Physical Regions of North America
Appalachia/Coastal Lowlands

- Located along the Eastern United States and Canada
  - Comprised of series of mountain ranges
- Traditional divide between Eastern and Central United States
- Coastal Plain along Atlantic Coast
  - Swampy and muggy in the South
The Great Lakes

• Located along the boarder of US and Canada
  – Connected to Atlantic Ocean via Erie Canal and St. Lawrence River
  – Used for intercontinental shipping
• Could also include lakes beyond traditional five
  – Lake Winnipeg, Great Slave Lake, Lake of the Woods, etc.
Lake Effect

• In winter cold winds from Canada collect moisture from Great Lakes and then falls to the ground as precipitation once making landfall
  – Resulting in very large snow storms
The Rivers of North America

• Large network of Rivers across North America
  – Largest are Missouri, Mississippi and Mackenzie

• Serve as transportation routes
  – Connecting inland areas to seas and oceans
Canadian Shield

• Massive area of volcanic bedrock
  – A lot of it is exposed rock due to this layers of topsoil

• Sparsely populated
  – Permafrost makes farming difficult
  – Extremely cold winters
  – Mostly mining companies
Great Plains/Interior Plains

- Grassland Biome
  - Capable of supporting large-scale agriculture
- Located just east of Rocky Mountains
  - Partial rain shadow created by Rocky Mountains
Tornado Alley

• Meeting point between colder winds of Rockies and Canada with warm Caribbean currents
  – Few tornadoes outside region
    • Few in rest of United States
    • Also South Africa
The Mountain West

- System of mountains running from Alaska to Mexico
  - Brooks Range (Can and US)
  - Rocky Mountains (Can and US)
  - Sierra Nevada Mountains (US)
  - Cascade Mountains (US)
  - Great Alaskan Range (US)
  - Sierra Madres (Mex)

- Major tourist destinations
  - Vistas and mountain sports
The Mexican Plateau

- Arid to semi-arid region that comprises most of Mexico
  - Desert region in the North
  - Sierra Madre Occidental to West, Sierra Madre Oriental to the East
The Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico

• Bodies of water between North America and South America
  – Containing many island countries and dependencies

• Warm tropical areas
  – Popular vacation destination
  – Warm winds from coast of Africa cause tropical storms and hurricanes
The Yucatan

- Peninsula in the South East of Mexico
  - Tropical biome
  - Very popular tourist destination

- Home to Mayan civilization
  - Remnants of Mayan people still remain
The Antilles

• **Greater Antilles**
  – Larger islands of Northern Caribbean
    • Largest are Cuba and Hispanola
    • Specialize in cash crops and tourism

• **Lesser Antilles**
  – Smaller islands of Eastern (Leeward) and Southern Caribbean (Windward)
The Arctic

• Areas of United States, Canada, and Greenland (Den)
  – Home to indigenous peoples
  – People survive mostly by fishing

• Receding Sea Ice
  – Global warming is causing sea ice to melt
    • Loss of habitat for animals
    • Release of freshwater into ocean