

Elevation illustrated in South America

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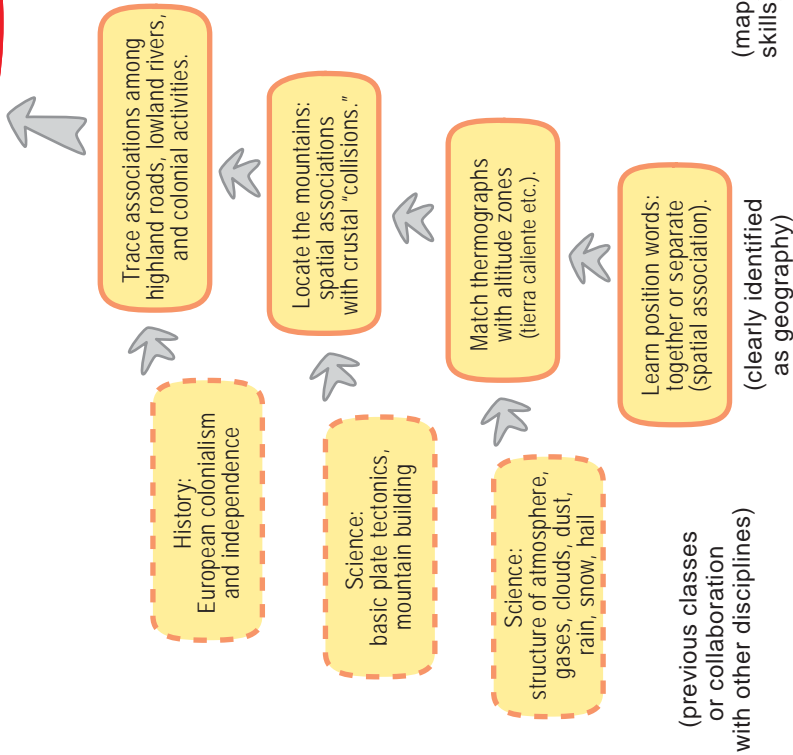
Very approximate grade level

R/1

2 a big geographic idea
(and a good place to study it)

Elevation

is important in South America because air that goes up a mountain gets cooler and more likely to cause precipitation.



3 some important consequences of the big idea

- Elevation continues to influence where people in South America build cities and use land.
 - Mid-elevation parts of South America are food-exporting areas.
 - European explorers followed lowland rivers and highland roads.
 - The Inca empire was unusual -- an early civilization at high elevation.
 - Metal ores are associated with mountain-building processes.
 - Different plant covers and land uses are associated with different elevations.
 - High mountains tend to be cold: they can even have permanent snow.
- (positioned where appropriate in the curriculum)

A discussion question:



What are some implications of cutting the vast rainforests in the equatorial lowlands of South America (especially if deforestation removes vital carbon sinks from the global biosphere)?

1 a scaffold of thinking skills and background knowledge that supports the big idea