

2  **Find out more** Read and listen. Where in North America are weather conditions extreme?

North America: climate change and landscapes

North America is the third largest continent in the world. With 8,000 km from north to south, the landscape is very varied. Each region of North America is affected by climate change in different ways.

In the north

The Arctic region is one of the coldest parts of North America. There are often violent snowstorms and glacial winds. But climate change is affecting the landscape here: temperatures are rising more quickly than in other parts of the world and this is causing sea ice and glaciers to melt. As glaciers get smaller, rocks and islands appear along the coast, and there is less and less ice covering the sea in the summer.



In the centre

In Colorado, on the east side of the Rocky Mountain Range, there are forests, deserts, canyons and agricultural land. Here, climate change is causing higher temperatures and longer periods of drought. This is increasing the number of wildfires, making the landscape more arid and leading to plagues of beetles which are destroying Colorado's beautiful pine tree forests.



In the south

In Puerto Rico, the weather is tropical. For many people, living on a Caribbean island is a dream, but this region regularly experiences devastating hurricanes. As climate change warms the sea, hurricanes are becoming more frequent and more violent. They bring heavy rain, floods and strong winds of more than 250 km/hr which destroy everything in their path.



Reading tip!

Find the places in the text on a map of North America.

1 How many continents are larger than North America?

2 Which region in the text is the coldest?

3 Why is the coast changing in the Arctic region?

4 Why is the landscape getting more arid in Colorado?

5 Why is life sometimes hard for people in Puerto Rico?

6 What types of weather do hurricanes bring?