



Continent Close-up

Asia is the biggest continent.

It contains about one-third of all the land on Earth. It is also the most populous continent, with almost four and a half billion people. This is more than 60 percent of Earth's total population! The people of Asia represent an incredibly diverse range of cultures, and they live in a wide variety of environments.



Kazakhstan

Land area	About 17,226,200 square miles (44,614,000 sq km)
Number of independent countries	About 50
Estimated population (2018)	About 4.5 billion
Main languages	Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic
Largest country	Russia
Smallest country	Maldives
Fast fact	China and India are the only countries in the world with populations above one billion.



China

Indonesia extends off the eastern edge of this map. The country can be seen in full on the Australia/Oceania map.

More than 1,500 islands
make up Raja Ampat.



Indonesia's Raja Ampat
Islands are located just off
the coast of New Guinea.

CHAPTER



Land and Climate

Asia shares part of its border with the continents of Europe and Africa. From north to south, it stretches from the Arctic Circle to the tropics south of the equator. From east to west, it stretches from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Because of its great size, the continent is often divided into six smaller regions: central Asia, northern Asia, eastern Asia, Southeast Asia, southern Asia, and the Middle East.

THE BIG TRUTH!

Pollution in Asia

Over the past few decades, Asia has become the manufacturing center of the world. Automobiles, computers, and clothes are just a few of the many products that come out of Asia. A great deal of oil and coal are also extracted from the continent. As a result of this rapid industrialization, Asia has developed major pollution problems. In China, most rivers and lakes are badly polluted. Many of Asia's biggest cities are among the most polluted in the world.

Many people in Asia wear masks to filter out pollution as they breathe.



Leading the Charge

To address these problems with pollution, many Asian countries are raising public awareness of climate change and promoting clean energy technologies. For example, India and China produce a great deal of solar energy. This cuts down on the

use of harmful fossil fuels. In countries such as Indonesia, paper companies are promising to protect forests to help make up for the trees they harvest. Many Asian cities are also converting to electric taxis to decrease air pollution.

Pollution Sources

- Burning fossil fuels
- Farms
- Toxic waste from factories
- Trash
- Deforestation



Ways People Can Help

- Use **renewable energy** sources
- Recycle
- Walk or ride a bike instead of driving
- Plant a tree
- Use less water

