

Substitute Guide: Comparing Two World Regions

Course: World Geography **Grades:** 9–12 **Time:** ~50 min standard · ~90 min block Social Studies

Learning goal (plain language)

Students compare **two real world regions** — the **Sahara region of North Africa** and the **Amazon Basin of South America** — using both **physical geography** (climate, landforms, rainfall) and **human geography** (where people settle and how they work). They read two short profiles, study a comparison figure, do a compare-and-contrast, trace how physical features shape human activity, sort fact from interpretation and opinion, evaluate a claim, and finish by writing a short evidence-based comparison about which region's physical geography limits settlement more. **You do not need a geography background to run this.** Everything students need is printed in their packet, and the separate answer key gives you every answer.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC Chapter 113 (World Geography Studies).

- **Regions:** describing and comparing the physical and human characteristics of different world regions.
- **Physical & human geography:** explaining how physical features such as climate and landforms shape human activity, settlement patterns, and economic activities.
- **Geographic skills:** using maps, tables, and other geographic tools to interpret information and support conclusions with evidence.

Provisional — pending educator verification against the current official TAC source.

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted, and this is **not** a claim of TEKS alignment. No section number is asserted; please confirm the specific student expectations and wording against your official source. Prompts are kept non-partisan.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No calculators, computers, or textbooks are needed.
- Decide up front whether this is a **standard (~50 min)** or **block (~90 min)** class and tell students which items to do (see Timing).
- Write the date on the board and remind students to fill in the name line.
- Keep the **answer key** with you — it is a separate file and is **not** in the student packet.

Materials What's needed

- Printed student packet (5–7 pages) per student.
- Pencil per student.
- This guide and the separate answer key (teacher only).
- No technology, no calculator, no textbooks, no safety hazards.

Timing Suggested pacing — standard vs. block

Segment	Standard ~50 min	Block ~90 min	What students do
Start — Observe a region	5 min	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up on two short descriptions
Build — Read the profiles	10 min	15 min	Profiles A–B (+ Profile C in block), word bank, Figure 1; Q3
Apply — Analyze the region	20 min	25 min	Q4–Q9 (+ Q10 push/pull in block)
Explain — CER comparison	10 min	25 min	Q11 claim/evidence/reasoning (block adds land-use analysis + counter-consideration)
Close — ACE	5 min	10 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional	~10 min	"Design a settlement"

Standard version: students skip every item marked **[BLOCK]** (Profile C, Q10, and the extended-writing add-on in Q11). **Block version:** students do those items and write a longer comparison.

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's assignment is a paper geography investigation called *Comparing Two World Regions*. You will compare the **Sahara desert of North Africa** with the **Amazon Basin of South America** — one very dry, one very wet — looking at both their physical geography and how people live and work there. You will work by yourself with just a pencil — no computers or textbooks. First read the two short profiles and study the comparison figure. Then answer the questions in order; if one is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in complete sentences where it asks you to explain. Everything you need is printed in the packet — you do not need any outside facts. Keep your answers grounded in the evidence and non-partisan: describe what the profiles show, not which place you like better. [If block: Also read Profile C and do the items marked BLOCK.] Put your name, class period, and date at the top now. You have about [50 / 90] minutes; raise your hand if you need help understanding a word."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck on the **compare chart** (Q5), remind them a similarity is something *both* regions share and a difference is where they *differ* — and to give one **physical** and one **human** point.
- For "how physical features shape human activity" (Q6, Q7), ask: "What does the climate or the rivers *let* or *stop* people from doing here?"
- For "fact / interpretation / opinion" (Q8), point to the **Word Bank**; an "opinion" states a preference, an "interpretation" says "probably" or "because."
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems** for the CER (Q11) and ACE sections.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "What does Figure 1 show for rainfall?" or "Is that a physical feature or a human activity?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task or the block add-ons.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of any passage or question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **Word Bank**. A quick glossary for reference: **region** = an area sharing common features; **physical geography** = natural features (climate, landforms, water); **human geography** = where and how people live and work; **climate** = the usual temperature and rainfall pattern; **landform** = a natural land feature (dune, plain, mountain, river valley); **population density** = how many

people live in an area; **oasis** = a watered spot in a desert; **arid** = very dry; **tropical** = hot and usually wet; **push factor** = drives people away; **pull factor** = draws people in.

- Extended time is fine; the standard core can stop after Q11 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in phrases if writing full sentences is a barrier, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — the comparison figure and tables print and read clearly in black and white.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed:** calculator (no math required), phones, computers, textbooks or outside sources (everything needed is in the packet).

Collect at the end: Collect every packet, whether finished or not, with names on them. Stack them for the teacher. Note on a sticky whether the class did the standard or block version, how far most students got, and any questions that caused confusion.

Answer key: The **answer key is a separate file** (answerkey.html) and is for the teacher only. Please do not hand it to students.

Teacher follow-up (for the returning teacher)

Watch for the common mix-up between **physical geography** (climate, landforms, rainfall, rivers) and **human geography** (settlement, economy) — Q5, Q6, and Q11 target this, and students sometimes label an economic activity as a physical feature. Also watch for "climate is the only factor" thinking in Q9 (the profiles show landforms and rivers matter too) and for the assumption that low average density means a region is empty (both regions concentrate people near water). The CER (Q11) responses show who can name a specific profile detail or a cell from Figure 1 and tie it to a region; block responses additionally show who can handle a land-use analysis and a counter-consideration. A quick next-day "physical or human?" sort, and a look at how water shapes settlement in opposite ways in the two regions, would reinforce this well.

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