

Year 5 Geography Knowledge Organiser – North and South America

Key Vocabulary	Definition
North America	A large continent where the countries of Canada, the USA and Mexico are located.
United States of America	The name for the country in North America that consists of fifty states and the District of Columbia. It is bordered by Canada in the north and Mexico in the South.
State	An area with a government that can make decisions and pass laws for that area. In the USA, the states are joined in political union.
Mississippi River	One of North America's major rivers, a source of fresh water, transport and irrigation.
Biome	A community of plants and animals that have common characteristics reflecting the environment in which they live.
Urbanisation	The increase in number of people living in cities.



Canada	Mexico	United States of America
Capital: Ottawa	Capital: Mexico City	Capital: Washington DC
Flag shows maple leaf representing cultural heritage and natural resources of Canada. The colour red represents hope and prosperity. The colour white represents peace and neutrality.	Flag shows national coat of arms, based on the Aztec symbol for Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) the centre of the Aztec Empire. It shows an eagle sitting on a cactus eating a serpent, as Aztec legends tell of a command to build a city at the place where an eagle is found eating a serpent. Red, white and green are the colours of the national Mexican army.	Flag shows fifty white stars representing the fifty states of America. Thirteen red stripes represent the thirteen British colonies that declared independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain and became the first states.

Key Vocabulary	Definition
Pangea	A supercontinent that broke apart 175 million years ago forming the continents we recognise today.
Rainforest	A dense forest, rich in biodiversity, that is often found in tropical areas that receive high levels of rainfall.
Subduction Zone	An area where one tectonic plate is being forced under another, often creating mountain ranges.
Plateau	A flat area of land with high altitude.
Altitude	The height of a location, often relative to sea level.
Deforestation	The process of removing forest.
Biodiversity	The variety of plants and animals within a habitat.

The Inca Empire			
Location	Dates	Places	Language and Communication
The Inca Empire spread along the pacific coast from Ecuador to Chile.	Began in 1100 CE Reached its height in 1530 Declined in 1535	Cuzco- the Inca Capital located in Peru built in the shape of a puma Machu Picchu- high in the Andes mountains	Quechua (Ketch-wah) the single Inca language, spread across the empire, to encourage clarity of communication. Quipu: lengths of knotted string, used to keep records and pass messages around the empire.

