



CHAPTER 18 GUIDED NOTES

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA: THE PLATEAU CONTINENT

Africa is a continent of plateaus, basins, and rift valleys; Africa features dense rain forests, vast grasslands, and the world's largest desert.

Section 1: Landforms and Resources

A Vast Plateau

- _____ supercontinent broke up 200 million years ago
- Africa moved very little, unlike Americas, Antarctica, Australia, and India.
- **Africa's Plateau**
 - Huge plateau covers most of Africa, rising inland from coasts; known as the "_____"
- **Basins and Rivers**
 - Basin—_____ ; each is more than 625 miles across, up to 5,000 feet deep.
 - Nile—_____ : 4,000 miles through Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, and Egypt.
 - Waters are used for irrigation; 95% of Egyptians get water from the Nile.

Distinctive African Landforms

- _____ make rivers less useful for transportation.
- Rivers' meandering courses also make them less useful
- **Rift Valleys and Lakes**
 - East Africa: continental shift created huge cracks in East Africa.
 - Land sank, formed long, thin _____ . These stretch 4,000 miles from Jordan to Mozambique
 - Eastern part is still slowly pulling away from Africa.
 - Long, deep lakes form at bottoms of rift valleys
 - Lake Tanganyika is the longest freshwater lake in world. Lake Victoria is Africa's largest lake.
- **Mountains**
 - Africa mainly has volcanic mountains: Mount Kenya, Mount Kilimanjaro.
 - _____ is Africa's highest mountain
 - Volcanoes created Ethiopian Highlands, Tibesti Mountains (Sahara), Mount Cameroon (West Africa)
 - Volcanic rock covers Great Escarpment in Southern Africa. _____ —steep slope with flat plateau on top

Africa's Wealth of Resources

- **A Wealth of Minerals**
 - Africa's minerals make it one of world's richest continents (Copper, phosphates, diamonds; 42% of world's cobalt.)
 - South Africa is largest producer of chromium, for stainless steel (produces 80% of world's platinum, 30% of gold.)
 - Mineral wealth has not created general African prosperity
 - Colonial rulers sent natural resources to Europe.
 - Nations are slow to develop infrastructure, industries.
- **Oil Resources**
 - Libya, Nigeria, Algeria among world's leading petroleum producers (Angola, Gabon have untapped oil reserves)
 - Angola is example of resources not benefiting Africans
 - Oil deposits will make it Africa's most oil-rich country; American companies will pay Angola to drill oil
 - Money will be spent on ongoing ethnic civil war; little will be invested in schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure.

Diversity of Resources

- **Major Commodities**
 - Coffee is Africa's second most profitable commodity; Few Africans drink coffee, but 20% of world's supply is grown there.
 - Nigeria leads in lumber exports, but logging is depleting forests; each year an area twice the size of New Jersey is cleared.
 - Other commodities include _____ .
 - Agriculture is Africa's single most important economic activity

Section 2: Climate and Vegetation

A Warm Continent

➤ The Deserts

- _____ is largest desert in world; name means “desert” in Arabic.
 - 3,000 miles from Atlantic to Red Sea; 1,200 miles north to south.
 - Temperatures as high as 136° in summer, and freezing at night.
- Only 20% is sand; rest is mountains, rocks, or gravelly plains.
- 6,000 feet under Sahara are _____—stores of underground water.
 - When this water comes to the surface it creates an _____.

➤ The Tropics

- Africa has the largest tropical area of any continent. 90% of Africa lies between _____.
- High temperatures year around; especially in Somalian Sahara. Africans say nighttime is the “winter” of the tropics.

A Grassy Continent

➤ Tropical Grassland

- Tropical grassland covers most of Africa
- _____—northern Tanzania grassland; dry climate, hard soil prevent growth of trees, crops
- Serengeti National Park has best grasslands in the world; some grasses grow taller than a person
- Ideal for grazing animals like wildebeests, gazelles, zebras; site of largest numbers of migrating land mammals

Africa’s Extremes

➤ Rain Forest

- Major tropical rain forests are on equator in the Congo Basin.
- A square acre can have hundreds of different types of trees and birds.
 - Plants, trees, leaves block out most sunlight; air is hot, moist.
- Most animals live in the _____—uppermost branches, 150 feet off ground.

Section 3: Human-Environment Interaction

Desertification of the Sahel

- _____ means “shore of the desert”
 - Narrow band of grassland runs east-west along southern Sahara edge; used for farming, and herding.
- Since 1960s, desert has spread into the Sahel.
 - _____—expansion of dry conditions into nearby moist areas
- **Human Causes of Desertification**
 - Livestock—overgrazing exposes and tramples soil, increases erosion.
 - Clearing land for farming increases erosion.
 - Water drilling and irrigation increase soil’s salt levels. Vegetation growth is stunted.
 - Population levels require more crop land, more fuel (wood) to burn.

Harming the Environment in Nigeria

➤ A Major Oil Producer

- Oil was discovered in Nigeria in 1956 in the _____.
- Nigeria is world’s 6th leading oil exporter.
- In 1970s, high oil prices made Nigeria one of Africa’s richest nations.
 - When prices fell, poor planning and corruption left Nigeria poorer than ever before.

➤ Destroying the Land and People

- There have been over _____ oil spills in four decades with slow or no cleanup.
- Pipeline explosions, some intentional, kill 2,000 between 1998 and 2000

Controlling the Nile

➤ The Aswan High Dam

- Egyptians have always tried to control the Nile’s flood, and droughts; built first Aswan Dam in 1902; quickly obsolete.
- _____ completed in 1970, creates 300-mile Lake Nasser.
 - Dam provides regular supply of water for farmers; holds back Nile floodwaters for irrigation
 - Farmers now have two or three harvests a year; Egypt’s farmable land increased by 50%.

➤ Problems with the Dam

- Construction meant relocating people, changing Nubian’s way of life.
- River no longer deposits rich _____ (sediment) on farmland
- Mosquitoes thrive in Lake Nasser and spread malaria, and other diseases.
- Millions of gallons of fresh water lost yearly due to lake evaporation.