North America: Mountains

Summary	The topographic map on the left shows the mountainous areas of North America. The western coastline is dominated by the Rocky Mountain chain. This is also the location of a tectonic plate boundary and the mountains are formed through the process of subduction. There is a great deal of seismic activity in this area as it is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire.		
Location:	See Map	**Vocabulary:**	**topographic:** relating to the physical features of an area **subduction:** the movement of one tectonic plate below another **seismic:** relating to earthquakes
Human Features:	N/A	**Physical Features:**	North America's major mountain ranges are: Alaska Range: extends from the Alaska Peninsula to the border of the Yukon Territory, Canada. The highest peak in North America, Danali (formerly Mount McKinley) – 20,320 ft (6,194 m) – is located here. Appalachian Mountains: extend from central Alabama in the USA through the New England states and the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Quebec. They are 1,500 miles (2,400 km) in length. Brooks Range: situated in northern Alaska. Cascades: stretching from northeastern California across Oregon and Washington. Major peaks include Mt Hood, Mt Rainier and Mt St Helens. Coast Range: running along the Pacific Ocean coastlines of California, Oregon and Washington. They also extend along the western border of British Columbia, Canada, and the southern edge of Alaska. Rocky Mountains: about 3,000 miles (4,800 km) in length, extend from the US state of New Mexico into the northernmost reaches of Canada.

			Sierra Madres: include two major ranges – the Occidental range and the Oriental range, and one smaller one – the Del Sur range. Sierra Nevada: situated in eastern California, about 400 miles (640 km) in length.
Human Processes:	N/A	**Physical Processes:**	N/A
Techniques:	N/A	**Human Processes:**	N/A
Diversity:	N/A	**Key Skills Covered:**	Map Skills
Key Local Links:	N/A	**Common Misconceptions:**	

	Basic	Advancing	Deep
Techniques	Describe the nature of a topographic map and explain why it is useful.	Compare and contrast the features of a topographic map and those of a political map, using examples from North America. Explain why a geographer may use a variety of map types for the same location.	Propose an appropriate set of maps to understand the route of the transcontinental railroad in the United States of America.
Location	Locate and mark on a map the geographical location of North America's major mountain ranges. Locate and mark on a map the highest peak in North America.	Give a broad overview (apply) of the geographical distribution of mountain ranges in North America. Show how the western coast of North America is part of a wider seismic zone.	Relate your knowledge of biomes in North America to your knowledge of mountainous areas and draw some conclusions.
Physical Features	Define the term 'seismic activity'. Describe the physical features of areas of tectonic subduction.	Compare and contrast the physical features of mountainous regions of North America and the Great Plains.	Relate your knowledge of mountainous areas to your knowledge of the extraction of natural resources.