Lesson 1: Geography of South Asia

Directions: Read the summary to reveal how South Asia is home to different peoples making homes across magnificent landscapes, from mountains to islands. As you read, underline important details in each section that relate to that section’s title. Think about what you already know, what you want to know, and what you have learned after reading the summary.

Vocabulary

subcontinent  a large region separated by water from other land areas
monsoon season  the rainy season
subsistence farming  a type of farming in which people grow food just for their family’s use

A Diamond Breaks Away (p. 123)
South Asia is a diamond-shaped land that extends far into the Indian Ocean. The world’s tallest mountains, the Himalayas, are in South Asia. South Asia is called a subcontinent because it is very large and separated by water from other land areas. Scientists believe that Earth’s surface is made of several slowly moving plates. The subcontinent may have once been part of a huge landmass. But its plate broke away and pushed into a larger plate. The smaller plate pushing up under the larger plate formed the Himalayas. The highest peak of the Himalayas is Mount Everest.

Snow to Monsoon (p. 124)
Eight countries are part of South Asia—Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives Islands or Maldives. Pakistan is in the northwestern part of South Asia. It has the world’s second tallest mountain, called the K2. A desert stretches across part of Pakistan and northwestern India. Nepal and Bhutan are mountainous countries in the east and north. To the south, a river delta surrounds Bangladesh. India is farther south. It has the Himalayas, a plain, and a plateau. Sri Lanka and the Maldives are islands in the Indian Ocean. Temperatures in South Asia are cool from October through February. It is very hot from March through May. The monsoon season, or rainy season, lasts from June through September. Nearly all of the yearly precipitation, or rain and snow, falls during the monsoon season.

Great Rivers, Great Plain (p. 125)
The Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra Rivers flow through South Asia. The rivers begin in the Himalayas and flow over the Indo-Gangetic Plain, or the Indo-Ganges Plain. The rivers carry water and silt to farmlands to irrigate crops and make the soil rich. The monsoon season rains cause flooding, which spreads the silt more. Families either grow food for themselves or trade with small groups of people in their villages. This type of farming is known as subsistence farming.

Plateau, Coast, and Islands (p. 126-127)
The Deccan Plateau is south of the Indo-Ganges Plain. The climate is dry. The soil is rich. Cotton and peanuts are grown there. The Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats are mountains that border the Deccan plateau. Most people in India work as farmers. People also fish. Sri Lanka and the Maldives Islands export tea, coconuts, fish, and rubber. Manufacturing, clothing, and textiles are also important industries.
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Directions: Label the map by writing the number of each place listed below on the map where it is located. You will need to use the map of South Asia located within Lesson 1.

1. Himalayas
2. Mount Everest
3. India
4. Pakistan
5. Nepal
6. Bhutan
7. Afghanistan
8. Bangladesh
9. Sri Lanka
10. Maldive Islands
11. Hindu Kush
12. Indian Ocean
13. Indo-Ganges Plain
14. Deccan Plateau
15. Eastern Ghats
16. Western Ghats

South Asia