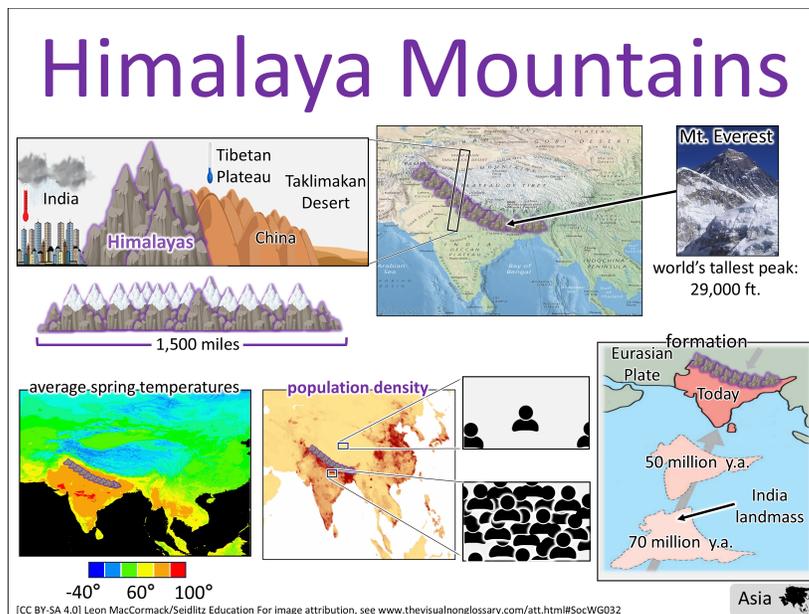


## Mountains That Shape Asia

*The purpose for reading is to examine how the Himalaya Mountains were formed and to understand how they affect climate patterns, population distribution, and political boundaries across Asia.*

### Pay Attention To:

- how the Himalaya Mountains were formed
- how the Himalayas affect climate
- where population density is higher or lower
- how tectonic forces continue to shape the region
- how the mountains act as a boundary between regions or countries



The **Himalaya Mountains** are very high mountains in South Asia. They were formed when the Indian landmass pushed into the Eurasian landmass. This happened because of **tectonic forces**, and it is still happening today. Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, is part of this mountain range.

The Himalayas pass through six countries: India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. They form a border between the land to the **south**, which is warmer and wetter, and the land to the **north**, which is colder and drier. To the south, the climate supports farming and large groups of people. To the north, in the Tibetan Plateau, the land is much harder to live on.

Many **major rivers** start in the Himalayas, such as the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra. These rivers bring water from snow and rain to farms and cities across Asia.

The Himalayas work like a wall that stops wind and rain. This causes very different types of **climate** on each side. These changes in **climate** also affect **population density** — or how many people live in a place. Fewer people live in the mountains, but many more live on the southern side, where the land is easier to use.

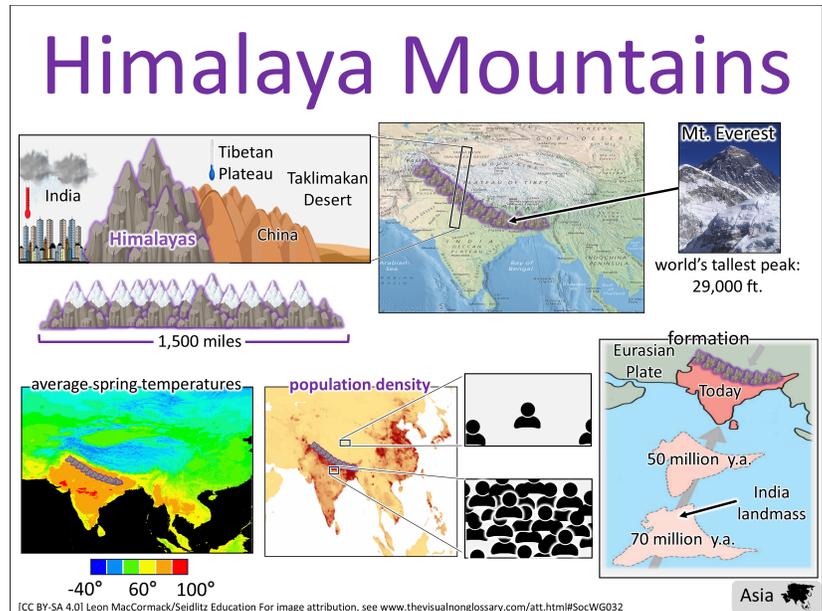


## The Himalaya Mountains: A Natural Divide

*The purpose for reading is to examine how the Himalaya Mountains were formed and to understand how they affect climate patterns, population distribution, and political boundaries across Asia.*

### Pay Attention To:

- how the Himalaya Mountains were formed
- how the Himalayas affect climate
- where population density is higher or lower
- how tectonic forces continue to shape the region
- how the mountains act as a boundary between regions or countries



Stretching over 1,500 miles across South Asia, the **Himalaya Mountains** are one of the most formidable landforms on Earth. Formed millions of years ago by the **collision of the Indian subcontinent with the Eurasian tectonic plate**, this massive range continues to rise slowly each year. The result is not just the world's highest peak, Mount Everest, but also a tremendous mountain barrier that shapes climate, water systems, and where people live.

The Himalayas touch or cross the borders of six countries: India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In many places they act as a natural state boundary, separating the Indian subcontinent to the south from the high Tibetan Plateau to the north. To the **south** of this barrier, warm, moist air from the Indian Ocean brings heavy seasonal rainfall. This supports dense forests, rich agriculture, and high **population density** in countries like India and Nepal. To the **north**, lies the vast Tibetan Plateau, often called the "Roof of the World." Shielded by the Himalayas

from incoming monsoon moisture, this region is cold, dry, and sparsely settled.

The Himalayas also give rise to some of Asia's major rivers. For example, the Indus River, the Ganges River, and the Brahmaputra River all have headwaters in or near the Himalayas. These rivers carry meltwater from snow and glaciers, plus rainfall from the southern slopes, to supply water, nutrients, and life to vast plains. The Himalayas' elevation and barrier effect help determine the flow of these rivers and the shape of the surrounding land.

Because of their height and orientation, the Himalayas act as a giant wall that intercepts wind and moisture, leading to dramatically different **climate regions** on each side. This blocking effect is one way a mountain barrier influences **temperature and precipitation**. The entire range also influences where people choose to live. Within the mountains themselves, steep slopes, high elevations, and harsh conditions make large settlements rare. Most large populations instead live on the safer and more fertile plains to the south.

Beyond these physical functions, the Himalayas play critical roles in water supply, climate regulation, and marking national borders. Their presence is a key reason why the landscape and human geography of South Asia look very different from many other parts of the world.

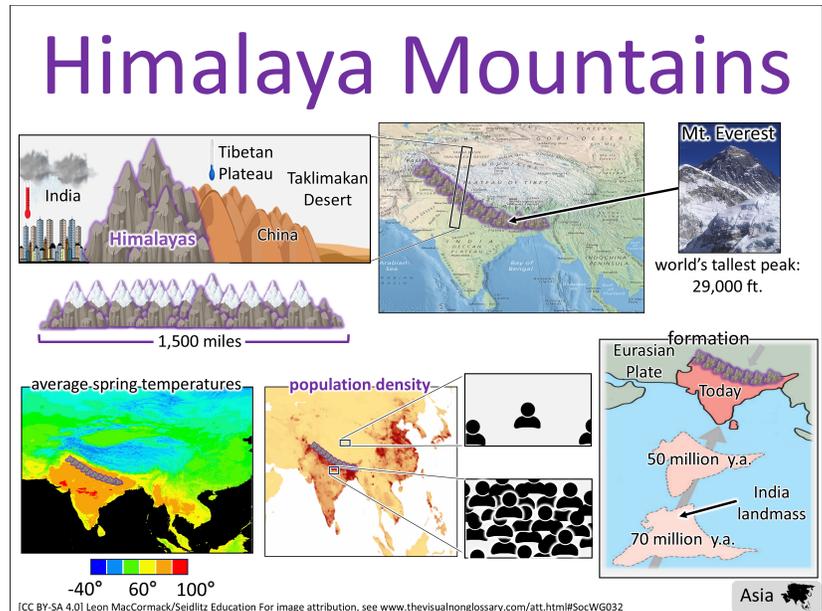


## The Himalayan Divide and Its Geographic Influence

*The purpose for reading is to examine how the Himalaya Mountains were formed and to understand how they affect climate patterns, population distribution, and political boundaries across Asia.*

### Pay Attention To:

- how the Himalaya Mountains were formed
- how the Himalayas affect climate
- where population density is higher or lower
- how tectonic forces continue to shape the region
- how the mountains act as a boundary between regions or countries



Stretching over 1,500 miles across South Asia, the **Himalaya Mountains** are one of the most dramatic and influential mountain systems in the world. They were formed by the **collision of the Indian subcontinent with the Eurasian tectonic plate**, a powerful example of **tectonic forces** that continues to shape the landscape today. This geologic activity created the world's highest peak, Mount Everest, and produced a massive mountain barrier that significantly affects climate, water systems, and population distribution across Asia.

Crossing six nations—India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—the Himalayas sharply divide environments. Their southern flank receives monsoon rainfall and supports lush vegetation and dense human settlement. In contrast, the northern Tibetan Plateau lies in a rain shadow, where cold, arid conditions limit agriculture and habitation.

The Himalayas are the origin of major rivers like the Ganges, Indus, and Brahmaputra. These waterways flow from Himalayan snow and ice, providing vital resources for drinking water, agriculture, and transportation throughout South Asia.

Functioning as a formidable mountain barrier, the Himalayas shape regional **climate** by directing wind patterns and blocking moisture. They also contribute to the uneven **population density** across the continent, concentrating populations in the more hospitable lowlands to the south while leaving the rugged highlands sparsely inhabited.

Together, their geological origins, environmental effects, and geopolitical role make the Himalayas a central feature in understanding how physical geography affects human systems.

