

## Analyzing Country Shapes and Location

### South America

Analysis of the size, shape, and location of countries provides geographers with a tool to consider location and distance when making and testing the validity and application of geographic generalizations. For example, an analysis of the countries of Central America reveals that almost all possess coastlines on both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. How could possession of two coastlines be an advantage or disadvantage for the country?

Geographers use the following terms to describe the shape of countries. Examine the country shapes using your text or atlas.

**Compact**—the shape is nearly round, and most points are equally distant from the center

Examples: Uruguay, Cambodia

**Fragmented**—territory is divided into two or more parts separated by geographic or political features

Examples: Indonesia, United States (Alaska and Hawaii)

**Prorupt**—land extensions of the main body of territory protrude or extend into neighboring territory

Examples: Thailand, Afghanistan, Austria

**Elongated**—territory is longer than it is wide; usually the length is much longer than the width

Examples: Chile, Vietnam

**Perforated**—territory is disrupted by areas (like holes in Swiss cheese) controlled by another country or independent political authority

Examples: eSwatini (Swaziland) and Lesotho perforate South Africa

Italy is perforated by San Marino and Vatican City

Countries may also be **landlocked**, not bordering the ocean with access to the blocked by the territory of other countries. How would being landlocked affect a country's ability to interact with the world and participate in international trade.

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Use the political map of South America in your textbook. Base your answers for these questions only on the country's shape and position on the continent.

1. Which country has the best shape?
2. Which country has the worst shape?
3. Which country is in the best position for international trade?
4. Which country is the most likely to have territorial disputes with its neighbors?
5. Which country is the least likely to have a strong navy?
6. Which country is the most likely to have problems with transportation?

Base your answer for these questions on other geographic factors. Use appropriate maps as needed.

7. Which country is most likely to have the largest variety of crops?
8. Which country is most likely to grow wheat?
9. Which country would have difficulty creating east-west transportation links?
10. Which country is likely to have large rainforest areas?