Europe Physical Geography

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which mountain range contains the Swiss peaks called the Eiger and the Jungfrau?
   A. Alps
   B. Pyrenees
   C. Apennines
   D. Carpathians
   Correct answer: A. Alps
   The Eiger and the Jungfrau are in the Alps. Both rise within the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch World Heritage area.

2. Which sea separates much of southern Europe from northern Africa?
   A. Black Sea
   B. Baltic Sea
   C. Mediterranean Sea
   D. North Sea
   Correct answer: C. Mediterranean Sea
   The Mediterranean lies between Southern Europe and Northern Africa and opens to the Atlantic at Gibraltar.

3. Which mountain range runs along much of the length of the Italian Peninsula?
   A. Pyrenees
   B. Apennines
   C. Carpathians
   D. Scandinavian Mountains
   Correct answer: B. Apennines
   The Apennines extend down the Italian Peninsula. The Alps form a separate mountain arc across northern Italy.

4. How did the steep-sided valleys of western Norway’s fjords acquire their shape before being flooded by the sea?
   A. Rivers built them up with delta sediment
   B. Coral reefs grew around them
   C. Sand dunes piled up beside them
   D. Glaciers carved them
   Correct answer: D. Glaciers carved them
   Glaciers deepened and widened the valleys. Seawater later occupied the lower parts of those valleys.

5. Which ocean lies directly west of the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula?
   A. Indian Ocean
   B. Atlantic Ocean
   C. Pacific Ocean
   D. Southern Ocean
   Correct answer: B. Atlantic Ocean
   The Atlantic borders the western coasts of Europe, including Ireland and mainland Portugal.

6. Which mountain range roughly follows much of the French–Spanish land border?
   A. Pyrenees
   B. Carpathians
   C. Apennines
   D. Balkan Mountains
   Correct answer: A. Pyrenees
   The Pyrenees extend from near the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean along the northern edge of the Iberian Peninsula.

7. Into which sea do the main channels of the Danube Delta empty?
   A. North Sea
   B. Baltic Sea
   C. Adriatic Sea
   D. Black Sea
   Correct answer: D. Black Sea
   The Danube branches across its delta before reaching the northwestern Black Sea.

8. Which feature best describes much of the North European Plain?
   A. A glacier covering the whole plain
   B. Continuous steep alpine peaks
   C. Broad lowlands with river valleys
   D. A narrow belt of active volcanic islands
   Correct answer: C. Broad lowlands with river valleys
   Much of the plain consists of low-lying terrain. Several large rivers cross it or drain parts of it.

9. Which European coastal system has tidal flats and barrier islands extending along the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark?
   A. Wadden Sea
   B. Adriatic Sea
   C. Bay of Biscay
   D. Gulf of Bothnia
   Correct answer: A. Wadden Sea
   The Wadden Sea lies on the North Sea coast. At low tide, large areas of its sediment flats are exposed.

10. Which Icelandic ice cap covers active volcanic systems and gives its name to a national park?

A. Mer de Glace
B. Aletsch Glacier
C. Jostedalsbreen
D. Vatnajökull

Correct answer: D. Vatnajökull
Vatnajökull caps several active volcanoes in southeastern Iceland. The other glaciers are in Switzerland, Norway, and France.

11. What kind of rock makes up the columns at the Giant’s Causeway in Northern Ireland?

A. Sandstone
B. Limestone
C. Basalt
D. Marble

Correct answer: C. Basalt
The columns formed as basaltic lava cooled and contracted. They are visible along the County Antrim coast.

12. Why is much of the Baltic Sea brackish?

A. Its water never reaches the open sea
B. River water mixes with seawater that enters through narrow straits
C. All of its freshwater evaporates every summer
D. The seafloor releases salt faster than the open ocean can remove it

Correct answer: B. River water mixes with seawater that enters through narrow straits
Rivers continually supply fresh water, while saltier water enters from the North Sea through the Danish straits.

13. Which mountain range arcs around the north and east of the Pannonian Basin?

A. Ural Mountains
B. Pyrenees
C. Apennines
D. Carpathians

Correct answer: D. Carpathians
The Carpathians form the northern and eastern mountain rim of this central Danube basin.

14. Which narrow passage connects the eastern English Channel with the North Sea?

A. Strait of Dover
B. Strait of Gibraltar
C. Strait of Messina
D. Bosporus

Correct answer: A. Strait of Dover
The Strait of Dover separates southeastern England from northern France at the eastern end of the Channel.

15. What is a jökulhlaup in the physical geography of Iceland?

A. A tide driven by offshore winds
B. A slowly advancing lava dome
C. A sudden glacial outburst flood
D. A low ridge left by a retreating coastline

Correct answer: C. A sudden glacial outburst flood
A jökulhlaup is a rapid release of water stored by or beneath a glacier. At Vatnajökull, subglacial volcanism can trigger one.