

## “Physical Location of North America”

Why did it take European explorers so many years to find North America? Because the continent is surrounded by water! The Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans lie to the north, east, and west of North America. The Gulf of Mexico lies to the south. From any direction, North America was difficult to reach. The physical isolation not only kept early settlers away, but also allowed unique species of plants and animals to develop. The Indian Paintbrush, sequoia trees, fragrant sumac, wild yam, and saguaro cactus are all native to North America. Native animals include the buffalo, opossum, wild turkey, bald eagle, manatee, and alligator. The location of North America kept some species of plants and animals from spreading to other continents. The water and distance have been both a barrier and a form of protection for inhabitants of North America. As recently as World War I and World War II, other nations had a difficult time attacking North America across the vast oceans.