Geographic Regions of South America
South American Introduction

- 4th Largest continent
  - 6.88 million square miles
  - 375 million people
- Incredibly diverse ecosystems
  - Highlands, Rainforest, Desert, Savanna, Grassland, and Mediterranean
  - Largest river in the world by volume (Amazon)
The Amazon Basin

• Refers to the system of rivers and forests that surround/feed into the Amazon River
  – Primarily Tropical Rain Forest, Savanna, and Floodplain Forest
  – Countries of Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Venezuela
Amazonian Biodiversity

- It is estimated that 10% of the world’s biodiversity lives within the Amazon Basin
  - Around 17% of basin has been deforested resulting in loss of Habitat

- Home to around 30 million people
  - 9% are classified as indigenous
The Brazilian Highlands

- Located in Southeastern Brazil
  - Southern border of Amazon Basin
- Consists of foothills, small mountains, and plateaus
  - Geographically similar to Guiana Highlands
Guiana Highlands

• Located in Northern Amazon region
  – Primarily rain forest
• Consist of foothills, low mountains, and large Tepui Mountains
  – Tabletop Mesas
Angel Falls

- Located in Guiana Highlands in Venezuela
- Tallest Waterfall in the World
  - Water falls off the edge of a tepui
  - Falls fed purely by rainfall
    - Not glacier fed or river fed
The Andes Region

- The Spine of South America
  - Longest mountain range in the world
  - Created by convergence of Nazca and South American tectonic plates
Human Adaptations: Living at high altitude

• The Cocoa Plant – Tropical Plant that when eaten alleviates the symptoms of altitude sickness

• The Coffee Bean – warm (but not hot) climate and plenty of rain allows ideal growth of coffee beans
The Llanos and Pampas

• Large Grasslands
  – Llanos located in Venezuela and Colombia
    • Tropical grassland
  – Pampas in Eastern Argentina and Uruguay

• Agricultural Lands
  – Good for animal grazing
Atacama and Gran Chaco

- Large deserts formed by coastal rain shadows
- Atacama driest hot desert on earth
  - Nothing lives, in some places no recorded rainfall ever
Patagonia

- Large plateaus and mountains covering southern Argentina
  - Southern range of Andes Mountains
- Primarily desert, semi-arid, and grasslands
  - Heavily glaciated
Sources

• Encyclopedia Britannica
• World Wildlife Foundation