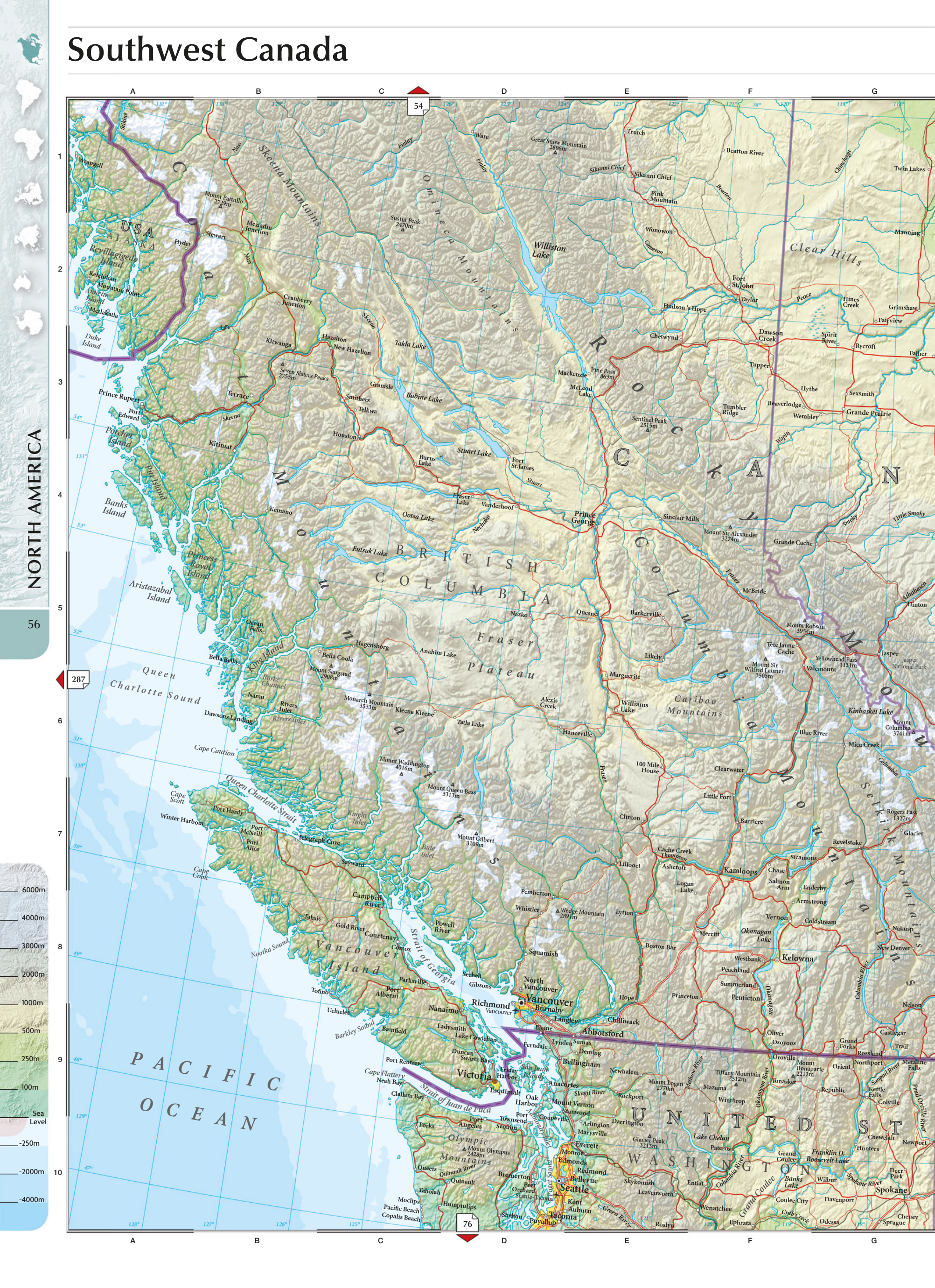
(projection: Lambert Conformal Conic)



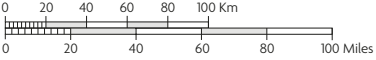
Population



Southwest Canada



Scale 1:3,750,000
(projection: Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area)



NORTH AMERICA

57





Eastern Canada

NORTH AMERICA

58

