00:11Narrator: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

00:13MAKE UP ABOUT 1/3 OF WORLD'S TOTAL LAND AREA.

00:17ASIA, THE LARGEST CONTINENT,

00:19STRETCHES ALL THE WAY FROM THE PACIFIC OCEAN TO EUROPE

00:22AND FROM THE ARCTIC CIRCLE TO THE EQUATOR.

00:26HERE YOU'LL FIND SOME OF EARTH'S MOST DRAMATIC EXAMPLES

00:29OF SEISMIC ACTIVITY.

00:32VOLCANOES PRODUCED THE ISLANDS

00:34THAT RUN FROM ASIA'S PACIFIC COAST

00:37TO THE INDIAN OCEAN...

00:42...WHILE THE COLLISION OF TECTONIC PLATES

00:44RAISED THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS, THE MIGHTY HIMALAYA.

00:50EUROPE AND ASIA OCCUPY THE SAME LANDMASS,

00:53BUT THEY ARE CONSIDERED SEPARATE CONTINENTS.

00:57ASIA BEGINS AT THE URAL MOUNTAINS

00:59AND CASPIAN SEA.

01:01THE CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS AND BLACK SEA

01:04FORM ANOTHER BOUNDARY.

01:07EXCLUDING RUSSIA'S SIBERIA,

01:10THIS VAST AREA OF THE GLOBE CAN BE DIVIDED

01:12INTO FIVE MAJOR LAND AREAS OF SIMILAR FEATURES --

01:16SOUTHWEST ASIA,

01:18CENTRAL ASIA,

01:20EAST ASIA,

01:21SOUTH ASIA,

01:23AND SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.

01:30SOUTHWEST ASIA INCLUDES THE MIDDLE EAST

01:33AND ITS VAST DESERTS.

01:37THE OLDEST KNOWN CIVILIZATIONS

01:38WERE BORN BETWEEN THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES RIVERS

01:41IN PRESENT-DAY IRAQ.

01:45BUT FERTILE RIVER VALLEYS ARE THE EXCEPTION, NOT THE RULE.

01:49IN MOST PLACES,

01:50THE LACK OF RAINFALL MAKES FARMING IMPOSSIBLE.

01:57BURIED UNDER THE SAND, THOUGH, ARE VALUABLE OIL RESERVES

02:00THAT HAVE GENERATED GREAT WEALTH FOR THE REGION.

02:04ALTHOUGH IT IS 60% DESERT,

02:07THE TERRAIN OF CENTRAL ASIA ALSO INCLUDES RUGGED MOUNTAINS

02:10AND SEEMINGLY ENDLESS, TREELESS PLAINS CALLED THE STEPPES.

02:15THIS REGION IS TOO DRY

02:16TO SUPPORT MUCH PLANT LIFE EXCEPT SHORT GRASSES,

02:19SO PEOPLE HERE GRAZE THEIR LIVESTOCK ON THE STEPPES.

02:23MELTING SNOW AND ICE

02:25FROM THE TOWERING PEAKS OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

02:28PROVIDE THE SOURCE OF EAST ASIA'S MOST IMPORTANT RIVERS,

02:32THE HUANG RIVER AND THE CHANG RIVER,

02:34ASIA'S LONGEST WATERWAY.

02:41THE VAST GOBI DESERT

02:43AND THE MONGOLIAN PLATEAU DOMINATE CONTINENTAL EAST ASIA.

02:47THEY STAND IN STRIKING CONTRAST

02:49TO THE REGION'S HIGHLY INDUSTRIALIZED ISLAND NATION

02:52OF JAPAN.

02:54SOUTH ASIA INCLUDES THE INDIAN PENINSULA

02:58THAT EXTENDS INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN.

03:01THE CLIMATE HERE EXPERIENCES MONSOONS

03:04OR STRONG SEASONAL WINDS.

03:06SUMMER MONSOONS FROM THE OCEAN BRING HEAVY RAINFALL.

03:14THE MOUNTAINS OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

03:16ARE THE ORIGIN OF THE INDUS AND THE GANGES RIVERS.

03:21SOUTH ASIA'S FIRST CIVILIZATIONS

03:23DEVELOPED IN THESE RIVER VALLEYS,

03:25AND TODAY THEY ARE AMONG THE MOST HEAVILY POPULATED AREAS

03:28ON EARTH.

03:30SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

03:33SHARE THE SUBTROPICAL HABITATS AROUND THE EQUATOR

03:36THAT SUPPORT LUSH RAIN FORESTS.

03:41SOUTHEAST ASIA INCLUDES NUMEROUS ARCHIPELAGOS,

03:45GROUPS OF ISLANDS THAT CONNECT ASIA TO AUSTRALIA

03:48AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS.

03:53AUSTRALIA, A LARGE COUNTRY THAT IS ALSO A CONTINENT,

03:57CONTAINS A VAST DESERT IN THE INTERIOR.

04:00THE OUTBACK, AS IT'S KNOWN, RECEIVES VERY LITTLE RAIN,

04:03SO MOST OF THE POPULATION LIVES ON THE EAST COAST.

04:12THE COUNTRY OF NEW ZEALAND AND THE TROPICAL ISLAND GROUPS

04:15OF POLYNESIA, MELANESIA, AND MICRONESIA

04:19EXTEND FAR INTO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

04:23ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ARE THE MOST DENSELY POPULATED PARTS

04:26OF THE WORLD.

04:28MORE THAN 3/5 OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE CALL THESE REGIONS HOME,

04:32EVEN THOUGH SCORCHING DESERTS, IMPASSABLE MOUNTAINS,

04:35AND DENSE FORESTS MAKE MUCH OF THE LAND UNINHABITABLE.

04:41CHINA AND INDIA EACH HAVE MORE THAN A BILLION PEOPLE.

04:50MOST PEOPLE HERE RELY ON FARMING FOR THEIR LIVELIHOODS.

04:57SOUTH, EAST, AND SOUTHEAST ASIA ALL HAVE GOOD FARMLAND

05:01THANKS TO RIVER DEPOSITS AND WARM, WET CLIMATES.

05:08MORE THAN 90% OF THE WORLD'S RICE COMES FROM ASIA.

05:11WHEAT IS ALSO ONE OF THE MAJOR CROPS.

05:17A FROZEN NORTH AND A STEAMY SOUTH,

05:20UNSTABLE VOLCANOES AND ENDLESS DESERTS,

05:24AREAS OVERCROWDED AND OTHERS UNINHABITED.

05:30IN A WORLD OF EXTREMES,

05:32ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION COVER THEM ALL.