

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# DESERT AND SAVANNAH

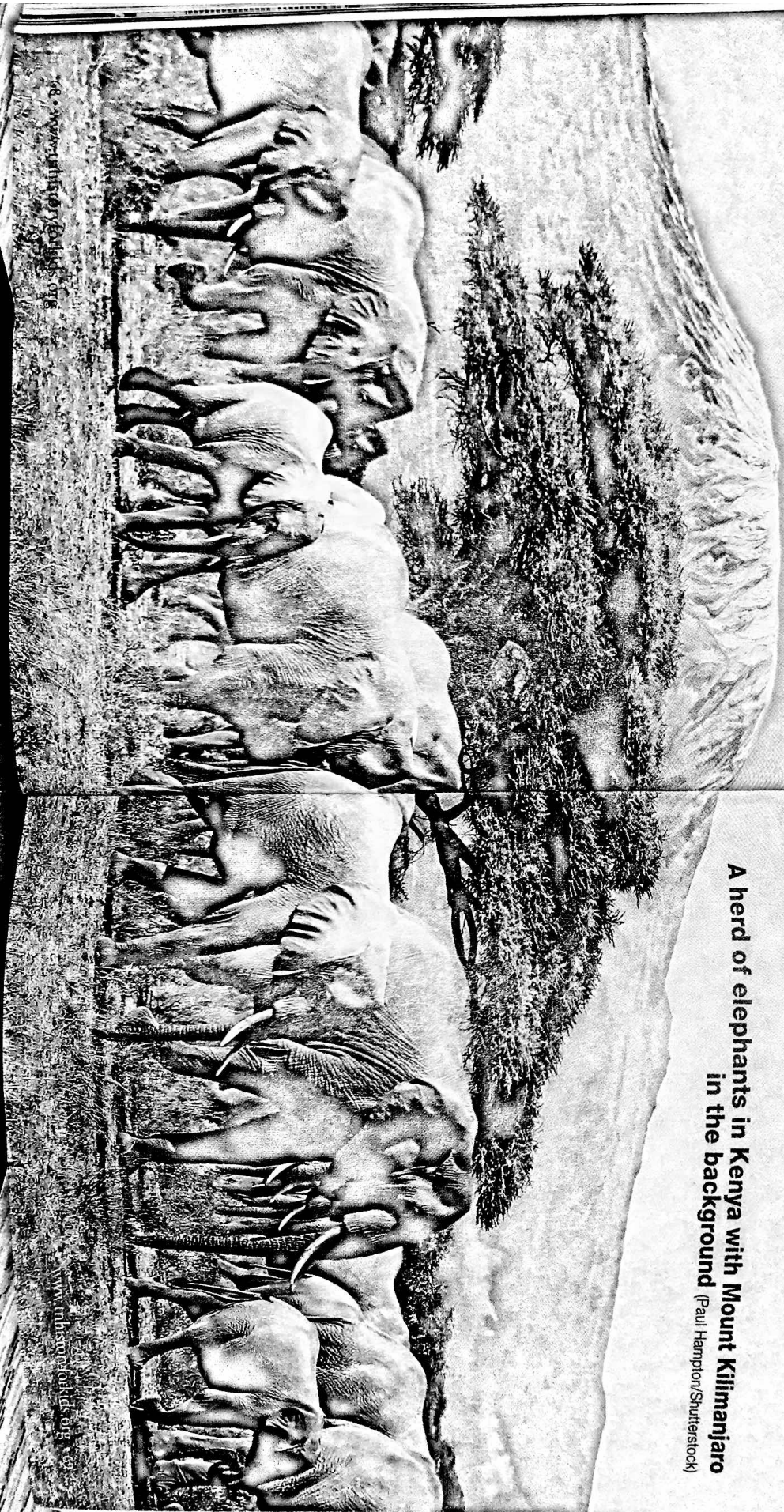
Africa is the second largest continent and the continent with the second highest population. Africa is bordered on the west by the Atlantic Ocean; on the east by the Indian Ocean; on the north by the Mediterranean Sea; and on the south by the Southern Ocean.

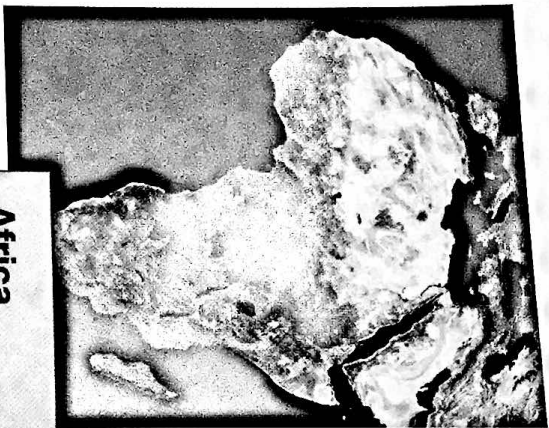
The weather and type of land vary quite a bit in Africa. The northern third is desert or dry land that is close to being desert. In fact, northern Africa contains the Sahara Desert, the largest desert on

Earth. The Sahara is about as large as the entire United States! Central and southern Africa contain everything from rainforest to an area of grassland known as **savannah**. The savannah is where you will find many of the animals we associate with Africa such as lions, elephants, giraffes and zebras.

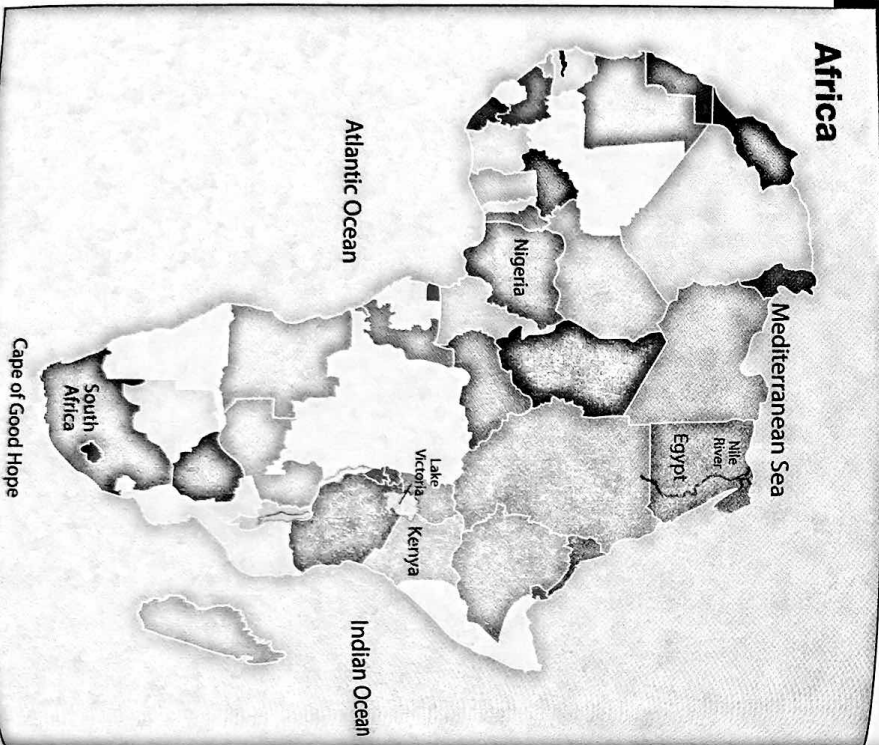
We don't normally think of mountains when we think of Africa, but there are some very large ones there. In the north is a mountain range called the Atlas Mountains. Near the middle of the continent is 20,000-foot-high Mount Kilimanjaro, one of the best known mountains in the world.

**A herd of elephants in Kenya with Mount Kilimanjaro in the background** (Paul Hampton/Shutterstock)





**This photo of Africa taken from space shows the brown desert in the northern half of the continent.** (NASA photo)



## Africa

### TRUE OR FALSE?

Africa has the youngest population of any continent.  
(Answer on page 96)

Africa's Nile River is the longest river in the world. It flows through 11 countries on its way north to the Mediterranean Sea. Every year, the Nile floods and creates a huge, muddy delta in Egypt.

There are 54 countries in Africa, some of which are large and some of which are small. The African country with the highest population is Nigeria, which is in the central part of the continent.

Egypt, in northeast Africa, has been important for a long time. The history of Egypt goes back thousands of years, to the time when people built huge pyramids for the kings of Egypt. Have you ever heard the story of Moses, the Pharaoh and the Ten Commandments? That story took place in Egypt!

Kenya is one of the most visited countries in Africa, and it is easy to see why. Kenya contains Lake Victoria, the largest lake in Africa. It also contains a large area of savannah where people come to see animals such as giraffes and elephants.



**The city of Cairo, Egypt, is so large that it has begun to surround some of the pyramids.** (Mikael Damkier photo)



**A group of children in Nigeria** (Jordi C/Shutterstock)

At the southern tip of Africa is the country of South Africa and the Cape of Good Hope. Years ago, when most oceangoing ships were propelled by wind, it was a big deal to make it around the Cape of Good Hope!

### Slavery and Colonies

Africa is special to many people who live in the United States. You see, millions of Americans are descended from Africans who were kidnapped and brought to North and South America and forced to work as slaves.

These slaves (or enslaved people, as they are sometimes called), lived all over the U.S., including in Tennessee.

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Slavery is an important and sad part of American and Tennessee history. It was also one of the main causes of the American Civil War, which took place between 1861 and 1865. Slavery was forever made illegal by the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Today we often use the phrase “African American” to describe Americans who are descended from people in Africa. 🇺🇸

## QUESTIONS

1) Which part of Africa sounds more hospitable to animal life: the northern part or the southern part? Why?

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2) What is the longest river in the world? \_\_\_\_\_

3) In what country did people build pyramids to their kings (known as pharaohs)? \_\_\_\_\_

4) (Challenge question:) Why is southern Egypt known as “upper Egypt” and northern Egypt known as “lower Egypt”? \_\_\_\_\_

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