

## TEACHING NOTES

Book title: North America

Series: Continents

*Pack your bags. We are going to travel through North America! North America, the third largest continent in the world, is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. In this book, students will learn about the world's tallest tower, the largest freshwater lake on Earth, and the largest island in the world. Students will also discover the names of the five Great Lakes and where they are located, which national park has the most geysers in the world, and who built the pyramid in Tikal, Guatemala.*



Text Structure: Description



Direct students' attention to pages 6–7. Explain to students that in this section the author uses descriptive language to help us understand and feel what the weather is like in North America. Read aloud the text on page 6. Identify the descriptive words and discuss how descriptive language helps the reader visualize North America's weather. Ask: Which descriptive words and phrases help you feel what the weather in North America is like? (*very warm and often rains in the south, hot in the southwest, sun shines along the west coast*) Draw a concept web on the board like the one on the reproducible. Write the word *North America* in the center circle. Model how to record the descriptive words and phrases the class identified in the outer circles. Have students copy the information on their reproducible graphic organizers. Then continue reading page 7 with students. As you read the text, ask students to point out additional words and phrases that help them understand what the weather in North America feels like. (*ground stays frozen all year near Arctic Circle, northwest coast is cool and rainy, cold and snowy in winter, hot in summer*) Tell students to record these descriptive words and phrases on their concept webs, adding more circles as needed.



Text Feature: Photographs and Captions

Point out to students that the book contains many interesting and informative photographs and captions. Have students turn to page 5 then together read aloud the text. Have students examine the photographs and read the caption. Explain that captions describe photographs or other images and often include information that is not in the main text. Ask students what new information they learned about one of the islands in North America from the photograph and caption. (*Greenland is in the Arctic Ocean.*) Remind students that looking at photographs and reading captions will help them better understand the main ideas presented in the text.



### Comprehension Strategy: Monitoring and Repairing Understanding

Remind students that it is their job as readers to pay attention to times when reading makes sense and when it doesn't. When reading doesn't make sense, good readers stop and figure out how to fix the problem. Tell students that there are various things that they can do in these situations, such as rereading the section, looking up unknown words, looking at photographs or illustrations, stopping to think about the text, visualizing what is being described, or seeking help from an outside source. Model for students by using a section of the text, such as the paragraph on page 8.

**Think Aloud:**

"The first time I read the paragraph, I could read all the words, but I didn't understand what *ranges* were. So I read the paragraph again and stopped after each sentence to think about what each sentence means. I still didn't understand the meaning of the word *ranges*, so I turned to the glossary on page 31 to look up the definition. Now I understand that the word *range* means 'a line of mountains that are connected to each other.' The Rocky and Appalachian mountain ranges are both groups of mountains that are connected to each other."

As they read, ask students to continually monitor and repair their understanding of major concepts.



### Word Study: Multiple Meaning Words

Write the word *temples* (p. 29) on the board. Students will probably know at least one meaning of this word. Model how to identify when a word has more than one definition.

**Think Aloud:**

"I read on page 29 that temples are shaped like pyramids and are located at the center of Central American cities. When I see the word *temples*, I think of the areas on the sides of my forehead. I realize that this definition does not make sense in this sentence, so there is probably another definition for the word. I check the glossary on page 31, and I see that *temples* are places built to worship a god or goddess."

Remind students to use context clues and the glossary as they read to determine meanings of multiple meaning words. Ask students to think of other words that have different meanings (e.g., plain, p. 14) and write the answers on the board.



### Writing and Responding: Letter

Have students write a letter to a family member or friend in which they explain what they have learned about North America. In their letters, they should tell the most interesting fact they've learned about our continent. Remind students that they can look through the book for specific details to include in their letters. Students should date their letters and include a greeting, body, closing, and signature.

 Indicates a graphic organizer is linked to this activity.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

