



Location	Africa is the world's second largest and second most populated continent. It contains 55 independent countries belonging to five different regions: Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa.
Climate	The climate in Africa varies widely, from desert conditions in Algeria to tropical conditions in Sierra Leone.
Geography	Northern Africa is largely desert with mountain ranges, while Central and Southern Africa consist mainly of plains and jungle rainforest.
Government	After the creation of the United Nations in 1945, Africa went through a massive decolonization movement where countries previously occupied by foreign powers became independent. However, borders drawn during European imperialism continue to cause numerous disputes and conflicts both within and among African states. Although the African Union was created in 1999 to increase unity and promote peace among African states, government corruption and instability remain widespread and human rights violations are a common occurrence.
Environment	Africa's environmental issues include desertification (areas becoming more desert-like, causing drought), wildlife extinction and poaching, water shortages and the over-use of natural resources.
Economy	Despite an abundance of natural resources like fossil fuels and minerals, Africa remains the world's most underdeveloped continent.
People	Many Africans suffer from extreme poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy, malnutrition and lack of clean water. However, the standard of living varies greatly in different African countries. For example, only 3 percent of people in Sierra Leone are internet users, compared to 39 percent of people in the Seychelles; 96 percent of people in Seychelles own cell phones, compared to 2.8 percent in Eritrea; and the highest secondary education enrolment rate is in Seychelles at 105 percent, compared to the lowest in Niger, at 12 percent. ¹
Novels <i>Torn Pages</i> by Sally Grindley	Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 68% of all people living with HIV – 22.9 million adults and children are living with HIV – but only 12% of the global population. ² Millions of children of parents with HIV/AIDS have been orphaned or infected with the disease. Considerable progress has been made in slowing the number of deaths and infections, but it is still a problem of great magnitude.
Issue HIV/AIDS; Rights of Children	

1 The World Bank, "50 Things You Didn't Know About Africa," available from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICA/EXT/0,,contentMDK:20563739~menuPK:1613741~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:258644,00.html>

2 The Stephen Lewis Foundation, "Fact Sheet - HIV/AIDS Key Statistics" available from http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/assets/files/Materials%20-%20General/SLF_HIV-AIDS_factsheet.pdf

