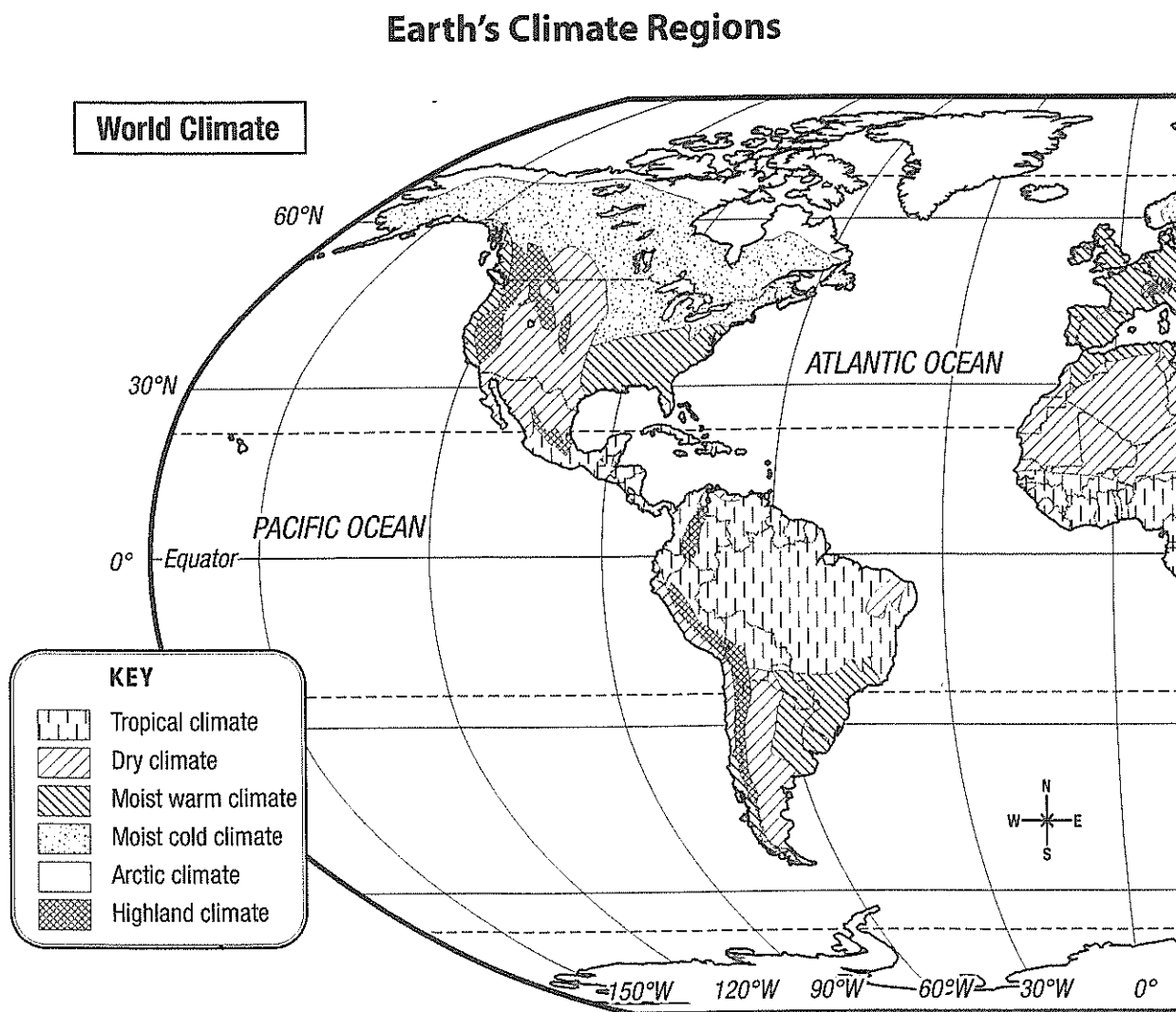


Earth's Climate Regions

Not all plains and plateaus are the same. Earth's land regions are different because of their **climate**. The climate is how hot, cold, wet, or dry a place is year after year.

➤ Look at the map key below. What are the six different kinds of climate found on Earth?

In most tropical climates, heavy rains fall all year long. The rain and hot climate produce thick **rain forests**. Because there is so much rainfall, trees and other plants grow very quickly.

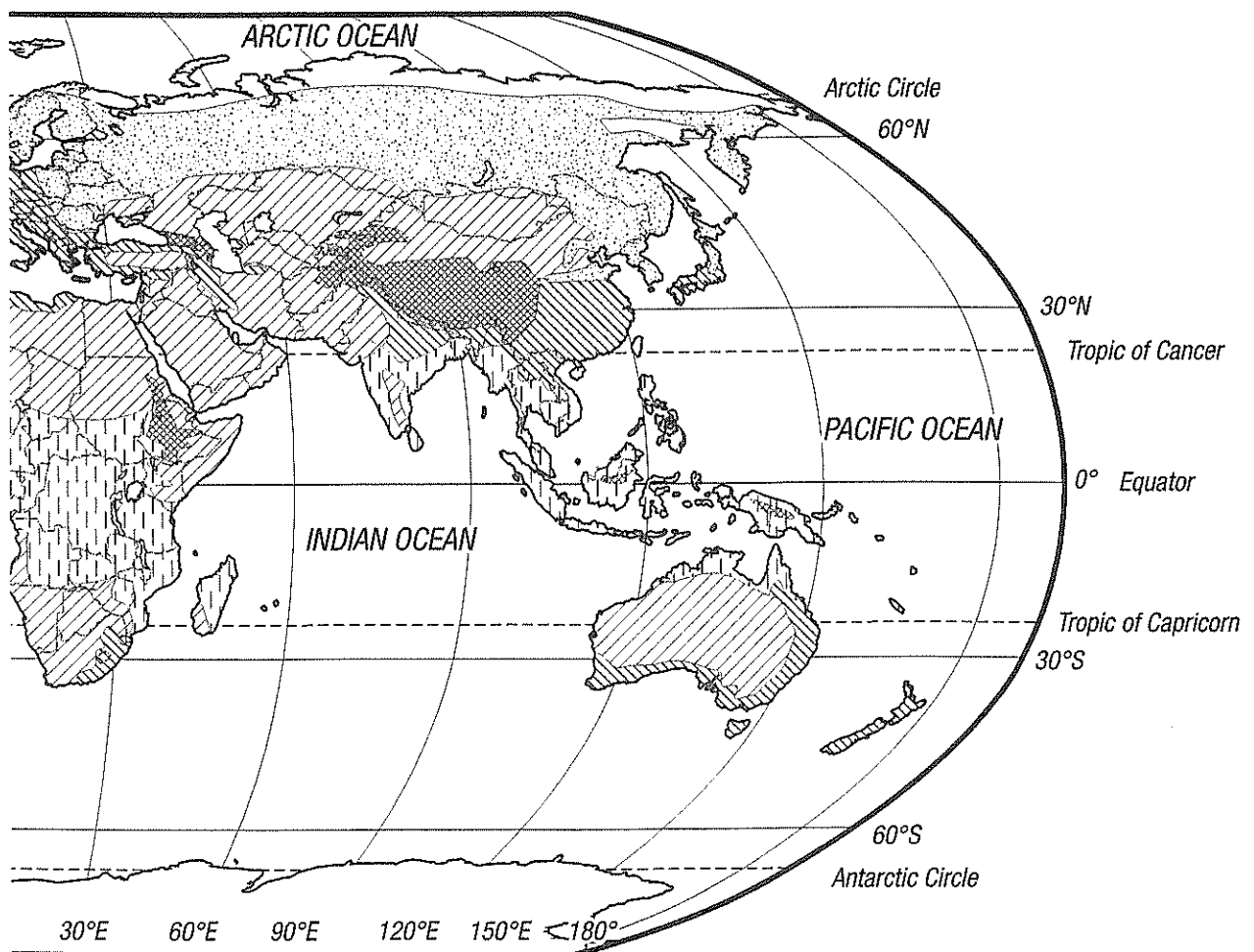


Some land regions on Earth get very little rain. They are called **deserts**. A desert can be a hot, dry place where few plants can grow.

Arctic regions are very cold. They are located north of the Arctic Circle and south of the Antarctic Circle. These regions have huge sheets of ice called **glaciers**. These cold regions also get very little rainfall. They are deserts, too.

Moist warm and moist cold climates both receive about 20 to 40 inches of rain a year. Winters are longer and colder in moist cold climates.

- Look at the part of the map below. Find the Tropic of Cancer. Are moist warm and moist cold climates found mostly above or below this line on the map?



How Climate Affects Earth

Have you wondered why there are mountains in some places on Earth and plains in others? Earth's climate has shaped much of its geography.

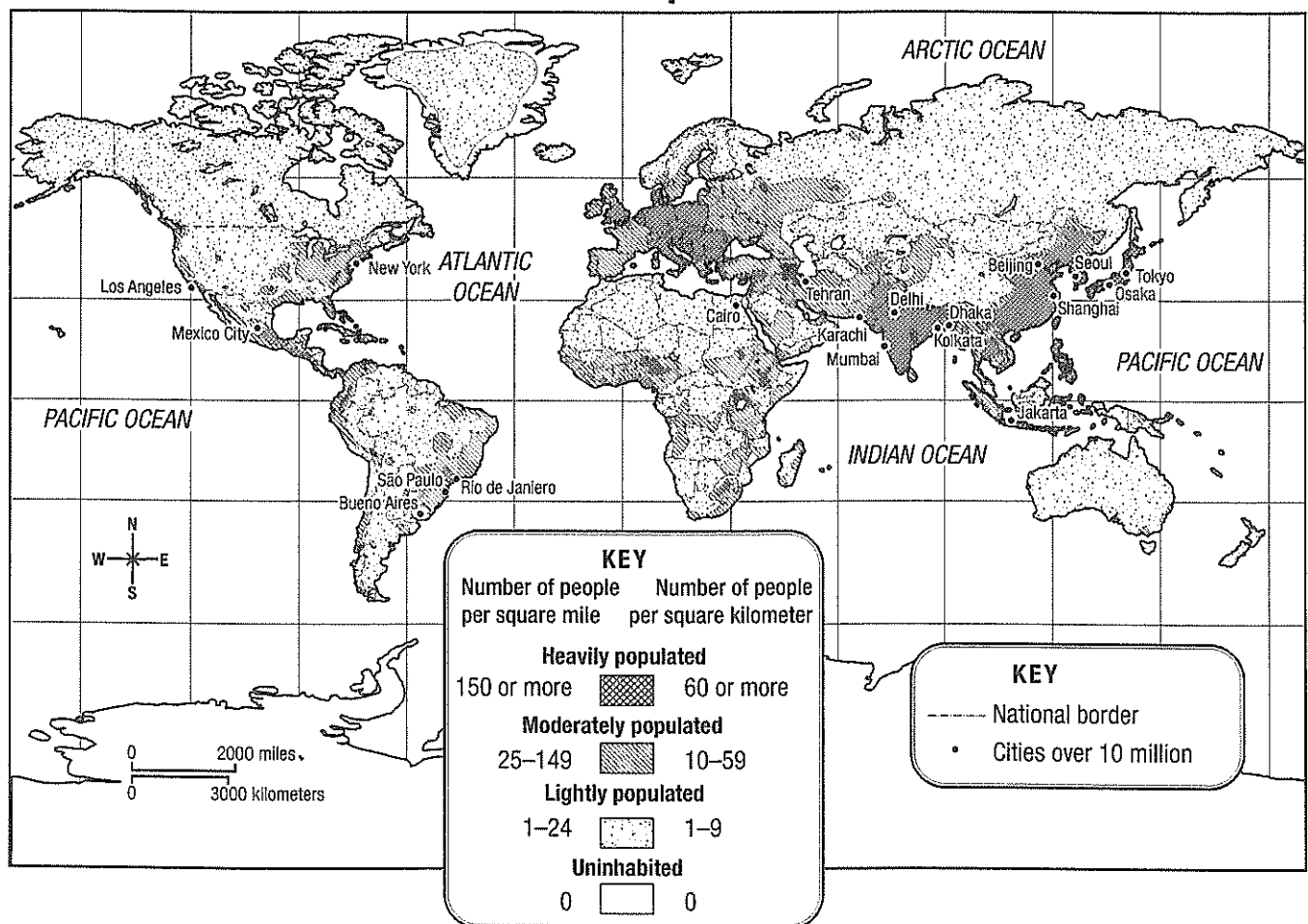
Several times in the distant past, Earth's climate became much cooler. Huge glaciers spread over many areas of Earth. These sheets of ice cut into Earth, creating valleys and plains. When the glaciers melted during warmer periods, some of them created rivers and lakes.

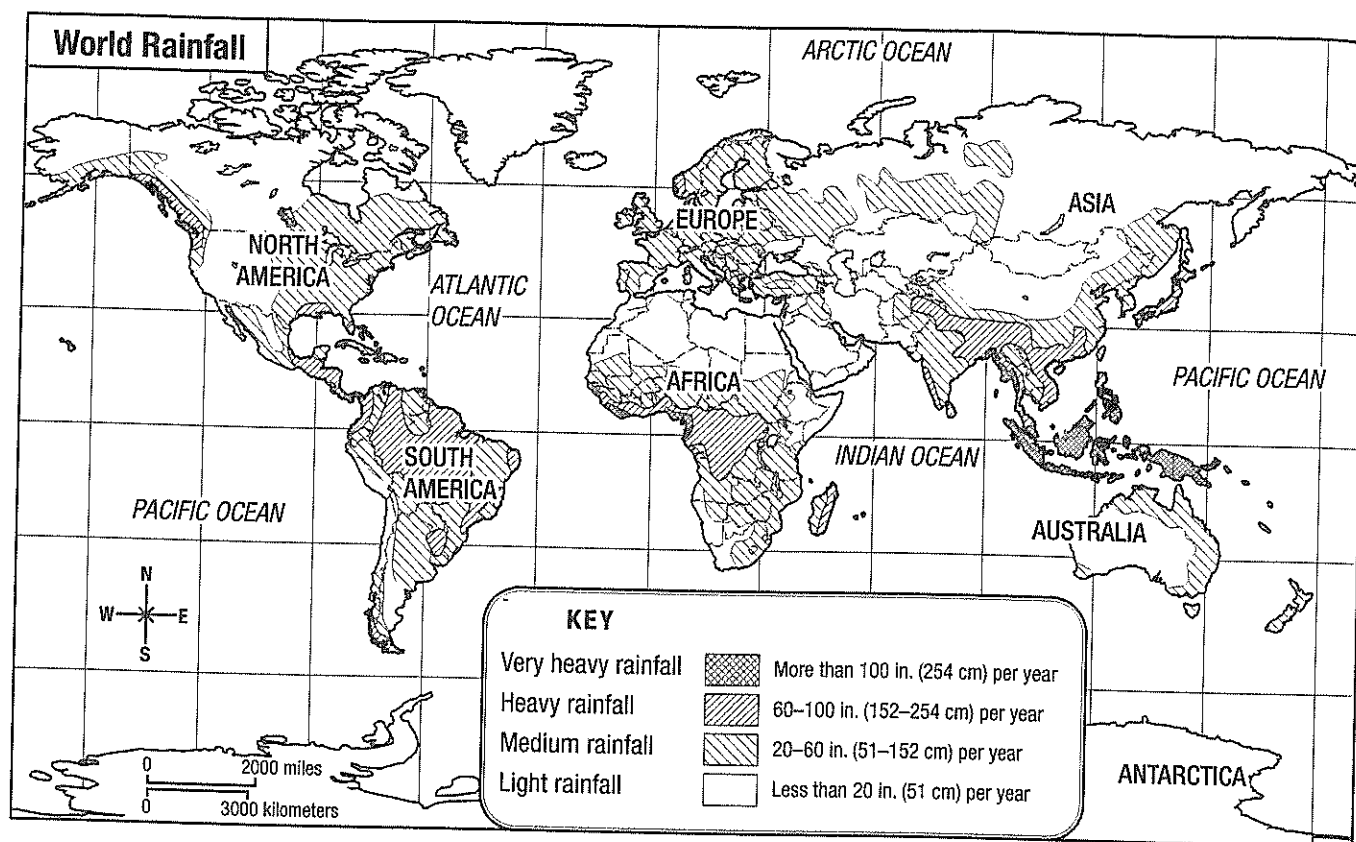
► Where are glaciers found today?

Strong winds can also change the surface of Earth, picking up soil in one place and dropping it in another. This is one kind of erosion.

Many forces have changed the surface of Earth in the past and still do so today.

World Population





Where Do People Live?

The map on page 13 is a population map. It shows where people live on Earth.

The map on this page shows how much rain or snow falls in a year in different regions on Earth. We call this a rainfall map because most **precipitation**, or moisture, falls as rain.

Look at the map above and study the map key.

- Pick two areas on the map that receive light rainfall. Now find these areas on the population map on page 13. These areas are probably lightly populated. Find an area on the rainfall map that receives medium rainfall. This area is probably heavily or moderately populated.

What connection can you make between world rainfall and world population?

As you can see, climate helps people decide where to make their homes.

Chapter Checkup

► Darken the circle by the answer that best completes each sentence.

1. Four main land regions on Earth are called
 - (A) plains, valleys, mountains, and highlands.
 - (B) canyons, plateaus, mountains, and highlands.
 - (C) mountains, highlands, plateaus, and plains.
 - (D) oceans, mountains, highlands, and plains.
2. The highest mountains in the world are the
 - (A) Andes.
 - (B) Himalayas.
 - (C) Great Central Plains.
 - (D) deserts.
3. The six main climate regions on Earth are called tropical, dry, moist warm, moist cold, highland, and
 - (A) arctic.
 - (B) glacier.
 - (C) hot.
 - (D) wet.
4. Land regions on Earth that get very little rain are called
 - (A) deserts.
 - (B) valleys.
 - (C) rain forests.
 - (D) erosions.
5. Earth's climate has shaped much of its geography through
 - (A) erosion and population.
 - (B) glaciers and rain forests.
 - (C) the Tropic of Cancer and the equator.
 - (D) erosion and glaciers.
6. Population numbers and rainfall are connected because
 - (A) few people live in areas that have medium rainfall.
 - (B) most people live in areas that have no rainfall.
 - (C) most people live in areas that have medium or heavy rainfall.
 - (D) there are glaciers in areas of light rainfall.

THINKING AND WRITING

Why do most people live in plains regions?
