***Asia***

Physical Characteristics

Influence of mountains:

        --Population and settlements:  Himalayas prevented populations of the Indian subcontinent from intermingling with those of China and Mongolia; significantly different cultures developed

        --Movement:  very few passes exist through the Himalayas; Kyber Pass in the Hindu Kush; military expeditions are virtually impossible across the Himalayas; Ghengis Khan couldn’t expand his empire below the Himalayas

        --Climate:  blocks arctic winds, keeping the Indian subcontinent warmer; causes significant rain and snowfall in certain regions; accounts for the creation of deserts in central Asia; barrier for the monsoon winds

Mountains

**Himalayas**

*      --Mountain range in southern Asia

*      --separates the Indian subcontinent from the Tibetan Plateau

*      --highest mountain range in the world; includes all 14 of the world’s peaks over 8,000 meters

        --Mount Everest:  world’s highest peak at over 29,000 feet; border of Nepal and China

        --K2:  world’s 2nd highest peak at over 28,000 feet; border of China and Pakistan

*      --they span across 5 nations:  Pakistan, India, China, Nepal, and Bhutan

*      --source of 3 major river systems:

        --Ganges-Brahmaputra, Yangtze (Chang), and the Indus

        --750 million people live in the basins of these rivers

*      --formed by the collision of the Indian plate with the Eurasian Plate; it is still moving; mountains are still growing

**Western and Eastern Ghats**

--Western Ghats are located along the southwest coast of India

--Eastern Ghats are located in southeast India

**Mount Fuji**

–       highest mountain in Japan

–       near Tokyo on the island of Honshu

–       volcano; frequently used in Japanese art

Varied climate regions

--humid tropical climates in Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia

--steppe in Mongolia

--desert in China and Mongolia

--humid continental in eastern China and N and S Korea

--highland in western China

Natural hazards

--Monsoons:  seasonal winds that are caused by areas of low pressure over land; winds blow from the southwest to the Indian subcontinent often bringing heavy rain

--Typhoons:  hurricanes that form in the Pacific Ocean; affect coastal areas of South and East Asia

--Volcanoes:  occur frequently along the Ring of Fire; result from underground pressure; Mount Fuji in Japan is an old volcano; Philippines and Indonesia have multiple volcanoes

--Earthquakes:  result from shifting of continental plates; occur frequently along the Ring of Fire; many occur in Japan and the Philippines

Influence of water

--many rivers, seas, and favorable ocean currents help to support agriculture, trade, and transportation

Bodies of water

*      Arabian Sea:  located to the west of India

*      Indian Ocean:  borders Eastern Africa, southern Asia, and western Indonesia

*      Bay of Bengal:  located to the east of India; also borders Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia

*      Ganges River:  forms in the Himalayas and flows southeast through northern India and empties into the Bay of Bengal at the Ganges Delta; this river is holy to Hindus as many bath in it

*      Indus River:  flows from the Himalayas southwest through Kashmir and Pakistan; empties into the Arabian Sea; very early civilizations developed in the Indus River basin

*      Brahmaputra River:  forms in the Himalayas; flows east through southern China, then southwest through India and Bangladesh before emptying into the Bay of Bengal

*      Pacific Ocean:  to the east of Asia

*      Yangtze River (Chaing Jiang):  longest river in Asia; forms in western China and empties into the East China Sea; Shanghai is located on this river

*      Mekong River:  flows from China’s Tibet region through Southwest Asia and empties into the South China Sea; rapids and waterfalls make navigation very difficult

*      Yellow River (Huang He):  second longest river in China behind the Yangtze; flows from western China and empties into the Yellow Sea, just to the south of Beijing

Abundant arable land

--significant rainfall and nutrient-rich soil allow for extensive agricultural activity in many areas of Asia, with the exception of the Gobi Desert, the Himalayas, and much of Afghanistan and Pakistan

--Loess:  silty soil found on a plateau around the middle part of China’s Yellow River; fertile area

Plateau of Tibet

--region of China that was formerly an independent region; sparsely populated; home of the Tibetan people; because of its high elevation, it is called “the roof of the world”; located above the Himalayas; many Buddhists live here; Potala Palace, former home of the Dalai Lama, is located in city of Lhasa

Gobi Desert

--located in northern China and southern Mongolia; temperatures range from -40 F to over 100 F