

# CHAPTER 22



# China, Mongolia, and Taiwan

## What You Will Learn...

In this chapter you will learn about the physical features, climate, and resources of China, Mongolia, and Taiwan. You will also study the histories of these countries, how different influences have shaped their cultures, and what life is like in these regions today.

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## FOCUS ON READING AND WRITING

**Identifying Implied Main Ideas** The main idea in a piece of writing is sometimes stated directly. Other times, you must figure out the main idea. As you read, look for key details or ideas to help you identify the implied main ideas. See the lesson, **Identifying Implied Main Ideas**, on page 689.

**Writing a Legend** Since ancient times, people have passed along legends. These stories often tell about supernatural people or events from the past. Read the chapter. Then write your own legend describing the supernatural creation of a physical feature in this region.



**Geography** Horses play an important role in Mongolian life and culture. Many Mongolians are nomads and use horses to travel across the country's large plains.



## China, Mongolia, and Taiwan: Political



Geography Skills

**Regions** China is the largest country in East Asia and is closely linked with Mongolia and Taiwan.

1. **Name** What are the capitals of China, Mongolia, and Taiwan?
2. **Contrast** Based on the map, how do the countries of Mongolia and Taiwan differ?

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MONGOLIA

CHINA

TAIWAN

HOLT

## Geography's Impact

video series  
Watch the video to understand the impact of the Three Gorges Dam.

**History** The Great Wall of China stretches for many miles across China's northern lands.

**Culture** Chinese opera uses music and symbolism to tell stories. The actors wear bold and colorful makeup that has special meanings.



## What You Will Learn...

## Main Ideas

1. Physical features of China, Mongolia, and Taiwan include mountains, plateaus and basins, plains, and rivers.
2. China, Mongolia, and Taiwan have a range of climates and natural resources.

## The Big Idea

Physical features, climate, and resources vary across China, Mongolia, and Taiwan.

## Key Terms and Places

Himalayas, p. 588

Plateau of Tibet, p. 587

Gobi, p. 587

North China Plain, p. 588

Huang He, p. 588

loess, p. 588

Chang Jiang, p. 589

## TAKING NOTES

As you read, use a chart like the one below to take notes on the physical features, climate, and resources of China, Mongolia, and Taiwan.

Mountains	
Other Landforms	
Rivers	
Climate and Resources	

# Physical Geography

## If YOU lived there...

You are a young filmmaker who lives in Guangzhou, a port city in southern China. You are preparing to make a documentary film about the Huang He, one of China's great rivers. To make your film, you will follow the river across northern China. Your journey will take you from the Himalayas to the coast of the Yellow Sea.

## What do you expect to see on your travels?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** China, Mongolia, and Taiwan make up a large part of East Asia. They include a range of physical features and climates—dry plateaus, rugged mountains, fertile plains. This physical geography has greatly influenced life in each country.

## Physical Features

Have you seen the view from the top of the world? At 29,035 feet (8,850 m), Mount Everest in the **Himalayas** is the world's highest mountain. From atop Everest, look east. Through misty clouds, icy peaks stretch out before you, fading to land far below. This is China. About the size of the United States, China has a range of physical features. They include not only the world's tallest peaks but also some of its driest deserts and longest rivers.

Two other areas are closely linked to China. To the north lies Mongolia (mahn-GOHL-yuh). This landlocked country is dry and rugged, with vast grasslands and desert. In contrast, Taiwan (TY-WAHN), off the coast of mainland China, is a green tropical island. Look at the map to see the whole region's landforms.

### Mountains

Much of the large region, including Taiwan, is mountainous. In southwest China, the Himalayas run along the border. They are Earth's tallest mountain range. Locate on the map the region's other ranges. As a tip, the Chinese word *shan* means "mountain."



Interactive Map

## China, Mongolia, and Taiwan: Physical

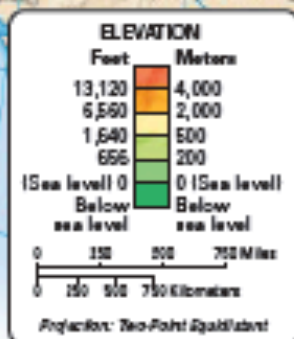


Geography Skills

Place Physical features vary across the region.

1. **Identify** What major rivers begin in the Plateau of Tibet?
2. **Make Generalizations** In general, how does China's elevation differ from west to east?

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- 1 The Himalayas are the world's highest mountain range.



## Other Landforms

Many of the mountain ranges are separated by plateaus, basins, and deserts. In south-west China, the **Plateau of Tibet** lies north of the Himalayas. The world's highest plateau, it is called the Roof of the World.

Moving north, we find a low, dry area. A large part of this area is the Taklimakan (tah-kluh-muh-KAHN) Desert, a barren land of sand dunes and blinding sandstorms.

In fact, sandstorms are so common that the desert's Turkish name, Taklimakan, has come to mean "Enter and you will not come out." To the northeast, the Turpan (toohr-PAHN) Depression is China's lowest point, at 505 feet (154 m) below sea level.

Continuing northeast, in Mongolia we find the **Gobi**. This harsh area of gravel and rock is the world's coldest desert. Temperatures can drop to below  $-40^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).

- 2 Hills that are called karst towers line the Li River in southeast China. These dramatic hills formed over time as rainwater eroded limestone.





In east China, the land levels out into low plains and river valleys. These fertile plains, such as the **North China Plain**, are China's main population centers and farmlands. On Taiwan, a plain on the west coast is the island's main population center.

## Rivers

In China, two great rivers run west to east. The **Huang He** (HWAHNG HEE), or the Yellow River, flows across northern China. Along its course, this river picks up large amounts of **loess** (LES), or fertile, yellowish soil. The soil colors the river and gives it its name.

In summer, the Huang He often floods. The floods spread layers of loess, enriching the soil for farming. However, such floods have killed millions of people. For this reason, the river is called China's Sorrow.

The mighty **Chang** (CHAHNG) **Jiang**, or the Yangzi (YAHNG-zee) River, flows across central China. It is Asia's longest river and a major transportation route.

**READING CHECK** Summarizing What are the main physical features found in this region?

## Climate and Resources

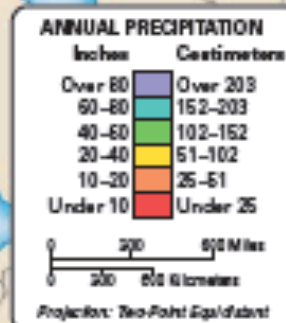
Climate varies widely across the region. The tropical southeast is warm to hot, and monsoons bring heavy rains in summer. In addition, typhoons can strike the southeast coast in summer and fall. Similar to hurricanes, these violent storms bring high winds and rain. As we move to the northeast, the climate is drier and colder. Winter temperatures can drop below 0°F (−18°C).

### FOCUS ON READING

Which details help you identify the main idea of the paragraph to the right?

Interactive Map

## China, Mongolia, and Taiwan: Precipitation



**Regions** In general, precipitation decreases from the southeast to the northwest. Deserts and dry steppes cover the northwest.

1. **Use the Map** How much precipitation does the lower Chang Jiang average each year?
2. **Contrast** How does annual precipitation in Mongolia differ from that in Taiwan?

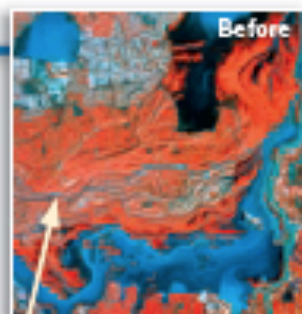
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## Satellite View

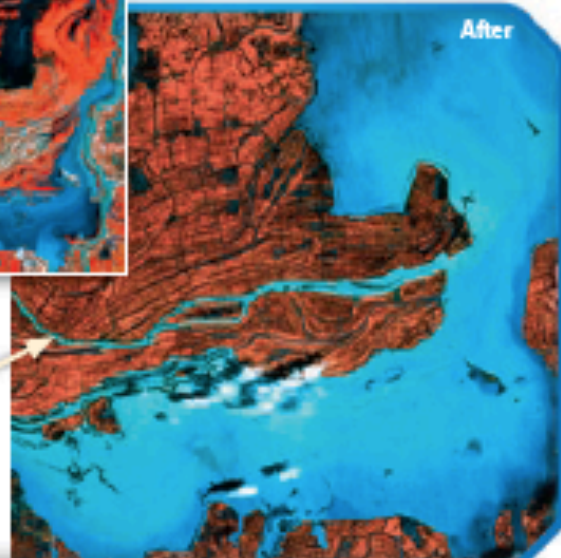
### Flooding in China

China's rivers and lakes often flood during the summer rainy season. The satellite images here show Lake Dongting Hu in southern China. The lake appears blue, and the land appears red. Soon after the Before image was taken, heavy rains led to flooding. The After image shows the results. Compare the two images to see the extent of the flood, which killed more than 3,000 people and destroyed some 5 million homes.

**Drawing Inferences** Why might people continue to live in areas that often flood?



For comparison, these arrows are pointing to the same place in each image.



In the north and west, the climate is mainly dry. Temperatures vary across the area and can get both very hot and cold.

Like the climate, the region's natural resources cover a wide range. China has a wealth of natural resources. The country is rich in mineral resources and is a leading producer of coal, lead, tin, and tungsten. China produces many other minerals and metals as well. China's forestland and farmland are also valuable resources.

Mongolia's natural resources include minerals such as coal, iron, and tin as well as livestock. Taiwan's major natural resource is its farmland. Important crops include sugarcane, tea, and bananas.

**READING CHECK** **Contrasting** Which of these three countries has the most natural resources?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** As you have read, China, Mongolia, and Taiwan have a range of physical features, climate, and resources. Next, you will read about the history and culture of China.

## Section 1 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SK7 HP22

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- Identify** What two major rivers run through China?
  - Explain** How does the Huang He both benefit and hurt China's people?
  - Elaborate** Why do you think many people in China live on the North China Plain?
- Define** What is a typhoon?
  - Contrast** What are some differences between the climates of southeast and northwest China?
  - Rate** Based on the different climates in this region, which part of the region would you prefer to live in? Why?

### Critical Thinking

- Categorizing** Look back over your notes for this section. Then use a chart like the one shown here to organize, identify, and describe the main physical features of China, Mongolia, and Taiwan.



### FOCUS ON WRITING

- Writing about Physical Geography** Note the main physical features of this region. Consider which feature you might want to explain in your legend. Features to consider include mountains, plateaus, and deserts.