

North America North American Diversity

North America is diverse in many ways. Every type of **ecosystem**¹ that exists on Earth exists somewhere in North America. North America has deserts, mountain ranges, rainforests, and glaciers. If you could travel throughout North America, you could walk with the **caribou**² across the **permafrost**³ of Canada or sail a boat on the Great Lakes. You could hide in the great grasslands of the central continent or visit a lighthouse by the sea. These different environments make North America one of the most beautiful continents in the world.

There are many natural **resources**⁴ too. Some of these are coal, oil, and natural gas. These sources of energy have allowed North America to produce power inexpensively. Cheap power allows there to be big factories on our continent. Most North Americans have electricity and running water. People in many parts of the world still don't have those luxuries. Rich farmlands, gold and other mineral deposits are all natural resources in America. These resources have made our North American governments and citizens wealthier than most others in the world.

Europeans called North America the “New World” for a long time, even though the Native Americans were living here when the explorers first came. People had been living in Europe for a very long time. Europe seemed very old and crowded compared to North America.

Ever since those first explorers came to North America, millions of other people from all over the world have come here. It doesn't seem very new or

¹ **ecosystem**: a community of living things (plants, animals, insects, etc.) and the place where they live.

² **caribou**: large reindeer that live in North America.

³ **permafrost**: a layer of ground that's permanently frozen.

⁴ **resources**: available supplies that can be used when needed.

empty anymore! Each of us had adventurous *ancestors* that came before us. They came to the “New World” for different reasons, and in different ways, but they all made new lives for themselves and us, their **descendants**.⁵ All of us make North America a rich continent in another important way – *human* resources.

⁵ **descendants**: people whose ancestors come from a particular group.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 - a. North America is a very typical continent in many ways.
 - b. North America has abundant resources of many different types.
 - c. There are only three countries in North America.
 - d. People who live in North America are better than other people.

2. What are “ancestors”?
 - a. The people in our family who came before us, like grandparents, great grandparents.
 - b. The oldest people in your culture whom you are supposed to respect.
 - c. The real word for “an abundance of natural resources”.
 - d. Ancient tribes of North America.

3. Why did Europeans refer to North America as the “New World”?
 - a. The geography and ecosystems were all new to them.
 - b. They knew that North America was formed by a volcano and was a much younger continent than Europe or Asia.
 - c. The continent was new to the Europeans.
 - d. The Native Americans seemed like a new kind of people to the white Europeans.

4. Why would big factories need lots of energy?
 - a. Big factories are expensive and time consuming to build.
 - b. They need lots of people to work in them, so they have to be near cities.
 - c. They are open all the time so they have to have bright lights.
 - d. Factories need lots of energy to run the machines and assembly lines that make the goods.

5. Which type of ecosystem is not found in North America?
 - a. grassland
 - b. desert
 - c. savanna
 - d. rainforest

6. Why are the countries in North America richer than many other countries in the world? Explain, using details from the text.

7. The passage mentions two luxuries many people in North America have. What are the two luxuries and how do they make a person's life easier?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

A person traveling throughout North America could see a desert and grasslands, _____ a glacier.

- a. finally
- b. in addition to
- c. also
- d. additionally

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Many adventurous people have come to North America seeking a new life.

Who? _____

(have) What? come to North America

Why? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** descendants: people whose ancestors come from a particular group.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 880**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic**Passage Summary:** The author describes the different ways in which North America is a very diverse continent.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 - a. North America is a very typical continent in many ways.
 - b. Our continent has abundant resources of many different types.**
 - c. There are only three countries in North America.
 - d. People who live in North America are better than other people.

2. What are “ancestors”?
 - a. The people in our family who came before us, like grandparents, great grandparents.**
 - b. The oldest people in your culture whom you are supposed to respect.
 - c. The real word for “an abundance of natural resources”.
 - d. The answer to a question when it is asked in another language.

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6. Why are the countries in North America richer than many other countries in the world? Explain, using details from the text.

Suggested answer: Students should discuss the variety of natural resources that make the countries in North America wealthy. Possible details from the text include the resources of coal, oil or natural gas, as well as mineral deposits, gold and rich farmland.

7. The passage mentions two luxuries many people in North America have. What are the two luxuries and how do they make a person's life easier?

Suggested answer: The two luxuries are electricity and running water. Electricity allows us to use lights when it is dark, run appliances, and use technology. Running water provides us with clean water to drink, bathe, clean, and cook.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

A person traveling throughout North America could see a desert and grasslands, _____ to a glacier.

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- b. in addition to**
- c. also
- d. additionally

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Many adventurous people have come to North America seeking a new life.

Who? **adventurous people**

(have) What? come to North America

Why? **seeking a new life**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** descendants: people whose ancestors come from a particular group.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.