

## Top Themes – North American Region (U.S. & Canada)

1. Both the U.S. and Canada are blessed with a wide range of abundant natural resources and are bonded by trade and culture. For the U.S., Canada is the leading export market and number 3 source of imports.
2. The U.S. and Canada are two of the world's largest nations territorially (Canada 2<sup>nd</sup> largest, U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup>), but are vastly different in population. The U.S. currently has 330 mil (3<sup>rd</sup>), Canada 38 mil (39<sup>th</sup>).
3. The two countries are amongst the most urbanized in the world (80% urban). They are also highly suburbanized with beltways (encircling highway systems enabling a circular spread of suburbs outside of the urban core).
4. Sometimes called "Anglo America," this term is inaccurate since Quebec is primarily French speaking. In a close referendum vote in 1995 Quebec voted to remain with Canada.
5. North Americans are the world's most mobile people. Although traffic congestion is a problem, the realm's networks of highways, commercial air routes, and cutting-edge telecommunications are the most efficient on Earth. Millions commute to work by car. Cars have multiplied more than 6 times faster than the human population since 1970. Very large amounts immigrate to the region and also move around within the region. Each year nearly 1 in 6 change place of residence.
6. Much of American migration history was about the push west and the build-up of urban areas. Today's migration patterns for the U.S.:
  - Still a movement westward, but also southerly (into the Sunbelt)
  - Urban build-up is in the suburban ring rather than downtown
7. The combination of being heavily urbanized along with suburban sprawl has caused several metro areas in the U.S. to join up (called a megalopolis). The Boswash megalopolis is the biggest, which developed along the northern part of the Fall Line (a line of cities that developed along a line where navigation up rivers ran into waterfalls at the start of the Appalachian Mountains).
8. Climate: Westerly winds (west to east) dump precipitation on parts of the mountainous areas of the west coast after which a rain shadow effect keeps the Great Basin area and plains dry. At the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian the winds pick up moisture and the land becomes more forested continuing east.
9. Both Canada and the U.S. have a history of taking large numbers of immigrants and have numerous cities with high rates of diversity. Immigrants tend to assimilate more so than in European countries.

