

Module: South Asia
Topic Content: Physical Features of South Asia

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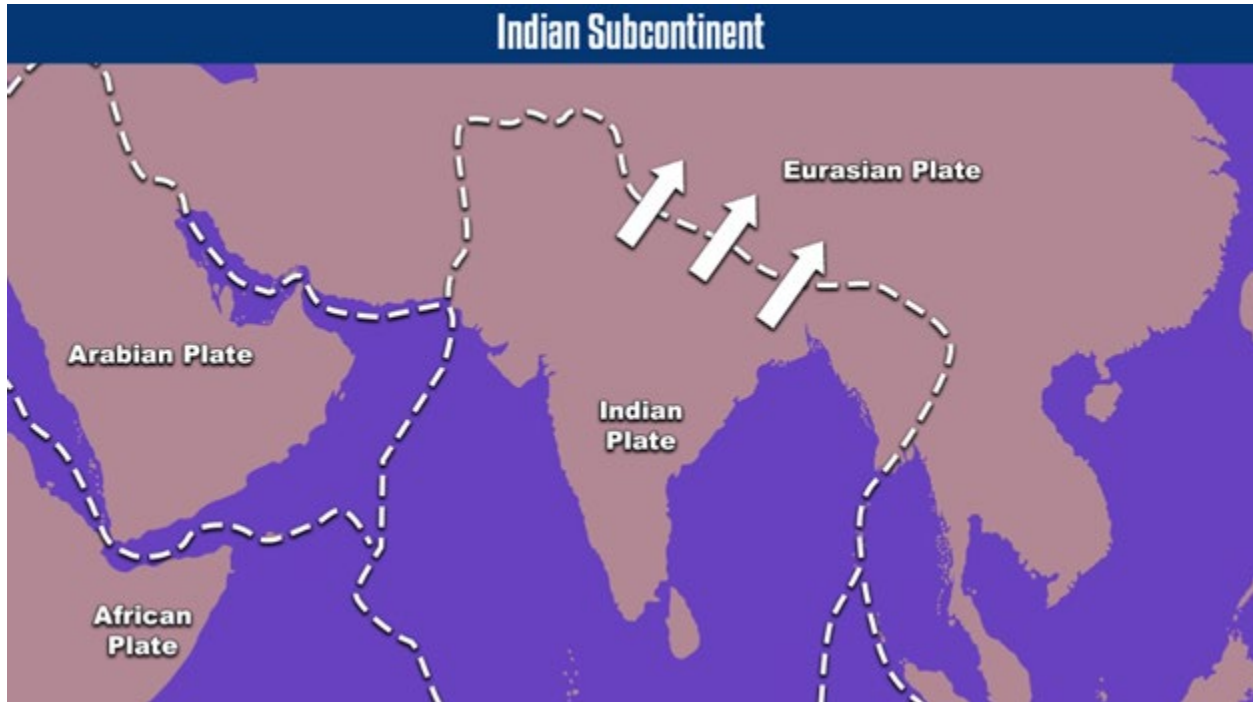
Location



South Asia is located on the southern part of the Asian continent. The region is bordered by large mountains in the north. The rest is surrounded by water. The Arabian Sea is in the west, the Bay of Bengal is in the east, and the Indian Ocean is in the south.

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Indian Subcontinent



South Asia is also described as the Indian subcontinent. This is because most of the region lies on a tectonic plate named the Indian plate. Tens of millions of years ago, the Indian subcontinent was a separate landmass from Asia. Over time, the Indian plate gradually moved north and collided with the Eurasian plate. This collision formed the large mountains in the northern part of the region.

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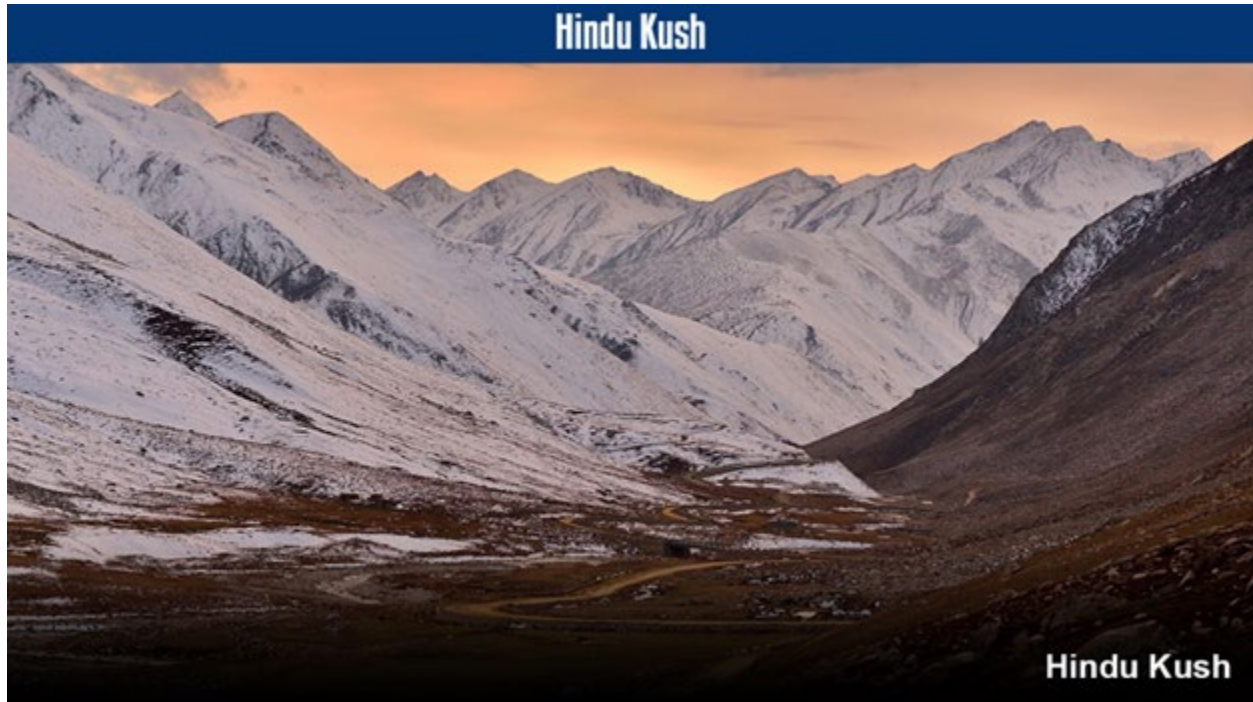
Himalayas



The Himalayas are a massive mountain range located in the northern part of South Asia. They were formed by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates. The Himalayan Mountains border a large elevated plateau called the Tibetan Plateau. This plateau is located north of the mountains. Several of the world's tallest mountains are found in the Himalayas. The tallest is Mount Everest, at 29,029 feet.

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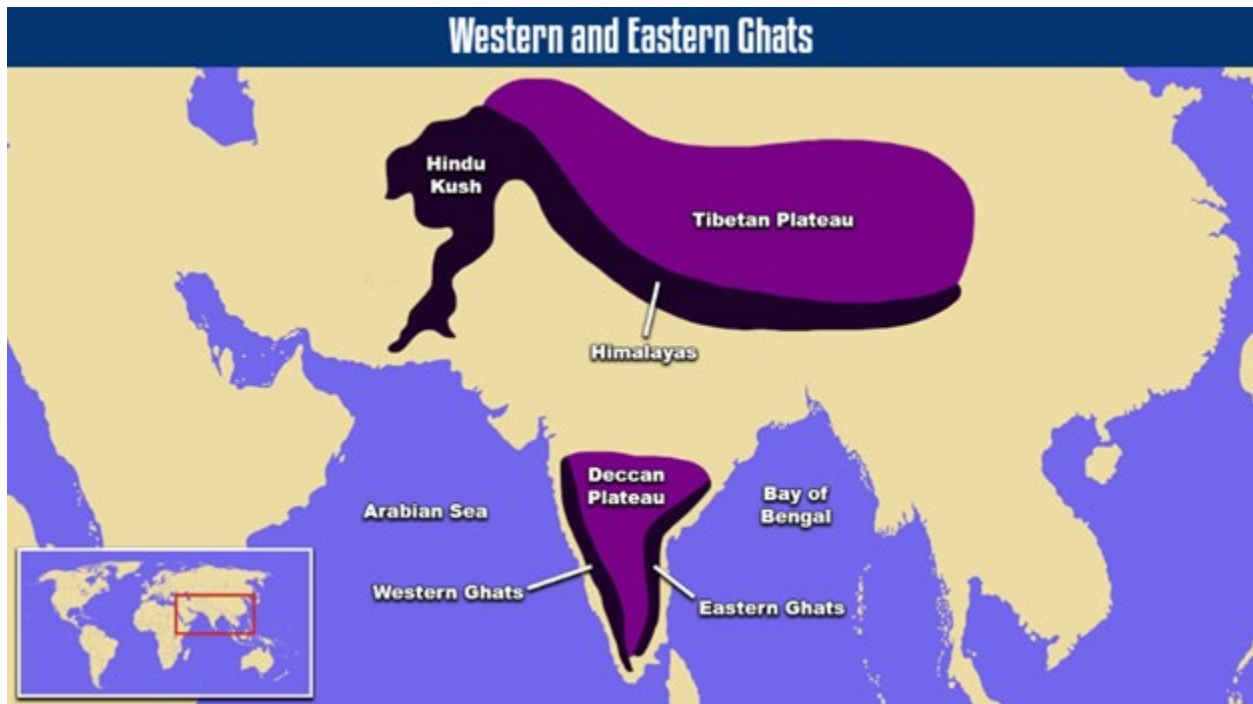
Hindu Kush



The Hindu Kush Mountains extend west from the Himalayan Mountains into Southwest Asia. The Hindu Kush and the Himalayas form a wall of mountains that divides South Asia from the rest of the continent. The Hindu Kush Mountains are steep and rugged, which limits movement through the mountains. However, there are a few passes that can be navigated. These mountain passes have been essential for travel and trade.

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Western and Eastern Ghats



The Western and Eastern Ghats are two mountain ranges located near the coasts. The Western Ghats run parallel to the coast of the Arabian Sea. The Eastern Ghats run parallel to the coast of the Bay of Bengal. The Deccan Plateau is located between these two mountain ranges. The Western and Eastern Ghats are much smaller than the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush. For comparison, the highest peak in the Western Ghats is 8,842 feet. The highest peak in the Hindu Kush is 25,289 feet.

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Major Rivers



There are several major rivers located in South Asia. The Ganges River begins in the western Himalayas. It flows through northern India and Bangladesh before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. The Ganges River is considered holy in the Hindu faith.

The Brahmaputra River begins in the eastern Himalayas. It flows through China, India, and Bangladesh. The Brahmaputra River merges with the Ganges River before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. The Brahmaputra and Ganges Rivers form a fertile delta called the Ganges Delta.

The Indus River is another major waterway in South Asia. It begins on the Tibetan Plateau and flows southwest toward the Arabian Sea. The Indus River has supported many different civilizations throughout history. Today, it is the most important river in Pakistan.