A Living High School Geography: The Americas and the Arctic

A high school geography course by Jill Papsdorf

based on excerpts from

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V
The Old and the New World

originally published in 1884
by
Charlotte M. Mason

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Introduction

Each day, before you read, you will use an atlas to find locations from the reading and label them on a blank map.

Charlotte Mason wrote her *Geographical Readers* in the 1880s. At that time, Britain ruled over a vast empire which (at its height) was the largest empire in history. The text you will read this year is excerpted from the *Reader* to exclude much of the Victorian-era commentary to allow us to focus on her geographical descriptions. As you read, however, keep in mind the world in which Miss Mason lived, a world of privileged English rulers (almost exclusively white) often living in colonies or territories surrounded by indigenous peoples.

How would the British leaders, political and military, feel about the native people in their territories? How would they justify their continued leadership? How would they ensure they continued in power?

Try to identify the Victorian attitudes of Miss Mason and her contemporaries towards non-Europeans. Consider both how those attitudes have changed and what attitudes we have today which future people may consider prejudiced.

The Progress of Discovery in America

Find on a globe:

- Spain
- Portugal
- Atlantic Ocean
- Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden)
- North America
- Greenland
- Labrador
- Nova Scotia
- Newfoundland
- Rhode Island
- Bahamas
- West Indies
- Cuba
- Hispaniola
- South America
- Central America
- Peru
- Mexico
- Amazon River
- St. Lawrence River and the Gulf of St. Lawrence
- Mississippi River
- England
- Tierra del Fuego
- Strait of Magellan
- Pacific Ocean
- Philippines

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 173-176

Long before Columbus sailed from the port of Palos, (1492), on that famous voyage which altered the geography of the world, the Scandinavians had already found the way to North America. From Greenland, which they had touched in pursuit of the whale, they sailed farther to the west, and gradually extended their discoveries from the coasts of Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, to those of the present State of Rhode Island, which they called the "good Vinland," from the wild vines they found growing there in great abundance.

But the world in general knew little of these discoveries, and cared less. Not until the end of the fifteenth century did the moment arrive which was to open up the New World; and to Christopher Columbus, a native of Genoa, does the glory of discovery belong. For fifteen years he pondered upon his great idea—that, by sailing to the west, he might, at least, reach the Indies by a shorter route than that round the Cape, if *nothing lay between*.

But not until after years of disappointment did he find the means—the money and the ships—to carry out his project. At least he succeeded in interesting Isabella of Castille, the enlightened queen of Spain, proving to her that Spain must be enriched by the discoveries he expected to make. He was provided with three ships and their crews, and set sail from the port of Palos, on the 2nd of August, 1492.

The good trade winds carried the little fleet across the ocean; but when two months had passed and no land was sighted—nothing anywhere but the interminable expanse of ocean—the mariners grew mutinous, and their admiral was compelled to promise to turn homewards if no signs of land appeared within three days. And the third day, behold, one of Bahama Islands was sighted, and on the 12th of October Columbus knelt upon its shores to give thanks to God for having brought him to this new land. Then he sailed amongst the West Indies, and discovered Cuba, St. Domingo,[1] and some other islands: and in April of 1493 he returned to Spain, bringing with him Indians, […] and various kinds of parrots, strange beasts and rare plants, and gold, in dust and in lumps, and wrought into […] ornaments. As Columbus approached them, the sovereigns of Spain rose to receive him with high honors; and he told them all he had seen and done. When he had finished, they sank on their knees, and gave thanks and praise to God for so great a providence while *Te Deum* was chanted by the priests.

Indies these islands were called, and *Indians* the natives, because Columbus believed that he had reached the outlying islands of the eastern Indies by this long westerly voyage. Of course, he returned to his new Indies, but it was not until his third voyage, made in 1498, that he saw the mainland of America, which received this name from one *Amerigo* Vespucci, who did not visit it until 1499. The remaining history of Columbus is sad enough: the envy of his enemies caused him to be sent home in chains, after his third voyage; his fourth was one of miserable disaster from storms and shipwreck; and two years after his return, his mind gave way under accumulated wrongs and poverty.

It was easy for others to follow where Columbus had led the way: Spain and Portugal explored nearly the whole of South and Central America, the captains everywhere taking possession of the lands they discovered in the name of their respective governments. Pizarro conquered Peru; Cortes, Mexico. The brave captain Orellana ventured on a voyage little less appalling than that of Columbus—he explored the mighty Amazon from its upper waters to its mouth. France hastened to secure her share of the spoil, exploring and colonising in the basins of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi; and England, the last in the field, was the most energetic and successful of the four nations which divided America amongst them—so much so, that at this day English-speaking people occupy the whole of America north of Mexico, with one or two trifling exceptions.

No event in that century of astonishing discoveries is more memorable than the voyage of Magellan, a Portuguese navigator in the employ of Spain. His fleet was mutinous; there was a shipwreck; vessels were lost. None were willing to follow him further when they came in sight of the dreary American promontory, the desolate Tierra del Fuego […]. Magellan and his men soon saw enough of this dismal region. He exclaimed, "Onwards!" He explored, and tacked, and threaded his way through a hundred isles, and entered upon a limitless sea, that day unvexed by storms, and therefore named *Pacific*.

[1] Santo Domino is now the capital of the Dominican Republic, which shared the island of Hispaniola with Haiti.

He perished in the Philippines: but one of his ships, the *Victory*, with its pilot, Sebastian Cabot, reached home in 1521; and he and his men were the first who had completed the circumnavigation of the world. The great truth had been guessed at before, but now, for the first time, was it made known to men as a certainty that the world was round, at least in one direction.

South America
The Andes and the Mountain States

Draw or label on a map of North and South America:

- Strait of Magellan
- Bering Strait
- Pacific Ocean
- Atlantic Ocean
- North America
- South America
- Alleghany Mountains
- Brazil
- Andes Mountains
- Rocky Mountains
- Cape Horn
- Tierra del Fuego
- Patagonia

Definitions:

Peninsula - a piece of land almost surrounded by water

Isthmus - a narrow strip of land with sea on either side, forming a link between two larger areas of land

Shingle - a mass of small rounded pebbles, especially on a seashore

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 178-180

The American continent, which is second only to Asia in size, consists of two great peninsulas joined by a long, oddly-shaped isthmus; It is thus naturally divided into North, Central, and South America, the whole having a length of 9000 miles. Through the whole length of this continent, stretching nearly from pole to pole, there runs an immense mountain chain, by far the longest stretch of elevated land in the globe.

This great range rises from the waters of the Antarctic Ocean,[2] and through its whole length, from the Straits of Magellan in the south, to the Bering Strait in the north, it keeps close to the Pacific coast. Thus we get a short, abrupt slope, with not more than half-a-dozen rivers of importance, towards the Pacific; and long, low plains, drained by the mightiest rivers of the world, towards the Atlantic.

The vast central plains of both North and South America are hemmed in on the east by lower ranges, the Alleghany mountains in the North, and the mountains of Brazil in South America.

[2] The Antarctic Ocean, also called the Southern Ocean or the Austral Ocean, is the water south of 60°S latitude, surrounding Antarctica.

The great chain of the Andes first raises its crest above the waves in the sombre mass of Cape Horn, the southernmost point of the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego.

The Pacific washes the very base of the Patagonian Andes for about a thousand miles, and this whole length of coast is thickly fringed with islands, separated from the iron-bound shores by narrow arms of the sea which are really nothing but valleys of the Andes filled by the ocean, while the islands are the summits of an outer range rising above the sea. Towards the Atlantic, Patagonia sinks into bare plains, in parts grass-covered, in parts strewn with shingle. Towards the south, the climate is very severe, and the winter winds blow over the bare plains, driving clouds of snow and sand with great violence. The southern Patagonian Indians are a tall, fine people, hunters of the guanaco and ostrich; the northern Patagonians possess flocks of cattle and sheep: they are but thinly scattered in the wide country over which they wander.

Chile

Draw or label on a map of South America:

- Chile
- Patagonia
- Andes Mountains
- Santiago, Chile
- Valparaíso, Chile
- Concepción, Chile
- Cerro Aconcagua (mountain)
- Atacama Desert
- Strait of Magellan
- Tierra del Fuego
- Cape Horn
- Pacific Ocean
- Atlantic Ocean

Miss Mason uses "Chili" as the title and in the text of this excerpt. I have opted to replace her spelling with the modern "Chile" throughout the study guide.

Definitions:

Plateau - an area of relatively level high ground

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 180-181

To the north of the Patagonian Andes are the Andes of Chile, in the midst of which lies the republic of Chile, the most prosperous and advanced of all those of South America. A chain of hills borders the coast, and between these and the Andes stretches a long valley well watered with rivers from the main chain; and this fertile valley forms the very garden of Chile. Here is Santiago, the capital, a fine, well-built city on a plateau, with a most delightful climate, and in the midst of the magnificent scenery of the Andes. It is joined by railway to Valparaiso, the chief seaport of Chile, and the centre of its foreign trade. Here also is Concepcion, and other flourishing towns in the midst of rich and fertile provinces. Here rises the great Aconcagua, the highest of the Andes (23,900 feet).[3] Many giant peaks of this region rise above the line of perpetual snow, and some of these are volcanoes. As far north as Concepcion, the climate is humid. North of Concepcion lies Central Chile, where no rain falls for nine months in the year. In Northern Chile, rain only falls once in two or three years, and the consequence is that the region is one of extreme sterility.

[3] According to National Geographic, the height of Aconcagua is uncertain, though it is more than 22,000 ft. (https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/cerro-aconcagua/)

Peru and Bolivia

Draw or label on a map of South America:

- Peru
- Andes Mountains
- Pacific Ocean
- Lima, Peru
- Trujillo, Peru
- Callao, Peru
- Pisco, Peru
- Amazon River
- Ucayali River
- Marañon River
- Source of the Amazon River
- Cerro de Pasco, Peru
- Cusco, Peru
- Bolivia
- Potosí, Bolivia
- Lake Titicaca
- La Paz, Bolivia
- Sucre, Bolivia
- Altiplano

Definitions:

Plateau - an area of relatively level high ground

Puna – grassland of the Central Andes Mountains above 3200-3400 meters above sea level; found in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 181-184

Peru

Next come the Peruvian Andes. Peru – about ten times the size of England – is the largest of the states which lie along the Andes and the Pacific coasts. Along the sea-board is a range of hills, and between these and the Andes is a sandy desert. For the vapour-laden winds blow from the Atlantic across the flat eastern plain; they strike the cold, high summits of the Andes, and the vapour is condensed and rain pours down in torrents on the eastern slopes of the mountains, to feed the great rivers of the plain. Meanwhile, the winds go their way over the summits of the Andes, but *they have been entirely drained of their moisture*, and no rain falls on the western slopes because there is no longer any watery vapour in the air. Why no rain-winds blow in from the Pacific is a matter to be explained later. Upon this low, hot belt stands Lima, the capital city of Peru, which was founded by Pizarro, who began the magnificent cathedral. A single heavy shower of rain would be the ruin of Lima, for the flat-roofed houses are built of sun-dried clay, and a thorough "wetting" would reduce them to mere mud-puddles: but there is no danger; rain never falls here; and the earthquake, not the torrent, is dreaded by the inhabitants. The seaport of Callao, on the best harbor in Peru, is within six miles

of Lima, where a great trade is done in guano gathered from the Chincha Islands,[4] about 100 miles further south.

Callao is the head-quarters of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company,[5] and some of their steamers may usually be seen in the bay.

Crossing the desert, we reach the mountain slopes ascending to the high plateaus of the Andes, the "Sierra," as it is called, up which narrow mule-paths lead through deep ravines and along the edges of vast precipices – dangerous and difficult travelling. When we have gained the high plains, we are in the midst of cold, bleak, desolate wastes, called "punas," above which the summit mountains of the Andes life their rugged sides into the region of eternal snow. But these desolate punas teem with the most extraordinary riches, – wonderful mines of silver, as well as quick-silver and copper and iron everywhere.

The city of Pasco,[6] on the plateau, nearly 14,000 feet above the sea, has long been famous for its silver mines.

The camel-like guanaco roams in great herds on the punas, and along the slopes of the Andes; and the llama and alpaca, the domesticated varieties of the same animal, yield most valuable wool.[7]

Beyond the punas, we come to the inward or Atlantic slope of the mountains; and here the scene is changed. Bareness and desolation give place to the boundless woodlands of the Amazon basin; here abundant rains fill the tributaries of the vast river, and from here flow its great head-streams, the Ucayali and the Marañon.

[…] The Incas had a rich capital, the ancient city of Cuzco,[8] the ruins of which – those of the huge Temple of the Sun especially – are amongst the wonders of ancient architecture. From the capital, great roads had been made, reaching into every part of the empire, which was peopled by a vast nation, and stretched down far into Chile, and over the woody plains of the Amazon. The Incas were a skilful people, understanding the arts of architecture, agriculture, working in metals, and the making of cloths of brilliant dyes from the fine wool of their llamas. But their arts and industries did not avail them to resist the arms and the craft of the few Spanish adventurers who added Peru to the rich Spanish domains.

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[4] The Chincha Islands are located off the coast of Peru near the city of Pisco. Guano is no longer harvested there.
[5] The Pacific Steam Navigation Company, based in England, was the first commercial company to use steam ships on the Pacific Ocean. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Steam_Navigation_Company)
[6] Miss Mason is probably referring to Cerro de Pasco, the capital of the Pasco region.
[7] Llamas and alpacas are different species from the guanaco, not merely domesticated varieties of the same animal.
[8] Cusco, Peru

Bolivia

From their southern point to 21° S. lat., the Andes form a single grand range of mountains; but here the chain divides into two ridges, which enclose a series of high valleys or table-lands, divided from one another by mountain-knots, that is, groups of mountains running across from one long range to the other. These lofty table-lands of the Andes are very fertile, yield every kind of grain, and have populous cities with universities, libraries, churches, at fully 12,000 feet above the sea-level; while there are mining villages at a height equal to that of Mont Blanc.

One of the most remarkable of these high valleys is that of the Desaguadero, at a height of 12,900 feet. It is from thirty to sixty miles broad, and includes a space about three times the size of Switzerland; while the snowy peaks rise all round it, fully 8000 feet higher than itself. Potosi, the highest city in the world, stands at a height of 13,300 feet, at the foot of a mountain celebrated for its silver mines. The Lake of Titicaca, twenty times as large as the Lake of Geneva, fills the north-west of the valley.

Chuquisaca is the capital of Bolivia.[9]

Bolivia, which is about the same size as Peru, is the most inland of the South American republics. Like Peru, it has its "punas," its warm forest regions, its high, fertile table-lands, and towering volcanoes.

Consider what you knew of the Incas before reading this passage from Miss Mason. Do you think she has portrayed them accurately? You will read more about them in your curated articles.

Remember you can use thetruesize.com to compare the sizes of countries from different parts of the globe. Perhaps you would like to see if Peru is ten times the size of England.

[9] The official capital of Bolivia is Sucre, the seat of the judiciary. The legislative and executive government centers are in La Paz. Chuquisaca is the department of which Sucre is the departmental capital.

Ecuador and Colombia

Draw or label on a map of South America:

- Ecuador
- Cordillera Oriental
- Cordillera Central
- Cordillera Occidental
- Loja, Ecuador
- Quito, Ecuador
- Chimborazo (mountain)
- Guayaquil, Ecuador
- Colombia
- Panama
- Isthmus of Panama
- Gulf of Panama
- Serra Nevada de Santa Marta (mountainous national park)
- Orinoco River
- Panama Canal
- Bogotá, Colombia
- Cartagena, Colombia
- Panama City, Panama

Look closely at Ecuador on the physical map in your atlas. Notice how the three Cordilleras seem to join together in Ecuador.

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 184-185

Ecuador

Ecuador, the republic of the Equator, is truly a mountain state. In lat. 4° 50' S., the Andes form the mountain-knot of Loxa,[10] celebrated for its forests, in which Chinchona or Peruvian bark was first observed.[11] From this knot the chain divides into two great ridges, and between them are three high valleys. Of these, that of Quito is of extraordinary beauty. It is 200 miles long and 30 wide, with a height of about 11,000 feet, and it is shut in on each side by a magnificent chain of volcanoes, – amongst them, the snow-capped peaks of Antisana, Cotopaxi, one of the most beautiful of active volcanoes, the gigantic Chimborazo, Pinchincha, and Cayambé – all higher than the highest Alps. Though it lies in the burning equatorial zone, perpetual spring clothes the valley with verdure. And here, at a height of 9500 feet, is the famous city of Quito, with rich churches, well-built houses, a university, and all the comforts and luxuries of civilised life, on the summit of the Andes; at a spot from which eleven volcanoes are visible, the smoke and, sometimes, the flame from which increases the magnificence of the scene. The chief products of Ecuador are cocoa, grown in the hot regions of the equator, and quinine bark from the forests. Guayaquil is the seaport of the state.

[10] Loja
[11] Chinchona, also known as cinchona, is a source of quinine, which was the first effective treatment for malaria.

Colombia

The republic of Colombia occupies the north-west corner of South America, as well as the narrowest part of the isthmus of Panama.[12] Here the Andes divide into three great ranges, or Cordilleras, the highest mountain being Tolima (18,000 feet).[13] Amongst the mountains are cool, healthy table-lands […] Stretching eastward to the basin of the Orinoco are vast grass plains where great herds of cattle feed. Most of the metals – gold, silver, copper, lead, iron – are found in Colombia: quinine is obtained from the forests, coffee is grown on the slopes, and indiarubber,[14] cotton, and tobacco, on the low plains. The foreign trade is carried on chiefly by the isthmus ports of Panama on the Pacific and Aspinwall on the Atlantic, the termini of the railroad which joins the two oceans; but when the Panama canal is completed, ships will be able to pass from ocean to ocean without unlading.[15] The capital, Bogotá, stands on a plateau, close to a magnificent waterfall.

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[12] The modern country of Panama seceded from Colombia in 1903, twenty years after Miss Mason wrote her book.
[13] Tolima (Nevado del Tolima) is not the tallest mountain in Colombia. Pico Christóbal Colón is the tallest. Pico Simón Bolívar is nearly the same height. Both are estimated to be about 18,700 feet. They are very near each other in the national park, Serra Nevada de Santa Marta.
[14] Also known as natural rubber.
[15] France began work on the Panama Canal in 1881 but was unable to finish. The original canal was completed in 1914 and expanded in 2016.

Northern Coast States of South America: Venezuela and Guiana

Draw or label on a map of South America:

- Venezuela
- Guyana
- Suriname
- French Guiana
- Andes Mountains
- Orinoco River
- Source of the Orinoco River
- Atlantic Ocean
- Caracas, Venezuela
- Maracaibo, Venezuela
- Lake Maracaibo
- Georgetown, Guyana
- Angel Falls
- Gulf of Venezuela
- Essequibo River
- Maroni River
- Equator

British Guiana is now Guyana; it became independent in 1966.

Dutch Guiana is now Suriname; it became independent from the Netherlands in 1975.

French Guiana remains an overseas French department.

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 185-186

Venezuela

The states of Venezuela reach along the northern border of the continent, and are crossed by the last spur of the Andes. The Orinoco is the great river of Venezuela, and here it forms a great delta on the Atlantic coast. The slopes of the northern mountains are entirely forest-covered, and what forests they are! alive with swarms of humming-birds and glittering beetles, hung with gorgeous blossoms, and the spaces carpeted with orchids of a hundred queer shapes and of every brilliant colour. In the clearings are cocoa and sugar plantations, coffee on the slopes, and cotton, tobacco, and indigo on the plains; all of which are exported in large quantities from La Guayra,[16] the port of Venezuela. Caracas, the capital, is about twelve miles distant, and is delightfully placed in a valley of the northern coast range. The fine lake of Maracaybo,[17] the largest in South America, lies in this northern "garden of Venezuela."

Guiana

The name Guiana is now generally limited to the region which is divided into the three colonial possessions of British, Dutch, and French Guiana. British Guiana is by far the

[16] La Guaira, Venezuela.
[17] Lake Maracaibo

most flourishing of the three colonies. Georgetown, its capital, on the Demerara, has well-built wooden houses, and is crossed by canals.

[…] Large quantities of sugar, rum, and molasses are exported.

The Great Plains of South America

Draw or label on a map of South America:

- Andes Mountains
- Pacific Ocean
- Orinoco River
- Llanos
- Amazon River
- Atlantic Ocean
- Guiana Highlands
- Brazilian Highlands
- Rio de la Plata (River Plate)
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Amazon Basin
- Selvas
- Equator
- Colorado River
- Pampas
- Pilcomayo River

Find the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator on the globe. Notice where they are in relation to South America.

Definitions:

Llano – (in South America) a treeless grassy plain

Matto – dense tropical American forest (Portuguese)

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 186-188

The Andes, the great water-parting range of South America, are so close to the sea that no large rivers empty themselves into the Pacific. Indeed, most of the water from the Andes is poured into the Orinoco and the Amazon, which carry it across the continent to the Atlantic. Save for the highlands of Guiana and Brazil, the whole eastern slope of South America from the Andes to the Atlantic is a vast plain.

The Orinoco is navigable for 1000 miles at all times of the year; and, of its vast basin, the upper part is one impenetrable forest, and the lower consists of the wide plains called Llanos.

Upper Peru is the cradle of the Amazon, the greatest of rivers, which drains the chain of the Andes from the equator to the 20th parallel of south latitude, its basin including an area ten times as great as that of France.

The Rio de la Plata[18] is 2700 miles long, and for 200 miles from its mouth, up to Buenos Ayres,[19] it is more like a great sea estuary than a river, being never less than 170 miles broad.

Though the basins of the three great rivers are but slightly divided from each other, yet the lowlands they drain form three vast plains differing widely in character.

First, there are the Llanos of the Orinoco, covered with long grass mixed with lilies and other bulbous flowers, and occupying a vast region, level as the surface of the sea. In the wet season, the tropical rains pour down in torrents, hundreds of square miles of the Llanos being flooded by the rivers, and vast numbers of horses and other animals perish in the floods. When the water subsides, these steppes, fertilised by the river mud, are mantled with verdure; but when the dry weather returns, the grass is burnt up, and the air is filled with dust. If by any accident a spark of fire falls on the scorched plains, a conflagration spreads from river to river, destroying every living creature. The Llanos lie between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer.[20]

The great forest, or *Matto*, as it is called by the Brazilians, bordering on the river Amazon, forms the second division of the lowlands of South America. So dense is the vegetation, that the only way of penetrating the forest is to sail up the river or its tributaries. Think of a forest six times the size of France, 1500 miles long, and from 400 to 800 in width, covering the earth between the 7th parallel of north latitude, and the 18th of south!

A few miles to the north of the Rio Colorado the red earth of the Pampas begins, covered with coarse tufted grass, without a tree or bush to relieve the view. This country, nearly as level as the sea and without a stone, extends almost to the table-land of Brazil, and for a thousand miles between the Atlantic and the Andes.

The Pampas afford inexhaustible pasture to thousands of horses and cattle.

Multitudes of animals perish in the river floods, and the drought that sometimes succeeds is even more fatal. Millions of creatures are sometimes destroyed by casual and dreadful conflagrations of the dry grass and thistles which overspread these lands.

The only formidable beasts of prey in South America are the jaguar and the puma. The great tapir, the peccary and the sloth, armadillos and anteaters, opossums and monkeys, are the characteristic animals of the New World. The American monkeys have long tails, and many of them are able to use their tails to swing themselves from tree to tree. Eagles and vultures, especially the famous condor of the Andes, parrots and

[18] River Plate
[19] Buenos Aires
[20] The Tropic of Cancer is about 23° N of the Equator.

humming-birds, and the strange, great-beaked toucan, are some of the birds; while amongst the numerous serpents are the great boas and venomous rattlesnakes, and alligators abound in the tropical rivers.

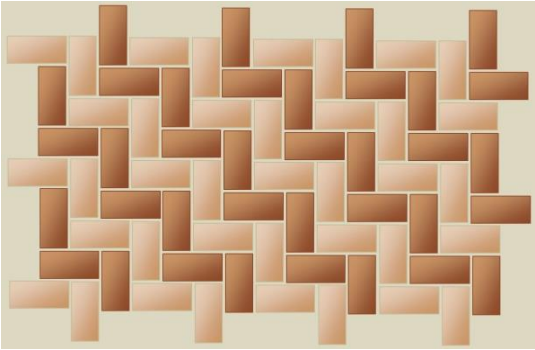
Brazil

Draw or label on a map of Brazil:

- Brazil
- Brasília, Brazil
- Brazilian Highlands
- Campos
- Gran Chaco
- Pantanal
- Paraguay River
- Madeira River
- Tapajós River
- Tocantins River
- Amazon River
- São Francisco River
- Salvador, Brazil (Bahia)
- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Rio de la Plata
- Mouths of the Amazon
- Marañon River
- Peru
- Atlantic Ocean
- Branco River
- Negro River
- Orinoco River
- Purus River
- Xingu River
- Paranaiba River

Definitions

Campo - a grass plain with occasional stunted trees



Take some time to trace the mountain ridges of Brazil. Below, Miss Mason will compare the ranges to a herringbone pattern. Here is an example.[21]

Miss Mason writes of Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina after North and Central America. I have changed the order to complete South America in one section.

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 254-256

This vast empire, larger than the whole of Europe, is by far the most peaceful and prosperous State in South America […]

The general aspect of Brazil, as seen from the sea, is rugged and mountainous; and a high ridge, sometimes called the Brazilian Andes, runs nearly parallel with the coast. Then, a broad valley; then, another level, forming a region of highlands about as lofty as

[21] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:90_degree_Herringbone_bond.png, CC BY-SA 3.0

the first; these sink into the sandy deserts called Campos Parexis,[22] which occupy a large part of the central regions of South America; beyond the deserts is another chain of mountains, the highest in Brazil, where the Paraguay and other great rivers take their rise, and where are some of the mines for which Brazil is famous, rich mines of gold, diamonds, and other precious stones, as well as of iron and copper.

Various spurs from these chains run to the south, to the right, to the left, until the map of Brazil looks pretty well herring-boned with mountain chains; so much so, that the great rivers the Madeira, Tapajos, Tocantins,[23] &c., are unable to find a passage for themselves to the Atlantic, and have swelled the mighty Amazon with their tributary floods. After the Amazon, the San Francisco[24] is the largest of the rivers which make their way to the ocean.

As there are few river mouths, so are there few capes and bays in all the vast extent of coast belonging to Brazil. […] Bahia[25] is built on a small promontory which encloses a bay; and there is the Bay of Rio Janeiro, one of the best harbours in the world; and these are the only inlets worth speaking of between the mouth of the Amazon and that of the La Plata. So that, notwithstanding its long coast-line, Brazil has not great advantages for commerce.

But, you will say, it has such waterways within itself as are to be found nowhere else in the world, – in the Amazon and its mighty tributaries, some of them 1000, and even 2000 miles in length. Look at the map, and see how few are the towns marked in this vast basin of the Amazon. […] The Amazon ought to be a great highway for the world's commerce, instead of which it rolls through impenetrable forests, almost as silent and as little marked by human activities as when the ill-fated Captain Orellana first ventured to sail down this marvelous inland flood.[26]

The magnificent river known by the names of the Amazon, the Marañon, and the Orellana, is supposed to be the largest river in the world. It is formed by two large rivers, which unite on the borders of Peru, and at last falls into the Atlantic by eighty-four mouths, after having received the waters of nearly two hundred tributary streams. Reckoning on all its windings, it is more than 4000 miles in length, and at its mouth it is 180 miles broad. The Rio Negro, one of its tributaries, is connected with the Cassiquaire,[27] a branch of the Orinoco, so that there is thus open water-way between these two great rivers of South America; and this curious connection offers a hint of

[22] Miss Mason is probably referring to the Campos, as they are found on our map, and the Gran Chaco. The phrase "Campos Parexis" is no longer used.
[23] As you may have noticed on your map, the Tocantins River is not a tributary of the Amazon River; it flows directly into the Atlantic Ocean.
[24] São Francisco River
[25] Salvador, Brazil
[26] Francisco de Orellano, Spanish explorer, explored the Amazon River in the early 1540s.
[27] The Casiquiare is too small to show in most world atlases though it varies in size. You will find an article about this interesting distributary in the curated articles.

> what may take place in the future, when forests shall be cut down, and when the stir of busy trading towns shall awake in the now silent depths.
>
> The estuary of La Plata is the great drain for all the central waters south of the tributary streams of this Amazon.
>
> As in all tropical lands, the northern provinces of Brazil are subject to heavy rains, tornadoes, storms, in a word to the utmost fury of the elements; but the southern regions are blest with a settled, temperate, and most healthful climate.
>
> The soil appears to be most fertile everywhere, excepting on the Campos Parexis, but not one-hundredth part of the country is under cultivation; indeed, the whole of the interior is little more than an immeasurable forest.

What do you think about Miss Mason's assertion that the Amazon should be a river of commerce?

What do you think about Miss Mason's prediction that the forests between the Amazon and the Orinoco will be cut down and trading towns built up?

What differences are there between what our family values now and what she and her British students may have valued when she published this book in 1880?

The Mines, the Forest and the Campo, and the Coast Towns

Draw or label on a map of Brazil:

- Brazil
- Brazilian Highlands
- Serra do Espinhaço Mountains
- Diamantina, Brazil
- Amazon River
- Mouths of the Amazon
- Amazon Basin
- Selvas
- Rio de Janerio, Brazil
- Salvador, Brazil (Bahia)
- Recife, Brazil
- Belém, Brazil
- São Paulo, Brazil
- Brasília, Brazil

Definitions:

Schist - a coarse-grained metamorphic rock which consists of layers of different minerals and can be split into thin irregular plates

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The Mines

Villa Rica, or Ouro Preto,[28] occupies two hills and the valley between them. The whole town is white-washed, and there are some really handsome public buildings and fountains, churches, a palace, and a treasury wherein is a mint; and in this mint, not less than two millions of pounds troy-weight of gold where coined within a hundred years or so, all of it washed from the hills upon which Villa Rica stands, and smelted in the smelting-house of the town.

Dreary and unsightly enough is this rich mining district. The mountains and the high valleys consist of a crust of granite overlaid with clay and schist, and in this soft covering it is that the gold is found, sometimes in pellets as big as a pea, but more often in grains so minute that you could hardly see them without a microscope. Below the town of Villa Rica is a small high valley surrounded by mountains. A river flows through the valley, and this river is joined by several streams, all of which have flowed down auriferous (gold-bearing) hills, and through auriferous valleys, and have torn up the soft clay covering of the hills in their course, and so have done a great deal of "gold-washing." The people of Villa Rica know this well; and in times of flood everybody rushes to the river and carries home baskets and barrows and carts full of the precious mud. No yellow gleam in the mud betrays the golden secret to outsiders, but days of patient washing are sure to be rewarded by, at any rate, a coating of gold on the vessel through which the mud of the river is drained, again and again. But the miners do not trust alone to the mud brought down by the river; the hill-sides, the valleys, every acre of this rich

[28] Ouro Preto is a former mining town that lies in the Serra do Espinhaço Mountains.

district has channels cut in it through which an artificial stream is driven, well mixed with the red clay, and blankets, or hairy hides, are set up to catch the grains of gold as the stream is driven through them. Everywhere are water-trenches, and mounds of sifted clay; and the hill-sides are torn, and pierced, and utterly desolate looking.

Within an easy journey of Villa Rica are the famous topaz mines of Capao.[29] "We entered," says a traveler, "a sort of quarry, wherein the rocks were embedded in clay and schist as in the gold mines. In one part I observed two […] poking in the little soft veins with a piece of rusty iron, and on enquiring what they were about, I was told they were miners searching for topazes." The topazes are of various colours – grey, bright yellow, carnation, – and are sometimes very large: as large as a fist, the miners say.

Still amongst this rich eastern chain of mountains is another treasure, more precious than gold or the topaz; a wide district, of which Villa do Principe and Tejuco, or Diamantina,[30] are the centres, is fabulously rich in diamonds. In early days the pebbles of the little streams were gathered by the gold-washers, and used as counters in games and as pretty playthings. By-and-by, some of these pretty pebbles found their way to Holland; the Dutch lapidaries polished them, and, behold, some of the largest and most brilliant diamonds that had yet been seen in the world! Of course, the Dutch merchants profited by this discovery; but in course of time, the Brazilian government took the diamond mines into their own hands.

We have noticed only some of the mines in the eastern mountain range; but there are numerous valuable mines in the interior, and, very probably, many districts yet unworked where the earth is more or less auriferous.

The Forest and the Campos

No one who has not seen it can form any idea of a Brazilian forest: the trees are majestic and beautiful beyond our conception; their very trunks appear to be of a hundred colours and a hundred shapes; the leaves are abundant, beautiful, endlessly various; but the flowers – there are no words to describe them; they are splendid, brilliant, enormous, queer: orange and white and pink, crimson and gold and purple. It seems as if every tree were always laden with blossoms, because luxuriant parasites twine round the stem until frequently the whole tree is a mass of huge, gorgeous blossoms.

Palms, with their waving crowns rising fifty feet above the green heads of the trees below them, are an ornament of the forests, the beauty and majesty of which no words can describe. If the eye turn from the lofty trees to the low brushwood which covers the ground, behold a flower-show, stretching for countless miles in every direction, as if all

[29] Capão do Lana mines, of which you can read more in the curated articles.
[30] Diamantina was originally called *Arraial do Tijuco*.

the hothouses in the world had sent their glowing brilliant treasures to be spread under the trees of these vast forests. But you make your way in these marvelous forests a step at a time, and with the aid of a hatchet, for the creeping plants have spread thick walls of matting from tree to tree.

The animal life of the forests is as endlessly various, as glowing, as peculiar as the vegetation; there are the living gems of the forests, the humming-birds, of many varieties, some of them no bigger than bees, burying their tiny forms in the deep bell-blossoms, whose cups hold the nectar of their dainty diet: then there are the butterflies, as large as these, and as gorgeous: and the beetles with radiant wing-cases, worn as an adornment by the ladies of Brazil: and parrots and parroquets[31] with plumage of the brilliant dye: and enormous white ants, the plague of the forests, which raise for themselves colonies of hills, fully three feet high: and the mosquitos – name of dread to all dwellers within the tropics: and, drollest denizens of the forest, there are the innumerable monkeys which, except in the still noon of the tropics when all nature goes to sleep, keep up a perpetual stir of life, with their queer antics and their noisy chattering. But all this animation may only belong to the margins of the mighty forests; and it is possible that in the green depths to which no man has penetrated there is little sign of animal life.

The Coast Towns

[…The] seaports of the coast are the seats of a very flourishing commerce, carried on with England, Russia, Germany, Norway and Sweden, in fact, with every commercial State of the world.

The low plains which skirt the coast produce sugar freely; and, until of late years, its sugar plantations were the chief source of wealth to Brazil: now, however, coffee forms the chief export of the country, which has become the greatest coffee-growing region in the world. The coffee plant loves the healthy hill-side, and many German colonies are planted on the hills. The tobacco plant grows feely in the forest-clearings, and tobacco is also an important article of export; cotton, like sugar, flourishes on the unhealthy plains. Among the other exports are, gold and precious stones; hides and tallow, tinned meat and horns, from the vast herds of the southern plains; and dye-woods, drugs, timber, and indiarubber from the forests.

All the towns are white and bright looking; the streets are usually narrow, but this is no drawback in a hot climate, as one side of the street affords some shelter to the other from the burning rays of the sun. Rio Janeiro (the river of January), the capital, […] is seated on a beautiful bay, one of the finest in the world, and has the largest commerce of any city in South America; the streets are lively with coaches and omnibuses, and rather finely dressed foot-passengers. […] Bahia also is a well-known commercial town,

[31] parakeet

> which receives annually an immense quantity of English goods. Pernambuco,[32] another important port, is a sort of Venice of the west, whose lofty whitewashed houses, steeples, and towers appear to rise gradually out of the sea. Its harbor is formed by a reef of coral rocks. Para,[33] the port of the Amazons, we have already spoken of. San Paulo[34] carries on great trade by means of its harbor, twelve miles distant. […]

What do you think of the possibility Miss Mason raises that "in the green depths" of the Amazon rainforest there is no animal life?

[32] Recife, Brazil, is the modern capital of the state of Pernambuco.
[33] Belém, Brazil, is the capital of the state of Para.
[34] São Paulo

The Republics of the La Plata

Draw or label on a map of South America:

- Chile
- Argentina
- Paraguay
- Uruguay
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Asunción, Paraguay
- Montevideo, Uruguay
- Mercedes, Uruguay
- Paysandú, Uruguay
- Paraná River
- Paraguay River
- Uruguay River
- Rio de la Plata
- Resistencia, Argentina
- Córdoba, Argentina (Cordova)
- Rosario, Argentina
- Andes Mountains
- Patagonia
- Pampas
- Gran Chaco
- Chaco Boreal
- Strait of Magellan
- Tierra del Fuego

Argentina is officially called the Argentine Republic.

At the time Miss Mason was writing, the boundary between Chile and Argentina was under dispute. The Boundary Treaty of 1881 partitioned Patagonia between Chile and Argentina and established the border between the countries, though disagreements continued for some time.[35]

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 262-267

> […] The great water-course of the country [Argentine Republic] is the Paraná, formed by the union of the Upper Paraná and Paraguay rivers. This is a noble river in all parts of its course through Argentine territory, scarcely ever less than a mile in width, and in some places spreading out in many channels to a breadth of ten miles. Nothing can be finer than the confluence of the Paraná and Paraguay, a short way above the town of Corrientes.[36]
>
> Corrientes, seated at the confluence of the rivers, is built on a high and jutting point of land from which it commands the whole scene. Like all Spanish cities, it is laid out in squares; […] the number of trees and shrubs, flowers and fruits, in the squares and gardens of the city give it a bright, picturesque air. It is a place of busy trade, because the hides, hair, wool, and tallow off the pampas are brought here to be shipped for Buenos Ayres.[37]

[35] Omniatlas website (https://omniatlas.com/maps/south-america/18810723/), accessed on April 9, 2020.
[36] Corrientes, Argentina, is across the Paraná River from Resistencia, Argentina.
[37] Buenos Aires, Argentina

Down the river we go, through the vast pampas, covered with coarse grass, over which roam quite innumerable herds of wild horses and cattle; the distant Gran Chaco on our right shows stretches of dark forest, and here and there a gleaming white patch appears, a "salina," the bed of a salt lake whose waters have disappeared under the hot sun. But we have soon left these behind, and are still in the interminable green sea of the pampas. We catch sight of Cordova,[38] the second town of the State, where there is an observatory; we stop at Rosario, a busier town than Corrientes, and always with the same trade – in hides and hair, wool and tallow, for this animal-produce forms the wealth of the plains.

At last we have reached Buenos Ayres, the great port, and the only large city of the State […]

Buenos Ayres is seated on the broad estuary of the Paraná and Uruguay, the Rio de la Plata, the River of Silver, which gives name to the Argentine, or *Silver*, Republic, and which was so named in the first place, because the discoverer of this mighty sea-like river found silver ornaments amongst the natives on its shores.

Besides her trade with England, from which she receives manufactured goods, Buenos Ayres imports from France great abundance of finery, wine, and other articles; she trades with China for silk, teas, crapes; and with every maritime country of the world for its own commodities; for all of which she pays in hides, tallow, horse-hair, wool, and skins.

Changeable as the climate of Buenos Ayres is, now 90° in the shade, now falling to 35°, or 40°, yet, on the whole, it deserves its name, "Buenos Ayres," "Fine Air."[39]

> "A stranger would think that where beef was to be had for next to nothing, and fish for the trouble of picking it up, there could not be many beggars. He would be mistaken. In Buenos Ayres here are plenty of beggars, but they beg in style. They almost all ride. Mounted on his steed with a wallet behind him, the beggar goes from house to house, soliciting an alms for the love of God."[40]

Even in the city, you may come across groups of the Pampa Indians, a wandering, but on the whole, a peaceful tribe, who generally live on pretty good terms with the people of Buenos Ayres. They come to trade with their wares – beautifully plaited reins for bridles, head-pieces for horses, skins of various sorts, horse girths of various colours, lassos and bolas for the capture of the wild cattle, covers for saddles, and other articles of horse-

[38] Córdoba, Argentina
[39] In the United Kingdom today, temperatures are recorded and reported using the Celsius scale, but Miss Mason used the Fahrenheit for these Buenos Aires temperatures.
[40] Miss Mason is quoting from *Letters on South America Comprising Travels on the Banks of the Paraná and Rio De La Plata* by J.P. and W.P. Robertson (volume II), published in 1843.

gear; for these they get blankets, knives, tobacco, a little white cloth, and a supply of spirits.

It is generally known that America is indebted to Spain for the small stock out of which have grown her present immense herds – thousands upon thousands, millions upon millions, of horses and horned cattle. In 1535, one Mendoza, who landed at Buenos Ayres, brought a few horses with him, some fifteen or twenty; later, another Spaniard took a dozen or so of horned cattle into Paraguay. These have increased until, "when I first landed at Buenos Ayres," says a traveller,

> "I went to the barracas or hide warehouses; large as these were, there was not space for the produce, and the hides they could not contain were stowed in immense heaps in the spacious courts. It was computed that three millions of hides were stowed away in those barracas, besides horse skins, hair, and tallow. At Monte Video[41] it was nearly the same; while the country on both sides of the River Plate seemed as if groaning under the immense pressure of the teeming multitudes of quadrupeds."[42] […]

The preparation of tinned meats, and of extract of meat, is another profitable trade, by means of which the crowded countries of Europe get some of the excellent beef and mutton which would otherwise by wasted upon the Pampas. Fray Bentos[43] and Paysandu, on the Uruguay river, are important centres of this industry.

What has been said of the Argentine Republic applies to the two smaller Republics of *Paraguay*, enclosed between the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, and *Uruguay* or Banda Oriental (the eastern district), on the eastern coast, and watered by the Uruguay. They, too, form part of the vast Pampas. Their wealth consists in their splendid pastures, which support immense herds of cattle, horses, and sheet. *Estancias*, or cattle-farms, are dotted at intervals all over the land. The inhabitants are, in part, the descendants of the original Spanish settlers, mixed with the native Indians, and in part immigrants — English, French, Swiss, Germans, Americans. Paraguay, however, has a distinct trade in "*yerba mate*" a tea made from the dried leaves of a kind of holly that grows along the central heights and is the universal drink of these countries. Asuncion, the […] capital, trades in this tea.

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[41] Montevideo, Uruguay
[42] The source for this quotation is unknown.
[43] Fray Bentos, Uruguay, is near Mercedes, Uruguay.

Central America

Draw or label on a map of Central America:

- Mexico
- Belize
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- El Salvador
- Nicaragua
- Costa Rica
- San José, Costa Rica
- Panama
- Panama Canal
- Colombia
- Caribbean Sea
- Pacific Ocean
- Gulf of Honduras (or Bay of Honduras)
- Lake Nicaragua
- Sierra Madre Mountains

Notice the mountainous nature of much of Central America.

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 191-192

> The narrow, strangely shaped strip of land which joins North and South America, is about twice the size of Great Britain, and contains five republics.[44] Instead of forming one continuous chain, the Andes break here into a series of table-lands. The State of Guatemala rests on such a table-land, consisting of undulating verdant plains of great extent, fragrant with flowers, and crossed by deep valleys. […]
>
> All the eastern slope of Central America to the Caribbean Sea is densely forest-covered […]
>
> Along the western edge of the table-land, there is a long line of volcanoes of various heights. It would seem as if a great crack had been produced in the earth's surface through which the internal fires find a vent. […]
>
> The remaining republics of Central America are Honduras, Sal Salvador, Nicaragua (where is the large lake of the same name), and Costa Rica. Of these the three first are, for the most part, forest-covered, while Costa Rica (rich coast) is by far the most flourishing and cultivated. […] A rich coast this truly is, whether it contain gold or not: two crops may be raised here in the year; forests of the coco-nut palm extend for miles; it produces the cocoa-bean, vanilla, indiarubber, numerous dye-woods, balsams, medicinal plants, sugar, cotton, tobacco – all the usual productions of a tropical clime. But the vegetation is so rank, the high trees so interlaced with creepers, that the light is

[44] Central America, bordered on the north by Mexico and on the south by Colombia, currently has seven countries: Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Panama was covered in this study guide along with Colombia in the South America section.

shut out; and the heat is so intense and rain so frequent, that the climate is exceedingly unhealthy. The capital of Costa Rica is San José, on the central heights of the isthmus. […]

The West Indies
The Greater Antilles

Draw or label on a map of Central America:

- West Indies
- Gulf of Mexico
- Caribbean Sea
- Atlantic Ocean
- Venezuela
- Florida
- Greater Antilles
- Cuba
- Hispaniola
- Haiti
- Dominican Republic
- Jamaica
- Cayman Islands
- Havana, Cuba
- Kingston, Jamaica
- Bahamas
- Puerto Rico
- Lesser Antilles

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 244-249

The West Indies

The West Indies Islands form a long Archipelago, shutting in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. They are divided into three principal groups: the Greater Antilles, including the large islands of Cuba, Hayti, Porto Rico,[45] and Jamaica; the low, flat, coralline group of the Bahamas, and the long chain of the Lesser Antilles, really a chain of volcanic mountain tops.

Though they lie almost entirely within the tropics, their elevation, the cool breezes off the surrounding seas, and the prevailing trade-wind which blows over them, make the climate of these islands bearable, and even pleasant […] The southern islands have two rainy seasons, one in the summer, and one near the end of the year. The northern islands have their rainy season during the summer months. Terrific hurricanes sweep the coasts occasionally during the months of August and September. […]

Sugar, rum, and molasses, all the products of the cane, are the great articles of export. Coffee, cocoa, and cotton are largely cultivated, as well as tobacco, spices, certain dye-woods, and tropical fruits, such as bananas and pine-apples, the mango, guava, shaddock, pomegranate, &c. […]

[45] Puerto Rico

The Greater Antilles

[…] Cuba is the largest of the West India Islands, and produces more sugar than any country in the world. The great sugar plantations are upon the northern side of the island […]

Besides sugar, cocoa, and coffee, tobacco, cotton, and indigo are largely grown in Cuba: its tobacco is specially famous; and every one has heard of Havanna cigars, though perhaps every one does not know that Havanna is a large and handsome town, beautifully situated, with much commerce and a large population.

It is by far the most important city and the greatest port in the West Indies, and it is the greatest sugar market in the world.

A range of mountains, rising to the height of 8000 feet, fills the centre of the island, much of which is covered with dense forests.

Porto Rico, the second Spanish island, is highly cultivated, and has many cattle-farms, or "Estancias," as well as plantations of sugar, coffee, and tobacco.

Hayti,[46] or St. Domingo, is an island about the size of Ireland. The interior is mountainous, and the greater part of the island is covered with dense forests of mahogany, cedar, logwood, and other valuable timber.

It is remarkable chiefly for its stormy history. On the shores of Hayti, the first settlement of Spanish America was placed by Columbus; and here were planted the first gangs of negro slaves. In the course of time, certain French pirates established themselves on the western coasts, and, by the peace of Ryawick, this part of the island was ceded to France; but the French settlers proved brutal masters to their slaves, and during the period of the French Revolution a terrible insurrection broke out in Hayti […]

Jamaica, an island about four-fifths the size of Yorkshire, is by far the most important of the British possessions in the West Indies.[47] It has a central chain of high mountains – the Blue mountains (7000 ft.), -- is well watered, has many capital harbours and a fertile soil, suited to the growth of the sugar-cane. […] [S]ince the Emancipation Act of 1831 the productions of the island have declined. Sugar, rum and molasses, coffee, all-spice, cocoa, cotton, tobacco, ginger, indigo, and logwood are the principal exports; and Jamaica imports British manufactures for her own use, and for exportation to the neighbouring continent and islands.

[46] Haiti and Dominican Republic are two countries now found on the single island of Hispanola.
[47] Jamaica became an independent country in 1962.

The island is divided into three counties with familiar English names – Surrey, Middlesex, and Cornwall.[48] Kingston is a busy port with a fine harbor, and is the most important town; near it are the ruins of Port Royal, once a beautiful city, but now almost entirely destroyed by earthquakes.[49] […]

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[48] The counties retain the British names.
[49] Port Royal was destroyed by an earthquake in 1692.

The Lesser Antilles

You may find it difficult to label the many small islands of the Lesser Antilles; just do the best you can.

Draw or label on a map of Central America:

- West Indies
- Gulf of Mexico
- Caribbean Sea
- Venezuela
- Florida
- Greater Antilles
- Lesser Antilles
- Virgin Islands
- St. Kitts & Nevis
- Montserrat
- Antigua & Barbuda
- Guadeloupe
- Dominica
- Martinique
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Grenada
- Barbados
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Bonaire
- Curaçao
- Aruba
- Bahamas

Notice how some of these islands are countries and some are territories or areas that remain under the jurisdiction of European countries or the United States.

Miss Mason will mention the **Bermuda Islands**. Find them in your atlas, but they are too far north to appear on your map.

Definitions:

> **Bitumen** - a black viscous mixture of hydrocarbons obtained naturally or as a residue from petroleum distillation
>
> **Parterre** - a level space in a garden or yard occupied by an ornamental arrangement of flower beds

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 249-253

> Barbados is the most ancient colony of the British Empire. It is a level island, except in the north-east, which is called Scotland. […]
>
> Bridge Town, the capital, lies round the bay, and contains some handsome houses, but there are no shop windows as in an English town, and the buildings are all rather low for fear of hurricanes. Codrington College, a very handsome building, and the chief seat of education in the West Indies, is prettily placed on the borders of Scotland.

Trinidad – The approach to Trinidad through the blue Gulf of Paria[50] is more beautiful than the reader can imagine, unless he has seen for himself the glories of the tropics; and Port of Spain is one of the handsomest towns of the West Indies. The streets are wide, long, and straight; there are handsome stone houses and a public walk shaded with trees, a very handsome Protestant church, and a spacious market, lively with the gay costumes and merry chatter of French and Spanish market women. But the heat! "Gentle reader, whilst thou pokest thy coal fire, think, oh! think, of the mercury at 94° in the shade."[51]

"On the morning of such a day, we set out to visit one of the finest cocoa plantations in the island. The cocoa, which grows from ten to fifteen feet in height, is a delicate plant, and cannot bear exposure to the direct rays of the sun. For this reason, certain tall trees are left in the plantation, whose meeting branches and evergreen leaves form a sun-proof screen, under which the cocoa flourishes. One main road led through the plantation, from which numberless alleys branched off, and these alleys, and indeed all parts of the plantation, were fringed with coffee bushes, which, with their dark Portugal laurel leaves, jasmine blossoms, and most exquisite perfume, filled us with delight."

Trinidad is very fertile, and produces coffee, and sugar, rum, molasses, a large quantity of cocoa, and some cotton and ginger. In the south-west is the famous Pitch Lake, which is really a wide plain covered with bitumen. The bitumen is used in making the roads, and there is always a hot unpleasant smell issuing from the lake under the action of the sun.

Grenada is, perhaps, the most beautiful of the Antilles. The harbor is one of the finest in the West Indies, and is free as yet from hurricanes. The large and picturesquely placed town of St. George covers a peninsula which projects into the bay. In every direction the eye wanders over richly cultivated valleys, orchards of shaddocks[52] and oranges, houses with gardens, […] huts embowered in plantain leaves, mountains and little hills, wood and copse.

St. Vincent's is another lovely island; indeed, the view of the town of Kingston from the Bay is thought by many to be the most beautiful of the Antilles, but the landscape has not the Italian softness of Grenada.

Sta. Lucia,[53] too, is amongst the beautiful Antilles. Nothing can exceed the beauty of night is St. Lucia, as in all these tropical islands; the great stars swim and shimmer in a sea of the softest azure; and, looking round, you may see all the woods upon the

[50] The Gulf of Paria is the small gulf between Venezuela and Trinidad.
[51] 94° F; Miss Mason is quoting in part from *Six Months in the West Indies*, *in 1825* by Henry Nelson Coleridge. The following paragraph is from the same source.
[52] A large yellow or orange citrus fruit
[53] Santa Lucia, also St. Lucia.

mountains illuminated with tens of thousands of flaming torches moving in every direction, now gathering together in a sort of globe, now dispersing in spangles. No one who has not seen them can conceive the magical beauty of these tropical fire-flies.

Dominica – The landscape behind the town of Roseau is one of the very finest in the West Indies. The valley runs up a gentle slope for many miles between mountains most of which are clothes to their cloudy tops with rich parterres of green coffee which perfumes the air. Going up the valley to visit the coffee plantations, you are struck with the size of the ferns – whole forests of them in the dips of the hills, each measuring twenty or twenty-five feet in height, and yet as dainty and delicate as the finest hot-house ferns in England.

Monserrat is another charming island, which the inhabitants call the Montpelier of the West Indies, for its balmy air and healthful breezes.

Nevis is, perhaps, the most captivating of the West Indian Islands. From the south and west it seems to be nothing but a cone, rising in the most graceful way out of the sea, and carrying its head in the clouds. It is deliciously green, perfectly cultivated; studded with the handsome houses of the old planters, and with churches peeping out from the most picturesque spots.

St. Christopher's[54] had the honour of being named by Christopher Columbus. Stretching from the rugged central mountains to the shore are endless cane-fields, like a carpeting of the softest green velvet. Basseterre, the capital, is a large town with many good houses and one large square.

Anguilla[55] is the exception to most West Indian islands; here you do not see countless windmills employed in crushing the sugar cane, nor the tropical palm, which is an equally characteristic feature of West Indian scenery. A great source of wealth to the island is a large salt pond, and the inhabitants think as much of their crop of salt as the planters do of their canes.

Antigua has no name for beauty amongst the West Indies; it is supposed to be dry and dusty, and it is true that the inhabitants depend almost entirely upon rain water. Yet Antigua has fine old houses in lovely green parks belonging to the planters, and pleasant gorgeous flowers and juicy fruits, and most abundant verdure even by its roadsides. More than half the island is covered with sugar plantations.

Barbuda is really a private estate belonging to the Codrington family; here are no sugar plantations, and very little land is under cultivation at all, but cattle, pigs, and poultry are raised, and there is a fine deer park. The island is flat and uninteresting.

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[54] Saint Christopher Island, more commonly known today as St. Kitts
[55] Anguilla is a small island, a British Overseas Territory, north of St. Kitts.

The above are the most important of the Lesser Antilles which belong to Britain. Guadaloupe and Martinique, with its neat, bright little capital of St. Pierre, are the most important of the French islands. Of the half-dozen Dutch islands, Curaçao, where the liqueur of that name is prepared from the juice of the lime, is the best known.

The Bahamas are the most northerly of the West Indies; they include several hundreds of little islets, only about twenty of which are inhabited. They are all low and level, the lowest, which are called *Keys*, hardly rising above the surface of the water. Salt, timber, turtles, and cattle are their most valuable products.

The Bermudas are a small group of coral islands […] Great numbers of turtle are caught in the summer, and the fisheries are important. Both of these groups of coral islands belong to Britain.[56]

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[56] The Bahamas are an independent country. The Bermuda Islands remain a UK territory.

North America
and Part II

Draw or label on a map of North America:

- Arctic Ocean
- Gulf of Mexico
- Alleghany Mountains
- Appalachian Mountains
- Rocky Mountains
- Atlantic Ocean
- Pacific Ocean
- Mexico
- Mexico City, Mexico
- Pico de Orizaba (mountain)
- Popocatépetl (mountain)
- Colima, Mexico
- Gulf of California
- Colorado Plateau
- Grand Canyon
- Colorado River
- Great Basin
- Great Salt Lake
- Great Plains
- Coast Mountains
- Baja California
- Alaska
- Sierra Nevada Mountains
- Cascade Mountains
- Denali
- Mt. Logan
- Mt. Ranier
- Mt. St. Helens
- Sierra Madre Oriental
- Sierra Madre Occidental
- Denver, CO
- Pike's Peak
- Mississippi River
- Great Lakes
    - Lake Superior
    - Lake Michigan
    - Lake Huron
    - Lake Erie
    - Lake Ontario
- British Columbia
- Labrador
- Greenland
- St. Lawrence River
- Nelson River
- Mackenzie River
- Pennsylvania
- Toronto, Canada

Definitions:

Barranca – narrow, winding river gorge

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 193-199

North America

North America, like the southern continent, consists of a vast central plain, reaching from the Arctic shores to the Gulf of Mexico, with a picturesque and pleasantly wooded

range of mountains on the east—the Alleghanies[57]—and on the west, a great mountain system, the northward continuation of the Andes; beyond the mountains are, the Atlantic slope on the east, and the Pacific slope on the west.

Continuing northwards from Central America, we find the mountains spreading into the most extensive table-land on the face of the earth, that of Mexico, measuring 1600 miles at its greatest length.[58] On the surface of the plateau, groups and ridges of mountains arise; but except where these occur, it is as level as the ocean. Round the city of Mexico, and scattered elsewhere on the plateau, are the snow-crowned cones of great volcanoes,--Orizaba, known as the "mountain of the stars," because its always fiery crater looks like a star in the darkness of the night; Popocatepetl (17,720 feet), the loftiest in Mexico, Colima,[59] and others. Deep cavities, called *Barancas*,[60] scar the table-land in all directions; they are large rents, two or three miles broad, and many more in length, often 1000 feet deep, with a brook flowing at the bottom.

The table-land of Mexico is continued northward to the Artic Ocean, in a long chain of desert plateaus higher than the highest summits of the British Isles, which lie between the Pacific coast range and the Rocky Mountains. This desert region consists of three great plateaus, or *basins*.

The most southerly is the basin of the Colorado at the head of the Gulf of California, a region of Mountain ridges and table-lands nearly as large as France: the main river and its tributaries have scooped narrow ravines, called cañons, of awful depth through these dry, barren table-lands. The Grand Cañon of the Colorado is 500 miles in length and from 2000 to 5000 feet in depth. Thus the streams of the region, instead of flowing near the surface and watering the country, are lost in the depths of the earth, leaving the uplands barren.

The next of these plateaus is what is called the Great Basin, or the Great Salt Desert of Utah, larger than the last, and consisting of vast, high, desert steppes, many of them covered with incrustations of salt. It is a dry, rainless region, because the winds from the Atlantic drop their moisture while blowing over the continent and across the Rocky Mountains. This desert has therefore few streams, but it has innumerable lakes, all of them, like the Great Salt Lake and the Utah Lake,[61] charged with salt.

The third division of the plateau which reaches up to the Arctic Ocean is narrower than the others, and has fertile valleys and table-lands, with many lakes, and feeds some of the largest rivers.

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[57] The Alleghany Mountains are part of the larger range, the Appalachian Mountains.
[58] The Mexican Plateau ("the table-land of Mexico") is found between the Sierra Madre Orientatl and Sierra Madre Occidental, the mountain ranges on the eastern and western areas of Mexico.
[59] Colima (the volcano) is near the city of Colima in Mexico.
[60] barrancas
[61] The Utah Lake is just south of the Great Salt Lake.

The Coast Mountains of the Pacific, which bound the great desert belt on the west, run parallel with the Rocky Mountains along the whole length of the coast from the peninsula of California[62] to that of Alaska. It is a wide and very lofty chain, with many peaks higher, even, that those of the Rocky Mountains.

In the peninsula of California it is a single ridge; but in N. lat. 35°, it divides into two branches, running northwards, namely, the Coast Mountains and the Sierra Nevada; and between these lies the famous gold-producing valley of California. Further north, the Sierra Nevada is continued in the Cascade Mountains, so called from the number of rapids and waterfalls which pour down their slopes. This is the loftiest part of the whole coast range, and contains three peaks which are 14,500 feet, or more, above the sea—Mount Baker, Mount Fairweather, and Mount St. Elias (14,970 feet), all of which are volcanoes, occasionally active.[63]

The Rocky Mountains are the main chain of North America, as the Andes are of South. The mountain-mass leaves Mexico under the name of the Sierra Madre, and, in Colorado, spreads out into a region of plateaus and peaks fully 300 miles wide. The high valleys or table-lands amongst the mountains are called parks, here; and very beautiful they are, and very large. […] They are green and lovely, wooded, and well watered; are the feeding-grounds of great herds of cattle, and are surrounded by such snow-capped giants as Long's Peak[64] and Pike's Peak, whose sides are clothed with pine forests. […]

Part II

Of the great lowlands which fill the centre of North America, the most remarkable are the vast prairies of the Mississippi, reaching from the great lake region of the north to the Gulf of Mexico. Though sometimes undulating, these savannahs are oftener level and interminable as the ocean, and covered with long rank grass of tender green, mixed with lilies and other bulbous flowers, which fill the air with fragrance.

From British Columbia across to Canada and Labrador, pine forests are the natural covering of the land. In the severe climate of the lands which edge the Polar ocean,[65] the trees become stunted and small, and at last give place to barren mosses and frozen swamps. Here, in the short summer, the surface soil thaws into mud and marsh, and clouds of mosquitoes fill the air; in winter, snows cover the land, and the lakes are hard frozen for half the year, and the thermometer falls far below the zero point. Farthest north of all, are the barren islands of the Arctic—the rocky points showing dark above the covering of snow and the ice-covered sea around them, and the huge island of

[62] Baja California
[63] You have already marked on your map mountains and volcanoes higher or more active than the three Miss Mason knew when she wrote her book.
[64] Longs Peak is in Rocky Mountain National Park, near Denver.
[65] The Arctic Ocean

Greenland, apparently covered, except for a narrow strip of its western coast, by one vast sheet of glacier ice. “Hvidsark” or “White Shirt” was the name given to it by the Dane who first discovered this land of desolation, and certainly that is a far more suitable name for it than Greenland.

It is a Danish possession, and there are a few small Danish colonies scattered […] on the western coast.

As the water-parting—the Rocky Mountains—is in the west, all the great rivers of North America flow eastward, to the Atlantic. Two of the most remarkable rivers in the world are the Mississippi, the “Father of Waters,” and the St. Lawrence, which, though not nearly so great a river as the Mississippi, carries to the ocean more fresh water than any other river of the world; a glance at the map will show why—it has in its basin a chain of great fresh-water lakes, inland seas almost, one of them, Lake Superior, being the largest fresh-water lake on the earth. Further north, in the basins of the Nelson and Mackenzie, are four or five other great lakes, but the rest of the low land of America is altogether without large lakes.

Maize[66] is the only cultivated grain native to America; sugar, cotton, coffee, and many other plants of which large crops are now raised, have been introduced by Europeans. Tobacco and the potato are, however, native to America; as are also arrowroot and tapioca, cocoa, and vanilla. The most important mineral product of North America is its gold, which is found on both sides of the Rocky Mountains; silver, also, is found in the west; and copper, iron, and lead in many parts. Nowhere in the world are there richer coal-fields than in eastern North America; and “oil wells,” yielding vast quantities of petroleum, have been found, especially in Pennsylvania and near the town of London in Canada.[67] […]

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[66] Maize is what we in America call corn.
[67] London, Ontario is north of Lake Erie, about two hours’ drive from Toronto.

Mexico

Draw or label on a map of North America:

- Mexico
- Mexico City, Mexico
- Sierra Madre Oriental
- Sierra Madre Occidental
- Colorado River
- Lerma River
- Rio Grande
- Guadalajara, Mexico
- Salamanca, Mexico
- Querétaro, Mexico
- Popocatépetl
- Pico de Orizaba
- Veracruz, Mexico
- San Luis Potosí, Mexico
- Gulf of Mexico
- Yucatan Peninsula
- Cozumel Island
- Isthmus of Tehuantepec
- Pacific Ocean
- Gulf of California
- Baja California
- Guatemala
- Belize

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 238-243

No country in the world is more delightfully places, or more rich in all manner of natural gifts, than Mexico […]

Mexico is really a narrow isthmus between the two vast oceans of the world, nowhere more than 500 miles across, and in the south scarcely more than a hundred. Here is a situation for commerce, unrivalled in the world! […]

Judging by its position on the map—between 14° and 31° north latitude—you would think that Mexico must be an altogether tropical country, yet by far the greater part of it produces wheat, barley, maize, grapes, and all kinds of temperate fruits, apples, peaches, and strawberries—such strawberries! […] beans and peas, potatoes, and vegetables of all kinds flourish here; in fact, with a few exceptions, just what is grown in every English county, or in Northern France, or Germany.

Central Mexico is a vast plateau, which becomes no warmer on approaching the equator, because the land gradually rises from 3000 feet where the plateau begins, to 9000 feet a little to the south of the city of Mexico: in fact, the southern part of the plateau is colder than the northern: but the air is everywhere clear, bracing, and delightful, and the temperature for the year is about the same as that of the countries to the south of the Alps. This plateau forms a sort of bridge to connect the Rocky Mountains of North America with the Andes of the south. Do not think of it as a flat table land: it is broken into many high valleys, each girded by its own wall of mountains which rise from the table-land to about the height of our highest English mountains.

The finest of these valleys is the great central valley of Mexico. It is about 200 miles long by 50 wide, and is one of the riches portions of the country. Looking down from the pass at its head, a splendid vale lies before you, rich with golden wheat-fields, with a fine river flowing through it […]

The want of rivers, or of any means of watering the soil, is the great defect of Mexico. Such streams as there are, frequently lose themselves at the bottom of channels 1000 feet deep, and with walls as steep as the sides of a house, covered all the way down with a luxuriant vegetation of trees and shrubs. These bright and fertile *barrancas* are often several miles across, with a small stream running through the middle of the valley at the bottom: but certainly no Alpine passes offer such difficulties to travellers.

The cities scattered over this Mexican plateau are handsome enough: there are the charming cities of Guadalajara, and Salamanca, and Queretaro[68]—all with good buildings and magnificent churches, and open markets, gay with flowers and abundant fruits, and lively with parrots and parroquets. Upon the pleasant raised pavements, bordered with trees, the ladies take exercise, arrayed in the Spanish mantilla and in long dresses, because a Mexican lady would take shame to herself if the passers-by could catch sight of her feet. Every lady wears a high-necked, long-sleeved chemise, most beautifully embroidered, in red, blue, or black […]

Mexico, the capital, is a beautiful city, situated on a wide plateau, surrounded by lofty mountains. The streets are broad and clean, well-paved and well-lighted, and the principal square, which contains the cathedral, a palace, schools, and other public buildings, is one of the finest in the western world. The *paseos*, or walks, of Mexico are really delightful, planted with double rows of trees, and going far into the country on every side. The city has many fine churches and monasteries: indeed, all over the country the churches are numerous and fine […]

To the south of the city, a chain of mighty volcanoes stretches across the country from east to west—*not* running in a line from north to south, as do the other volcanoes of America. You may see some of them from the city, with sombre sides, and a cap of snow 3000 feet deep, dazzling under the tropic sun; there are Orizaba and Istaccihuatl (the white woman),[69] Popocatapetl (the smoking mountain), and Jorullo, much lower than the rest, but the youngest of the volcanoes, having arisen about a century ago, after a great volcanic eruption which raised all the surrounding district several feet. […]

Hitherto, we have spoken only of the central plateau: but this is not the whole of Mexico: round this plateau lies a belt of really tropical country, varying from 50 to 200

[68] Querétaro
[69] Iztaccihuatl

miles in breadth; and the traveller who would reach the sea-port town of Vera Cruz[70] must descend the plateau, and cross this tropical belt.

> "The cliff by which we descended to the lowlands is almost perpendicular, and the road—which is swarming with pack-mules and long waggon-trains [sic] from the country below—takes twenty-two sharp turns down it; that we ever reached the foot to breathe once more in safety was only owing to the magnificent driving of our *cochero*.
>
> "The country we pass through now is the strangest change from that we have let. We go through a long valley where are rich fields of maize and sugar-cane, with hedges of huge aloes in full flower, and past palm-thatched huts, with green parrots crawling about the doorways, surrounded by neat gardens full of bananas and pine-apples; and through cool, shady groves, where oranges and mangoes and bananas, and a hundred other beautiful plants and flowers grow with the prodigal luxuriance one only sees in the tropics.
>
> "Then the road leads through hot wide plains, through blinding dust and broiling sun, with the occasional shade of the coco-nut palm; and at last, white buildings appear, which are built entirely of white coral, and soon we are within Vera Cruz […]
>
> "Oh, the heat of that night in Vera Cruz! The very breeze was a sirocco, pouring hot air upon us, and by its very violence, heating instead of cooling one's skin. The town is small, but the market is well worth a visit, not only on account of the tropical fruits and vegetables, but for the quantities of birds, especially parrots, which the Indios bring in from the neighbouring forests."[71]

The hot belt round the central plateau is called by the Mexicans the *Tierra Calienta*, or Torrid Zone: its products are altogether tropical—sugar, cotton, rice, coffee, tobacco, cocoa, indigo, tropical fruits—the banana, lime, pine-apples, figs, coco-nuts, guava, mango, and fifty other things. The plateau is known as the *Tierra Fria*, or Cold Zone, though certainly only the children of the tropics could think it cold: and a Temperate Zone, or *Tierra Templada*, is found in the long slopes by which the Tierra Fria is reached from the low coast plains.

Great as is the wealth of Mexico above ground, her mines of precious metals are her chief treasures. The principal deposits of gold and silver lie along the whole range of the Tierra Madre, as far as 21° N. lat. South of this, the whole breadth of the country is so dotted over with mines, that it may be described as one vast mining region, second to

[70] Veracruz
[71] Miss Mason's source is unknown.

none in the world. The town of San Luis Potosi[72] is also the centre of a mining region. […]

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[72] San Luis Potosí

The United States
In the Eastern States

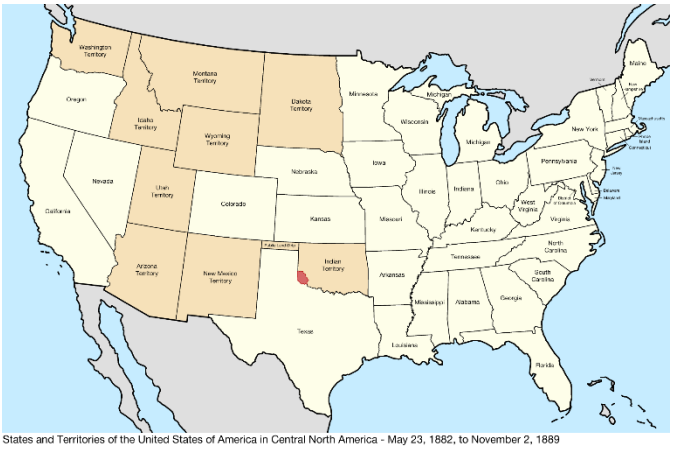
Draw or label on a map of the continental United States:

- United States
- Indiana
- Missouri
- Illinois
- Colorado
- California
- Virginia
- Atlantic Ocean
- Hudson River
- New York City, NY
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia
- Pennsylvania
- Philadelphia, PA
- Florida
- Louisiana
- New Orleans, LA
- Boston, MA
- Massachusetts
- Pacific Ocean
- 49th parallel (draw this in)
- Canada
- Mexico
- Mississippi River
- Alleghany Mountains
- Appalachian Mountains
- St. Lawrence River
- Gulf of Mexico
- Coastal Plain
- Ohio
- Cape Cod
- New York (state)
- Long Island
- Delaware River
- Washington, D.C.
- Maine
- Gulf of Maine
- Baltimore, MD
- Maryland
- Chesapeake Bay
- Albany, NY
- Niagara Falls
- Great Dismal Swap
- Richmond, VA
- Charleston, WV
- West Virginia
- Okefenokee Swamp
- The Everglades
- Alabama River
- New Hampshire
- Vermont
- Rhode Island
- Connecticut
- New Jersey
- Delaware

Recall, once again, that Miss Mason is writing in the 1880s, when many of today's states were still territories. The map shown below shows the states as she probably knew them.[73] (Turn the page for the *Geography Reader* excerpt.)

[73] Golbez, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>, via Wikimedia Commons

We must not allow ourselves to think of the "United States" as "a country of America." They are really eight-and-thirty distinct States or countries, many of them vastly larger than Britain; the whole, to be compared with Europe in point of size. Each State is free, a republic, having its own laws, taxes, and government; but, for the well-being of the whole, the eight-and-thirty States are united in a brotherhood, or, as it is called, a *Federal* Republic. Being united by this federal bond, all the States have certain laws in common—relating to education, service in the army, the right to choose members of their Congress or Parliament, &c. The English tongue is spoken throughout the republic.



States and Territories of the United States of America in Central North America - May 23, 1882, to November 2, 1889

The inland and Western States, including most of those which do not border on the Atlantic, have a simple enough history: the people of the Eastern States, and with them shoals of emigrants from the Old World, have been, for a century or more, migrating in a steady stream to the wide, solitary plains of the West, where the settler, if he have pluck and patience, may make, at least, a home for himself and his family. As settlers congregate, towns grow up, and local laws are needed, and by-and-by a new State is formed. In this way have sprung up Indiana, Missouri, Illinois, &c.—flourishing States with large towns and large and busy populations, which fifty or seventy years ago were parts of the wide prairie-waste. Where, as in Colorado and California, the reports of rich finds of gold have drawn men by the thousands to the new settlements, the growth of the State has been still more marvellously rapid.

But the thirteen States which border the Atlantic have histories of their own, various, and full of interest. There is Virginia, which Sir Walter Raleigh named in honor of his "Virgin Queen," and where he founded the first English colony, at "James Town," during the reign of James I. And this same King James, quite unwittingly, laid the foundation of America's fortunes. In the year 1620, twelve years after the founding of James Town, a ship called the *Mayflower* left Plymouth with a hundred persons on board, grave men, mothers, children, little used to voyaging in the open seas. A stormy voyage of sixty-three days brought them to the American coast, and, after much search, they found a harbour which they named "New Plymouth," after the Plymouth they had left. But before they tried to land, the men signed a document by which they pledged themselves to obey all laws made for the good of the colony; and then, after psalm-singing and prayer, a party of them attempted to row ashore in the face of a bitter wind

which froze the very spray as it dashed upon their coats. And the landing! Snowy hills and icy rivers, and the graves of Indians were what they found. […] Their New England came to include the six Northern States on the Atlantic sea-board, which is to this day one of the most prosperous, populous, intellectual, and in every way flourishing parts of the New World […]

A year after the landing of the *Mayflower*, the Dutch bought Manhattan Island (at the mouth of Hudson river, on which the central portion of New York now stands) from the native Indians for twenty-four dollars, and founded there the settlement which in time became New York. But we cannot stop to recount the early history of each of the States. There are the two Carolinas and Georgia, named after our English kings, Charles II. (Carolus II.) and George II., who made grants of lands of this new continent to certain companies of settlers. William Penn, the quaker, was one of those to whom Charles II. made a grant of the lands west of the Delaware, with permission to call the region by his own name; so he took out a ship-load of emigrants wherewith to settle *Penn*sylvania, and they built the good city of Philadelphia. Florida was the seat of a Spanish settlement; and Louisiana, named in honour of Louis XIV., with its capital New Orleans, after the French Orleans, tells its own history of a French origin.

Though of various origins, the British colonies were united by common interests, and were ready to unite in resisting a common grievance. Such a grievance arose when the British Government, under George III., proposed to tax these rich colonies for the benefit of the mother-country. A stamp duty was at first enacted, but the Act caused so much indignation that it was repealed, in favour of a duty on tea. From north to south in the colonies, however, it was determined that this tax should not be paid, and rioters in Boston, disguised as Indians, threw several cargoes of the offending tea into the harbour. War was declared in 1775, and the famous battle of Bunker's Hill, near Boston, was fought. The colonists were victorious, and next year the colonies proclaimed their separation from Britain, declaring themselves free and independent, under the title of the thirteen United States of America; but it was not until 1783 that the war came to an end, and the independence of the United States was fully acknowledged. […]

The United States now include the whole of American from ocean to ocean, in an east and west direction; and from the boundary line with Canada on the north to that of Mexico on the south. This vast country falls into four natural divisions,--the Atlantic slope and highlands on the east, the Mississippi valley, the western highlands, and the Pacific slope.

In the Eastern States

This section includes the curving ridges of the Alleghany mountains,[74] which extend from the St. Lawrence, south-westward, towards the Gulf of Mexico. […] The slope from

[74] The Alleghany Mountains are a part of the Appalachian Mountain Range.

these mountains to the sea is called the Atlantic plain, and varies in width from a mere strip of coast on the north, to a breadth of 300 miles in the south. The Alleghanies or Appalachian mountains are […] long, unbroken ridges, like huge wrinkles or furrows, with long, narrow valleys between them, one after another in endless succession, the whole clothed with wood, chiefly oak—this is their general aspect; but every now and then a break occurs for the passage of a stream, and then you get a really lovely glen. In the summer, the north-western slopes are glorious with the azalea of every shade, from a pale pink to a deep crimson; it is called here the wild honeysuckle. […]

Stretching from this chain is the great Appalachian coal-field, which extends through Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio, with a length of 720 miles, containing it is said, coal enough to supply the world for 4000 years! Iron occurs with the coal in great abundance. […]

Boston, on Massachusetts Bay, close to Cape Cod, under whose shelter the *Mayflower* first touched on American soil, is the great city of New England, and is named in honour of some of the Pilgrim Fathers who came from Boston in Lincolnshire. […] Boston is truly a charming city, seated on a beautiful harbour, and is at once a flourishing seaport and the seat of the most important university in America; for Cambridge, where Harvard College is situated, is really a suburb of the city, three or four miles distant. A monument crowns Bunker's Hill, beyond Boston, a spot dear to every American. […]

The scenery round Boston, and, indeed, through-out the New England States, is pleasing; hill and valley, river and brook and waterfall, broad meres, rocky coasts with lovely inlets, are met with everywhere. Manufactures are, on the whole, more important here than agriculture; indeed, it has been truly said that New England owes its wealth to its industry, the soil being sterile, the timber small, and the native productions being—ice and granite. […]

The six Middle Atlantic States are, however, those in which the greatest towns are gathered—the centres of commerce and manufactures. Foremost of these is New York, the "empire city," the great merchant city of the New World, and second only to London in commercial importance. It lies at the mouth of the Hudson, here fully three miles wide, on the narrow island of Manhattan. You sail into the city between green islands,--Staten Island, clustered with charming villas buried in trees; Coney Island, famed for "clams," a favourite shell-fish; Long Island, &c.: and around the magnificent harbour of New York Bay are the suburbs of Brooklyn and Jersey, which have themselves risen into great cities. The chief street of New York is the famous Broadway—a grand street, miles in length, and lined with great hotels and splendid buildings of marble and iron. Fifth Avenue is a street of magnificent houses, very lofty, many of them beautiful white marble, and never dirty in this clear air. But, like other great capitals, New York has its full share of filthy and unsavoury slums.

New York has a delightful pleasure garden in its Central Park, one of the most beautiful anywhere, with fine sheets of water, piles of grey rocks overgrown with the red foliage of the Virginian creeper, groups of noble trees, and beds of brilliant flowers.

From New York, we journey to Philadelphia on the Delaware river, which comes next to New York in population, and its manufactures exceed those of any other town in the States in value. On the journey, large fields of maize, and villas with neat flower gardens, are a pleasant novelty after the native forests and new clearings of the north. The streets of Philadelphia rival those of a Dutch town in cleanliness, and the beautiful avenues of various kinds of trees afford a most welcome shade. Washington, the capital of the United States, is, on the contrary, a disappointing place; here "Congress"—the American Parliament—meets, and here are the chief Courts of Justice, and, therefore, the principal persons in the country meet here at certain seasons […] General Washington, the first President of the Republic, is said to have selected the site of the capital as the most central spot on the Atlantic border, midway between Maine and Florida […] Washington has, however, the Capitol, built of white marble, the most magnificent building of the States; and also the famous "White House," the official residence of the Presidents of the United States. Baltimore, on Chesapeake Bay, is a great commercial city and seaport, but with many poor and crowded streets like the worst in Manchester or Liverpool; Albany is a well-built, important town, and is a good point from which the reach the celebrated Falls of Niagara.

The glory of the magnificent Falls of Niagara is shared between Canada and the States. There are two falls, divided by "Goat Island;" and the "Horse-shoe Falls," on the Canadian side of the river Niagara, is thought the more picturesque: their height is not more than 160 feet, but it is their breadth and the enormous volume of water which descends by them which rank the Falls of Niagara amongst the wonders of the world. Nothing strikes a visitor so much as the excessive beauty of the falling water—so soft and white and light, like a vast downfall of "whipped cream." The voice of many waters, as heard here, is a sound not to be forgotten, and the Indians named the spot well—O-Ni-aw-ga-rah, the thunder of waters.

The coal and iron of the Middle States, and their easy communication with the Old World, through fine harbours on the Atlantic, and by river and canal and railway with the West, have made mining, manufacturing, and commerce the great occupations of that division.

The six South Atlantic States have a warm climate, and a wide coast plain; and here cotton, tobacco, and rice are largely cultivated, while there are no great manufacturing centres, and few large towns. Along the Atlantic plain, running parallel to the coast, is a broad belt of forest, many hundred miles in length, known as the Pine Barrens: *Pine*, because here the long-leaved pitch pine flourishes, and *Barren*, because incapable of cultivation,--a vast tract, forming, like the Pampas of South America, one of the marked features in the geography of the globe. Here, in the Barrens, occur many swamps, where

peculiar kinds of evergreen oaks, the cypress or cedar, tall canes, and other plants abound. One of the largest morasses in this low, flat region is the Great Dismal Swamp. It is one enormous quagmire, soft and muddy, except where the surface is covered by vegetables and their matted roots. In these Southern States, are few habitations […] of Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas are gentle-folk, the planters; and rising from the midst of magnolia groves, the trees ninety feet high, you may see handsome, well-appointed houses, like those of country gentlemen in England. […]

These Southern States are still suffering from the effects of the terrible civil war, which so lately (1861-5) desolated the land, and brought ruin upon the families of many wealthy planters.

Richmond, once famous for its slave market, and the seaport town of Charleston, which exports cotton, rice, and tobacco, are the largest towns of this division.

States of the Mississippi Valley and The Prairies

Draw or label on a map of the continental United States:

- Mississippi River
- Gulf of Mexico
- Appalachian Mountains
- Rocky Mountains
- Ohio
- Cincinnati, OH
- Ohio River
- Cleveland, OH
- Great Lakes
    - Lake Erie
    - Lake Michigan
    - Lake Superior
    - Lake Huron
    - Lake Ontario
- Chicago, IL
- Illinois
- Milwaukee, WI
- Wisconsin
- Louisville, KY
- Kentucky
- St. Louis, MO
- Missouri
- Mississippi River Delta
- New Orleans, LA
- Louisiana
- Mobile, AL
- Alabama
- Texas
- Arkansas
- Mississippi
- Tennessee
- Indiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Iowa
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Nebraska
- Kansas
- Oklahoma
- Great Plains
- Central Lowland
- Ozark Plateau
- High Plains
- Tennessee River
- Missouri River
- Arkansas River
- Lake of the Woods
- Rainy Lake
- Galveston Bay
- Rio Grande River

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 221-227

States of the Mississippi Valley

The Mississippi basin, a vast rolling plain, lies between the northern chain of lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, and, in an east and west direction, between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains. This is the region of the famous prairies of North America; but towns and cultivated fields are spreading gradually over the States east of the Mississippi, and we must travel westward to reach the rolling prairies. The States naturally divide themselves into North and South; in the north, there is a fertile soil, valuable minerals, wide forests, and abundant water-ways on the great lakes and the mighty rivers. Men

have not been slow to use these advantages, and never, in the history of the world, have new States—countries we may call them—grown up, and become rich and populous with the amazing rapidity of these new States of the West.[…]

We will cross the State of Ohio, from Cincinnati to Cleveland on Lake Erie, the second city of the State. We leave a handsome and populous city and fine roads, and the towns grow smaller, and the high-road rougher across new clearings, where the felling and burning of tress is going on, and where oats are growing amid the blackened stumps. Then, for many leagues, we lose sight of all human habitations, except here and there an empty wooden building on which "Movers' House" is written, that is, a house that a family of emigrants may hire for the night. At last the road improves; again we come across scattered towns, getting more and more numerous, and soon we reach the large and busy town of Cleveland, seated on the edge of Lake Erie. Ohio was a wilderness, a vast forest, occupied exclusively by Indians until near the close of the last century: now, […] the forest has been transformed into a land of steamboats, canals, and flourishing towns, on the Ohio and the Lake Erie. "There is no other example in history, either in the Old or New World, of so sudden a rise of a large country to opulence and power."[75]

What we have said of one fairly describes all the new States north and east of the Mississippi; everywhere the great lakes and the rivers form the channels of commerce, and are crowded with every kind of craft, from the log-canoe to the magnificent steamboat. By degrees, settlers venture to fix their dwellings further and further from the water-way, bringing their corn and cattle to the water-side towns or exportation.

Thus Chicago has grown up on the western shore of Lake Michigan; here, fifty years ago, there was a solitary log-tavern, where straggling emigrants took refuge from the howling wolves […] now, here is a great commercial city, with rich stores, handsome churches, fine streets, wealthy inhabitants, fine public buildings—a large, rich city, able to recover itself in a few years after such another fire as the famous Fire of London. Then, there is Milwaukie,[76] another great town on the same lake, whose rise has been almost as rapid; and Louisville, on the south bank of the Ohio, in Kentucky. In Kentucky is the famous "Mammoth Cave", a limestone cavern like those of Yorkshire and the Peak, only, like everything in America, on a colossal scale, where there are chambers 250 feet long and more than half as wide, and 50 feet high, wherein are rows of cabins for consumptive invalids, who find the air of the cave delightful.

The Prairies

[75] Miss Mason is quoting Charles Lyell in *Travels in North America in the Years 1841-2 with Geological Observations on the United States, Canada, and Nova Scotia.*
[76] Milwaukee, WI

St. Louis, on the right bank of the Mississippi, is a great trading place, the point from which the West is reached, the key to the vast prairies. A lady,[77] travelling in this region says:--

> "I was west of the Mississippi, on that enchanted ground, to which, if you have once set foot upon it, you must sooner or later return. 'Mustang fever' is the name Westerners give to the longing which is said to allure people back into the wilderness once they have been there. Soon we came upon the regular prairies; short grass in tufts on a sandy soil, and long stretches of brown, rolling away, wave upon wave, like some great ocean turned into land in the midst of a storm. Here and there was a prairie *ranche*, or farm, with its corral (enclosure) for horses and cattle, and the great heap of grass which does duty here for a haystack.
>
> "It is a lonely life, that of a ranchman. Settled out upon the prairie with his herd of horses and cattle, and often without another house within twelve or twenty miles; he sees nobody, except a flying glimpse of the passengers by the daily train, where there is a railway, or passing emigrants wearily crawling over the plains with their white-covered ox-waggons. In winter, terrible snow-storms endanger his life. A month after I crossed the plains, twenty-seven men were brought in on the Kansas Pacific Railroad, frozen to death while tending their herds. Yet the rancheman [sic] learns to love his wild life, and that people can live and prosper on the borders of civilisation is proved by the very existence of the States of the far West."

Among the curious sights of the prairies are the towns of the prairie dogs. You come upon a crowd of little hillocks, upon the top of many of which is posted a little brown stump about a foot high: see them closer, and they are not stumps at all, but prairie dogs sitting in the attitude of a dog begging. Otherwise, they are not like dogs, but burrow like rabbits, and undermine the ground in a surprising way. […]

Utterly untameable [sic] is the monarch of the prairies—the bison or buffalo, a huge beast, eight feet long, standing as high as a tall man, and tremendously strong in the shoulders and large in the head; and yet presenting a comic likeness to a French poodle, from the fact that there is much long, shaggy, brown hair about his head and mane, and very little about his hinder regions. Indian and white man alike delight in hunting the buffalo, not only for the "beef" he furnishes, but for the splendid sport he affords; therefore buffaloes are getting scarce: they still roam in vast herds in the lower Mississippi valley, and in lonely tracts in the north-west, but, fast as civilisation spreads westward, the buffalo disappears.

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[77] This quote is from *South by West, or, Winter in the Rocky Mountains and Spring in Mexico* by Rose Georgina Kingsley and Charles Kingsley, 1874.

The Gulf States have an almost tropical climate and tropical productions. Skirting the Gulf is a broad belt of low, hot lands,--here, vast swamps covered with cypress, there, morasses under a growth of tall, stiff reeds, five or six feet high, among which you may hear the rustle of venomous snakes; now, dreary pine barrens, now, stretches of open prairie; now, forests of swamp-oak, cypress, and holly—haunts of the brilliant paroquet, the quail, the mocking-bird, and the live jewel of the West, the tiny humming-bird. Swamps, morasses variously covered with luxuriant tropical vegetation, distinguish this region; and these swamps extend far inland, round the lower courses of the numerous rivers, which overflow in the season of floods, and, when they retired, leave stagnant pools to breed deadly vapours—the source of the horrible yellow fever which is the scourge of this low, hot coast. The whole of the great Mississippi delta consists of low, swampy, reed-covered islands, and the banks of the "Father of Waters" for many miles inland are vast swamps under the cypress forests; the river has raised its bed, and, for a hundred miles or so above the delta, is kept in by embankments called *levées*, but these hardly hinder the annual floods which lay the country on either side under water.

But where these low lands are reclaimed, there are no spots in the world more fertile. The swampy margins of the rivers become rice-fields; along the borders of the Gulf are sugar plantations, reaching to lat. 31°; and for the culture of the sugar-cane, no spot is more suited than the sandy delta of the Mississippi. […]

Beyond the coast swamps lie wide plains of richly fertile land inhabited by planters and their labourers: the soil and the sun favour the growth of the cotton plant, and cotton plantations stretch round you everywhere. New Orleans, the great commercial city of the South, is the principal cotton port of the world. It is very handsome, and is called the Crescent city on account of its shape: but it is built on low ground, and when the river is in flood, the streets are under water; and the inhabitants are never secure from the ravages of yellow fever. Mobile, the second port of the South, has, like New Orleans, an immense cotton trade, and is, like it, subject to the scourge of yellow fever. In the cotton region and further north are maize and wheat fields, orange and lemon groves, plantations of the banana, fig, peach, and every delicious southern fruit. Grapes grow everywhere, and tobacco and indigo are largely cultivated.

Of all the Southern States, Texas is, at the present time, the most interesting to foreigners, because it offers a capital field for emigration. It is a huge country, much bigger than France, richly fertile, and well watered everywhere; with wide stretches of open prairie in the south, cut up by deep, thickly wooded ravines. Further north is a most delightful region of gentle swells and open valleys, and tree-crowned knolls, and park-like trees scattered over them: with delicious fruits,--peaches, figs, grapes, melons, oranges: with vast herds of buffaloes roaming its prairies, where the mustang gallops in herds, thousands strong, and where the deer is so abundant that venison is the only animal food to which the name of *meat* is given:--a paradise for the hunter, a land of promise for the emigrant farmer, is this beautiful Texan land.

The Western States and Territories and California

Draw or label on a map of the continental United States:

- Rocky Mountains
- Great Plains
- Yellowstone Lake
- Colorado
- Wyoming
- Montana
- New Mexico
- Idaho
- Utah
- Arizona
- Washington
- Oregon
- Nevada
- California
- Longs Peak
- Pikes Peak
- Sangre de Cristo Mountains
- Great Divide Basin
- Continental Divide (usually shown on a map as a little dotted line)
- Missouri River
- Platte River (draw it)
- Arkansas River
- Mississippi River
- Colorado River
- Snake River
- Columbia River
- Denver, CO
- Canon City, CO
- Colorado Springs, CO
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Cascade Mountains
- Sierra Nevada Mountains
- Coast Range
- San Joaquin River (draw it)
- Sacramento River (draw it)
- San Francisco Bay
- Colorado Plateau
- Rio Grande River
- Grand Canyon (Arizona)
- Sonoran Desert
- Mojave Desert
- Death Valley
- Great Salt Lake
- Great Salt Lake Desert
- Columbia Plateau
- Great Sandy Desert
- Pacific Ocean

All the territories in the continental United States are now states, of course.

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 228-236

The Western States and Territories

The "Territories" of the West are the vast stretches of thinly peopled lands which have not yet become populous and civilised enough to adopt a settled form of government and take rank as "States" […] The prairies reach to the very base of the Rocky Mountains—vast, treeless, grass plains, teeming with cattle and horses; and cattle-grazing is the great industry of the States of the plain. The States of the Rocky Mountain region are employed in mining: here are rich mines of silver and gold which have drawn motley troops of miners from all quarters of the globe. Lead, copper, and coal abound

here, too; but as long as great "booms" of the precious metals are to be found, the miners care for nothing else. The whole region rises high above the sea-level, and has a cool and remarkably dry climate; and the valleys afford fine pasturage. Nowhere in the world is there finer scenery than in this mountain region with its giant peaks and deep gorges. In this basin of the Yellowstone there are so many natural wonders gathered, that a section of it has been set apart by the Congress of the United States as a "National Park"; here are cañons and lakes and mountain peaks and lovely valleys and waterfalls, boiling springs and geysers,--all the wonders and glories that the traveller would find in Switzerland and Iceland combined.

But the true Switzerland of North America is the State of Colorado. It is crossed by the great chain of the Rocky Mountains, and within it are some of the highest points—Long's Peak, and Pike's Peak, and Spanish Peaks;[78] and here is the Great Divide, the water-parting which divides the waters belonging to the opposite slopes of the continent—the Platte and Arkansas on the one side, which flow into the Mississippi, and the Colorado and its branches on the other. A railway climbs the Divide; the traveller is carried through the pineries, great sources of wealth all along the Rocky Mountains, up a very steep ascent, and on the summit there is a lake, beside which the train stops; and from the north end of this lake flows the Platte, and from the south end, the Arkansas. Here you reach by rail, a height of 7500 feet; the Sherman Pass, on the Union Pacific Railroad is at a height of 8370 feet; but neither of these is the greatest height climbed by the marvellous railroads of the West. Marshall Pass, some twenty miles from Denver, has the highest railroad in the world. Here, the labouring, panting engine hauls up a heavy train, along a line full of curves and angles, to the astonishing height of 10,760 feet.

The scenery becomes grander and wilder every mile, now through rocky regions, savage and sterile, now by pine-clad hills. Here and there are cities to be seen springing up in the desert, mining centres which have sprung up suddenly round a spot where some lucky miner has discovered a great "find" of gold.

The "Parks" of this region are its great beauties: do not imagine pleasure grounds carefully laid out where people make holiday. These are but little used for pleasure, lovely as they are: they are high valleys, dips in the mountains, surrounded by snow-covered peaks and covered with the richest grass, where horses and cattle swarm; and here and there are scattered ranches, where the ranchemen [sic] live. Out of the world as these picturesque spots are, they have been found out by the tourist in search of pleasure; and one lovely, wild, most secluded little park, at the foot of Long's Peak, has been made familiar to the world lately, because here an English lady wintered among the ranchemen, [sic] in the intense cold of these high regions, after riding, alone and

[78] West Spanish Peak and East Spanish Peak are east of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

unattended, for 700 miles amongst the passes of the Rocky Mountains.[79] To appreciate the courage shown in such an exploit, one must recollect that the population of these mountain States is of the wildest: --adventurers who have been drawn here from all quarters by the report of gold to be had for the digging; for Colorado is rich in the precious metals; and miners, wild-looking men, armed to the teeth, and ruffians who come hither to prey upon the miners, to induce them to drink, and gamble, are to be seen in all the mining towns.

The "city of the plain" is Denver, the capital of the State, which lies within a sort of cup surrounded by lofty mountains. […]

Among the marvels of Colorado are the cañons—deep, narrow gorges in the rocks, sometimes thousands of feet deep, at the bottom of which the rivers run.

> "All that has been written about the Grand Cañon[80] utterly fails to convey an idea of its exceeding grandeur and wildness; the rocks, closing in, rise aloft for upwards of 2500 feet on each side, coloured with the brightest hues, and presenting an infinite variety of forms. Far beneath rushes the impetuous current of the Arkansas river, contracted at times to a breadth of twenty or thirty yards, and penned into a space in which the waters leap and toss about wildly below the railway cards on the line which has been carried through this frightful gorge."[81]

Wherever you go in the States, you see "Colorado Springs" advertised as a wonderful health resort. The name is inviting; you think of a delightful valley with green grass and shady trees; instead of which you find yourself on a dreary plateau, greenish brown, without a tree, or a soft valley, or any feature of loveliness. The springs are at some little distance; at Maniton,[82] which has great hotels, and is surrounded by mountains, and is rather like one of the Swiss villages which are visited for health by people of all nations; except that at Maniton there are […] tents spread round the town, whose inmates are […] the families of consumptive invalids who have been brought hither for the benefit of the fine air and the water of the springs.

We have no room to describe the remaining mountain States, nor the Utah Territory wherein is the famous Mormon settlement of Salt Lake City, a thriving colony […] Between the Rocky Mountains on the one side, and the Cascade and Nevada Mountains on the other, the land is a broad, high plateau, with a height of from 4000 to 8000 feet above the sea; and the States and territories which are included in these dry, almost

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[79] Miss Mason added a note here ("Miss Bird's 'Rocky Mountains'"). The book she references is probably *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Isabella L. Bird, 1879,

[80] This is not the Grand Canyon in Arizona, but rather the Royal Gorge, through which the Arkansas River runs near Cañon City, Colorado.

[81] Miss Mason's source for this paragraph is unknown.

[82] Manitou Springs, CO

rainless plateau lands have all, more or less, the same character—wide stretches of desert, completely barren, or covered with sage-brush, with occasional high pasture-valleys, watered and green.

California

Very different is the well-watered Pacific slope, with its forest-covered hills. Perhaps no region of the globe is so rich in the precious metals, gold and silver, as well as in quicksilver, iron, coal, and other valuable minerals; while the forest of the outer mountain-slopes afford inexhaustible supplies of timber. It is through the delightful land of California that we are most familiar with this region; everybody knows of California as the land of gold, where the lucky finders of great "booms," so they are called, become millionaires in a day, and where many a hapless miner who never comes across a fragment of the precious ore sinks into lower and lower depths of want and misery. But it is only of late that the world has taken account of the great loveliness and exceeding fertility of this Western paradise, a land of lawny pastures, soft valleys and gentle heights; of unfailing verdure and brightness; of delicious fruits in the most lavish abundance, olive and grape, apple and pear, peach and strawberry by the acre; a land of glowing cornfields and shadowy forests. Two ranges of mountains, the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range, traverse the length of California, and between these is a long, low, broad valley, 500 miles long by 50 broad, of which the San Joaquim[83] waters the southern half, and the Sacramento the northern half; and where the two rivers meet, there is a river delta of 25 miles, above their entry into the Bay of San Francisco—a magnificent harbour, one of the most famous in the world. This valley it is which contains not only the wooded, fertile, undulating district we have described, but the treasures of gold and of quicksilver for which California is famous. The gold region includes thew hole length and breadth of the valley, following the line of the Sierra Nevada. The metal is found in the beds of the rivers, and in the gullies formed by the floods in the rainy season, but its chief seat is in the quartz rock of the mountains.

The real capital of California is San Francisco, the city of the Golden Gate, the great port of the West. […]

California is rich in fine mountain scenery which we cannot stop to describe; but no one can visit the state without trying to see the famous Yosemité Valley, a wonder of the world for its marvellous loveliness. The traveller we last cited says:[84]

> "I know nothing like the effect produced by Yosemité Valley when seen for the first time. You take in at one glance stupendous mountain ranges, all but perpendicular, beyond which you see the snowy crests of the great Sierra, the

[83] San Juaquin River

[84] Miss Mason paraphrases from *Hesperothen; Notes from the West, Vol. 2 (of 2) A Record of a Ramble in the United States and Canada in the Spring and Summer of 1881* by Sir William Howard Russell.

profound valley between them, a long vista of extraordinary magnificence, of cascades and precipitous waterfalls, and far down below a silvery river rushing through a forest composed of the noblest trees in the world, with patches of emerald green sward and bright meadows.

"Clambering over a mass of trunks of trees, the Fall, the Yosemité Fall, was before us—I cannot write more—no adjective will do. 'Two thousand six hundred and thirty-four feet; mind!' says the guide. 'I don't care,' thought we, 'it's the most beautiful and wonderful water-jump ever seen by human eye'—a considerable river which in its first plunge comes sheer down 1600 feet; then follow two more plunges over sheets of granite; and then it is free, and rushes past at our feet, a joyous flashing stream." […]

Hawaii

Using a globe, find:

- Hawai'ian Islands
- Puerto Rico

Using an atlas, find in Hawaii:

- The major islands of Hawaii
  - Hawai'i
  - Maui
  - Moloka'i
  - Lana'i
  - O'ahu
  - Kaua'i
  - Ni'ihau
- Mauna Loa
- Mauna Kea
- Kilauea
- Pearl Harbor
- Honolulu, HI

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 270-271, 274-276

from **Polynesia**

The Sandwich Islands[85] are more truly mountainous than any of the others, the summits of Hawaii, the largest of the group, reaching a height of 14,000 feet—but little short of the greatest height of the Alps. The whole of Hawaii is a mass of volcanic matter, and here is one of the most famous active volcanoes of the world. […]

from **Polynesia Part III**

The Sandwich Islands are by far the most important of those north of the equator. There are eight larger islands in the group, including Hawaii, the largest island in the open Pacific. Here is the famous volcanic mountain, Mauna Loa, nearly 14,000 feet high, with a yawning crater, Kilauea—a terrible hissing, glowing lake of fire. Of this frightful lake, Mrs. Brassey says:[86]

> "We were standing on the extreme edge of a precipice, overhanging a lake of molten fire, a hundred feet below us, and nearly a mile across. Dashing against these cliffs on the opposite side, with a noise like the roar of a stormy ocean, waves of blood-red, fiery, liquid lava hurled their billows upon an iron-bound

[85] The Sandwich Islands are now the Hawai'ian Islands.
[86] Here, and below, Miss Mason is quoting Anna Brassey, though the exact source is unclear. Mrs. Brassey wrote a number of short pieces and books such as "An Ascent of Kilauea" and *A Voyage in the 'Sunbeam', Our Home on the Ocean for Eleven Months.*

> headland, and then rushed up the face of the cliffs to toss their gory spray high in the air."

Hawaii was once a name of terror—the scene of the massacre of Captain Cook, who discovered these islands in 1778. But times have changed. […]

Honolulu, the capital of the group, is the largest town in all Polynesia, and is regularly built in streets and squares.

> "The island is walled in by a coral reef against which the surf beats with a sound of perpetual thunder. Within the reef lies a calm surface of water of a wonderful blue; and beyond the flue, nestling amongst cocoa-nut trees and bananas, umbrella trees and bread-fruits, oranges, mangoes, hibiscus, and passion-flowers, almost hidden in deep, dense greenery, is Honolulu. […]
>
> "Without exception the men and women wore wreaths and garlands of flowers, twined round their hats and thrown carelessly round their necks; flowers unknown to me, but redolent of the tropics in fragrance and colour.
>
> "After leaving the town, we drove along roads shaded with the dense leafage of overarching trees—umbrella trees, bamboo, mango, orange, bread-fruit, monkey pod, palms, alligator pears, and huge-leaved wide-spreading trees, many of them rich in parasitic ferns, and others blazing with bright fantastic blossoms. The air was heavy with odours of gardenia, tuberose, oleanders, roses, lilies, and the great white trumpet-flower, and the verandahs were festooned with a gorgeous trailer with magenta blossoms, passion-flowers, and a vine with masses of yellow, waxy flowers.
>
> "In the deep shade of this perennial greenery the people dwell. They decorate and festoon everything with flowering trailers until you cannot tell which is house and which is vegetation. Each house has a large garden with bright green lawns and banks of blazing, many-tinted flowers. Fences and walls are altogether buried among passion-flowers, geraniums, fuchsias, and jessamine, which cluster about them in the wildest profusion. […]

The Artic

Draw or label on a map of North America:

- Arctic Ocean
- Bering Strait
- Alaska
- Canada
- Greenland (Denmark)
- Gulf of Alaska
- Bering Sea
- Beaufort Sea
- Mackenzie River
- Alaska Range
- Denali
- Seward Peninsula
- Brooks Range
- Yukon River
- Banks Island
- Victoria Island
- Parry Islands
- Viscount Melville Sound
- M'Clure Strait / McClure Strait
- M'Clintock Channel / McClintock Channel
- Back River
- Lancaster Sound
- Queen Elizabeth Islands
- Baffin Island
- Baffin Bay
- Davis Strait
- Hudson Strait
- Hudson Bay
- Labrador Sea

These paragraphs are pulled from Miss Mason's section called "The Progress of Discovery in America."

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 176-177

> But though America was discovered, and explored, and colonised, there yet remained something to be done. The huge continent lay in the way of the passage to India which Columbus had dreamt of, but might not something be done in the north? Surely, *there* was an open sea for valiant ships. Look well at the names marked on the map round the Arctic shores of America: many of them are epitaphs—all that was left of a long stream of navigators who died in the attempt to discover the long-talked-of North-West Passage to the East. For more than three hundred years, a host of explorers eagerly pursued the dream. It was a succession of martyrs. Cabot, the pioneer, was only saved by the mutiny of his crew, which prevented him from venturing further. Barentz[87] died of cold, and Willoughby of famine. Hudson was thrown by his own men into a small boat, without provisions and without sails, and we know not what became of him. Bering, discovering the strait which separates America from Asia, died of hunger, cold, and misery, on a desert island. In our own time, Franklin was lost among the ice, and only his bones were recovered after twelve years' weary search, in which foreigners as

[87] William Barents, though some use Barentz. In the Dutch, Willem Barentsz.

well as English assisted. At last, a ship equipped by Lady Franklin, succeeded in finding the great navigator's remains.

The months of April and May 1853 are a memorable epoch in the history of Arctic navigation. In April was found the passage which men had sought for upwards of three hundred years. We owe the discovery to a fortunate impulse of despair. Captain McClure, having entered the Polar Sea[88] by Bering's Strait, got imprisoned in the ice; and at the end of a couple of years, being in a perishing condition with hunger, and unable to return, hazarded all upon a forward movement. He marched forty miles, and found in the Eastern Sea some English ships. His boldness saved him, and the great discovery was at length made—a discovery destined to prove of little use, for what ships could weather these terrific seas! But the discovery of the North-West Passage has not put an end to the Arctic voyaging: the North Pole itself has been the quest of several recent expeditions.

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[88] Arctic Ocean

The Dominion of Canada

Draw or label on a map of North America:

- Newfoundland
- 49th parallel
- Alaska
- Northwest Territories
- Manitoba
- British Columbia
- Fraser River
- Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick (possibly labeled N.B. in an atlas)
- Ontario
- Quebec
- St. Lawrence River
- Ottawa River
- Great Lakes
    - Lake Superior
    - Lake Michigan
    - Lake Huron
    - Lake Erie
    - Lake Ontario
- Chicago, IL
- Montréal, Canada
- Prince Edward Island
- Bay of Fundy
- Winnipeg, Canada
- Labrador Sea
- Hudson Bay
- Baffin Bay
- Beaufort Sea
- Pacific Ocean
- Canadian Shield
- Baffin Island
- Victoria Island
- Churchill River
- Back River
- Yukon River
- Lake Winnipeg
- Great Slave Lake
- Great Bear Lake
- Lake Athabasca
- Vancouver Island
- Hudson Strait

Canada was organized differently in Miss Mason's time. She would have been familiar with a Canada like that shown on the map shown below.[89] Take note of her attitude, and that of Lord Lorne whom she quotes, as you read.

Geographical Readers for Elementary Schools Book V pp. 202-208

> We have said so much in a former volume concerning British North America, that we need not enter into details here. The whole of the British possessions in North America, with the exception of Newfoundland, are now included in the "Dominion"—that is to say, the half of the continent north of the 49th parallel. The forest-covered peninsula of Alaska, however, belongs to the United States.
>
> The vast fur-hunting grounds of the North-West Territory—a region of prairies and interminable forests, of great rivers, lakes, and swamps—the pastures of Manitoba, the

[89] [[User:SriMesh|SriMesh | [[User talk:SriMesh|<small>talk</small>]]]] 01:28, 13 October 2007 (UTC), CC BY-SA 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>, via Wikimedia Commons

gold regions of British Columbia on the banks of the Fraser river, the mines and fisheries of Nova Scotia, the dense forests of New Brunswick, have been described already. So, too, has Canada Proper, a country five times as large as England, consisting of the two provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

The province of Ontario is the most important part of the Dominion; it lies along the shores of the St. Lawrence, and of the four great lakes […]

Provinces and Territories of Canada, July 1 1881 to 1886

The province of Quebec occupies both sides of the St. Lawrence from the river Ottawa to the Gulf. The river valley is very fertile, but a great deal of the province is almost incapable of cultivation from the severity of the climate. […]

The industries of Canada depend a good deal on its magnificent water-way (near 1300 miles from Chicago to Montreal), formed by the great river and its mighty chain of lakes, along which steam-vessels now bring the grain and other produce of the Western States for consumption in Europe. The river trade, "lumbering" or timber trade, the fisheries—those of the Gulf being amongst the most valuable in the world, agriculture, stock-raising, and dairy-farming occupy the Canadians; the exports to England and the United States being timber, fish, and furs, meat, dairy produce, and cattle. […] Montreal, however, is the largest city of Canada (120,000). It has extensive trade and manufactures, and from it the magnificent tubular bridge carries the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada across the St. Lawrence, which is here two miles wide.

As to the advantages which Canada offers as a field for emigration, the following extracts from a speech delivered by the Marquis of Lorne (as reported by the *Times*), gives much valuable information.

> "He thought his five years' residence in Canada gave him a right to tell those who wished to know what the advantages of that great country are. The great bugbear to the minds of many in contemplating a move to Canada is the alleged

great and trying cold of that country. The climate is exceedingly healthy. Fevers are unknown. Men attain to great ages; and where many generations have lived on Canadian soil, the race becomes more vigorous, if possible, than in the days of the first settlers. Cold it certainly is, during five or six months of the year, but the cold is dry, and, except upon the sea coasts, is less felt than is the cold here.

"The cold being great, the question of fuel is an all-important one; but it is most fully met by the conditions of the country. What is known as Old Canada—namely, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, and Quebec—is a vast region of woodland, now largely cleared of forest, but having an abundant supply of wood for fuel within easy reach of every place where men have settled, or are likely to settle. Enormous stores of coal are being actively worked in Nova Scotia. You may see in the mines near Picton, galleries twenty feet in height worked in the solid coal. As far as Old Canada is concerned, no lack of fuel need ever be feared. Experts believe that coal in any quantity exists beneath the long rolling swell of the prairie along a track 400 miles long by 200 in breadth. And even if this exhaustless supply did not exist, the railway could readily carry to the settler the coal of British Columbia."

Speaking of emigration, Lord Lorne said:--

"No one doubts that very many in our large towns can benefit themselves by moving. Very many in the country can do so also; but I would rather see departures from the overcrowded towns. All emigrants should go out in the spring. First, what are the inducements offered to emigrants who desire to procure manual labour? At present (1883), the Canadian Pacific Railway is offering good wages for navies, and the cost of a passage is only 3*l*. Any one knowing the trade of a blacksmith, a mason, a bricklayer, or willing to work as a hired man on a farm, is sure of employment.

"Canada does not offer great inducements to young men who wish to lead a town life; the town life, as compared with the country life, gives fewer opportunities, for the cities are, relatively to the population, small. I have known very many men who have succeeded well, and who began with nothing, or next to nothing. But I should counsel all who contemplate emigration and the taking up of farm life, to have, if single men, from 50*l.* to 100*l*., exclusive of the cost of the journey, and if married, from 200*l*. to 500*l*. There are good vacant places to be had almost anywhere. It was only the other day I heard of some good land near Halifax, Nova Scotia, to be had for a dollar an acre. In the north-west, you can get 160 acres of excellent land for 2*l.* The land regulations under which these grants are made are to the full as favourable as those of the United States, and in some respects are to be preferred.

> “For women, there is plenty of space and places; but the women who will succeed are the women who will work; they who wish to go out as teachers, governesses, &c., had best stay at home. The Committee of the Women’s Emigration Society of Montreal told me lately that they could at once place 1000 girls of good character if sent out to them; good servant girls are excellently well treated in Canadian families.
>
> “I should like to tell you of the country you would first see, supposing you were to make a voyage to Canada. I will take you first to the top of a steep cliff which overlooks a gulf of the sea on the one side, and a fair, wide, and green valley on the other. If you wait until the tide ebbs, you will see that it goes back very far, and leaves a vast stretch of red sand. It will come back again over these sands with a rush which will send the water up as fast as a horse can gallop, until it surges against a long line of embankment,--this is the mighty tide of the Bay of Fundy.
>
> “The white houses and orchards of the valley are types of many to be found in the rich provinces of Nova Scotia, which possesses a little gold, and great yields of coal. If wages were as low in Nova Scotia as they are in England, Picton, one of her ports, would soon rival Glasgow as a great iron-shipbuilding port. Around almost every town in Nova Scotia, farms may be had where the head of the farm can get excellent schooling for his children, a church service exactly like his own, and a ready market for any produce he may raise.
>
> “After crossing the Gulf to its northern shore, across the valley of Sussex in New Brunswick, where beautiful trees are scattered in groups as in an English park, I will ask you to view the great province of Ontario, by far the wealthiest and most populous in the confederation. […] Passing the Niagara rapids, we come to Toronto, one of the most prosperous of the young cities of the continent. Railways reach out from it in all directions, and, though it is only eighty years since it was reclaimed from the primaeval forest, it has now a population of 100,000. The people are thoroughly British, proud of their country, and proud of their town. There are capital schools in the province, which the people support and manage themselves.”

After speaking of Montreal, and of the great tubular bridge, named after the Queen, which spans the mighty river at a point before Lachlin Falls, Lord Lorne went on to describe the excellent lands through which the Canadian Pacific Railway is carried,--vast rolling prairies, where many a tract of meadow appears untouched; but it has all been bought up, to sell again. Everywhere you see wooden planked houses, and often enormous patches of wheat. Some farming companies are carrying on operations on an amazing scale: one such company has plough riggs three or four miles in length.

Every train carries hundreds of emigrants to Winnipeg, and away to the West. Last year (1882) 50,000 entered this land of promise. These countries offer to our youth, unable to find suitable outlet at home, an unfailing field for success. There is hardly a man who has left these shores and has cast in his lot with the Canadians who has had reason to regret the step.

The various provinces of the Dominion of Canada form a united country with a population of 5,000,000, thoroughly devoted to the mother-country.

Maps

You will need:

1 copy of the map of North and South America

6 copies of the map of South America, plus 2 additional copies for exams

2 copies of the map of Brazil

3 copies of the map of Central America, plus 1 additional copy for exams

4 copies of the map of North America, plus 1 additional copy for exams

3 copies of the map of the continental United States

North and South America

Americas, hydrography, states
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South America

South America, hydrography, states
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Brazil

Brazil, hydrography, boundaries
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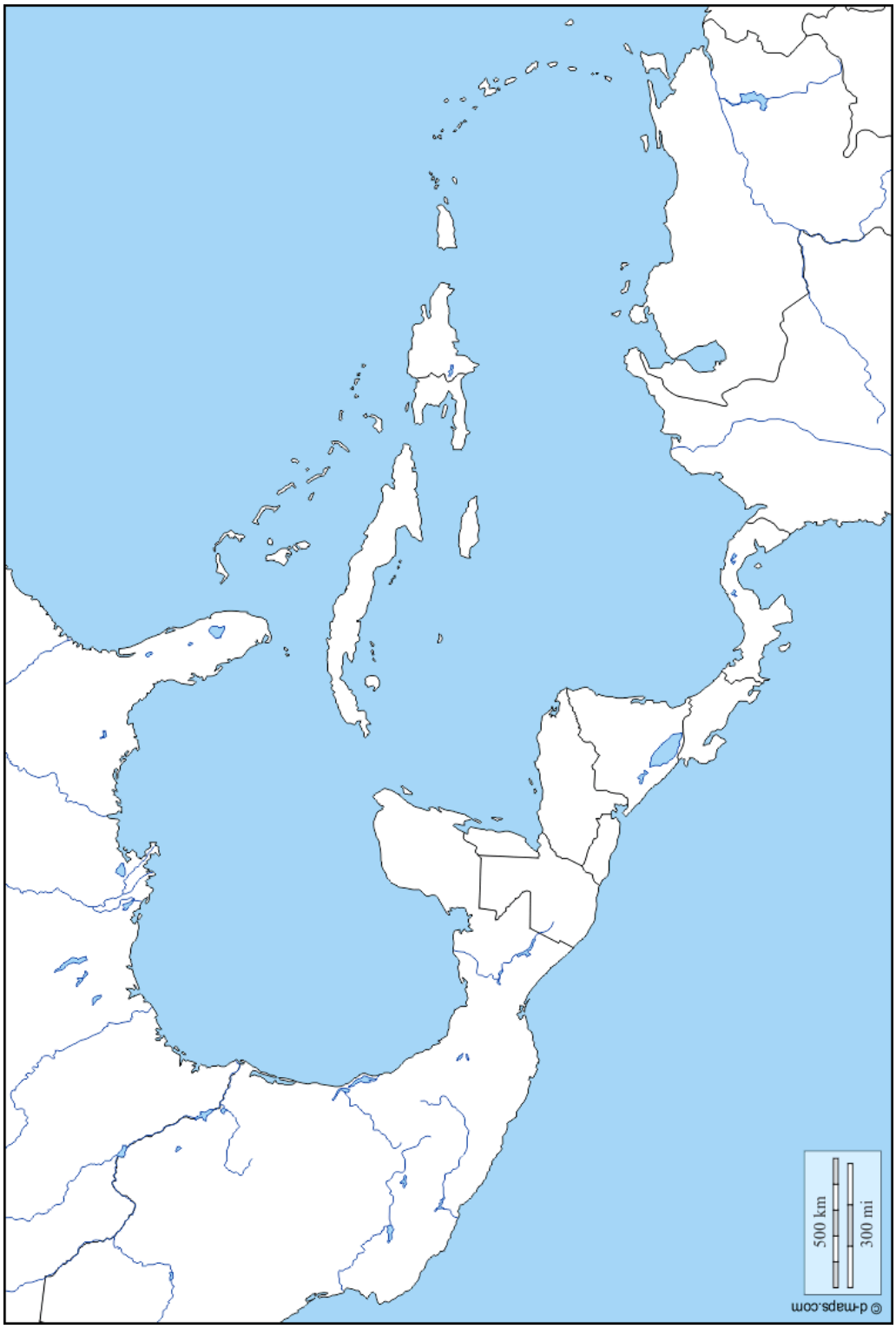
Central America



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North America

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The Continental United States

United States of America, boundaries, hydrography
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