Chapter 1: The Geography of the Western Hemisphere
Chapter 1, Lesson 1: The Changing Earth
Objectives:

- You will be able to identify the major natural events that cause the earth to change.
- You will be able to locate the major geographical features of the Western Hemisphere.
- You will be able to identify the three geographical regions of the Western Hemisphere.
NEW Vocabulary

tectonics - science of the structure of Earth

plate tectonics - theory that explains how the continents may rest on large plates of Earth’s crust

tectonic plates - pieces of Earth’s structure that push, pull, and grind against each other

continental drift - the theory that the seven continents slowly drifted apart
**NEW Vocabulary**

**region** - an area with common features that set it apart from other areas

**isthmus** - a narrow strip of land bordered by water that connects two larger areas of land (ex. Isthmus of Panama)

**archipelago** - groups of islands

**geographical feature** - person-made or naturally-created landforms or ecosystems of the Earth
ecosystem - all the living things that share an environment
Plate Tectonics

- Theory that explains how the continents may rest on large plates of the Earth’s crust
- The Earth’s crust is made up of 8 large tectonic plates that move, carrying the continents and ocean floors with them (continental drift)
- Many of the continents look as though they could fit together and at one time made up a supercontinent - known as Pangaea
Plate Tectonics

- Two colliding plates → mountains (when two plates push up)
- Two colliding plates → valleys; volcanic eruptions (when one plate goes under the other)
- Two plates that move away from each other → volcanic eruptions
- Two grinding plates → earthquake
- Scientists believe the continents move at a rate of about 2 inches a year
The Western Hemisphere

Made up of three regions:

1) North America
2) Central America
3) South America
North America

Central America

South America
The Western Hemisphere

- 90% of the land in the Western Hemisphere = North and South America

- The land of the Western Hemisphere is often called the “Americas”
The Western Hemisphere

- **Central America** - narrow piece of land that connects North and South America (considered part of North America)
  - Isthmus of Panama - narrowest part of Central America
- **Greenland** - world’s largest island (lies off the northeastern coast of North America)
- **Caribbean islands** - made up of multiple archipelagos
- Caribbean islands, Central America, and Mexico = Middle America
The Isthmus of Panama connects North America and South America. Today the country of Panama is located on the Isthmus of Panama.
Chapter 1, Lesson 2: Land and Water
Objectives:

- You will be able to describe and locate the main landforms of the Western Hemisphere.
- You will be able to identify and locate the important rivers and lakes in the Western Hemisphere.
NEW Vocabulary

**tributary** - a river or stream that flows into a larger body of water

**elevation** - height above sea level

**landforms** - a natural feature of Earth’s surface that is identified based on how rugged it is and how far it is above sea level (ex. mountains, hills, plateaus, plains)
Bodies of water that flow into the Mississippi River
NEW Vocabulary

**mountains** - a large natural elevation of the earth's surface rising abruptly from the surrounding level

**hills** - a naturally raised area of land, not as high or rugged as a mountain

**plains** - a large area of flat land with few trees

**plateaus** - an area of relatively level high ground; can also be called an upland or highland
Great Rivers and Lakes: WH

Earth’s greatest rivers:

1) Nile River - longest river in the world
2) Amazon River - second longest river in the world
3) Mississippi River - longest river in North America

Earth’s greatest lakes:

Great Lakes - five freshwater lakes located on border between Canada and United States
Landforms: WH

Mountains:

1) Andes Mountains - western coast of South America
2) Mount Aconcagua - tallest mountains in the Americas
3) Rocky Mountains

Plateaus:

Central Mexican Plateau

Plains:

Great Plains - largest plain in the Americas (from northern Canada through the United States to southern Texas)