What are China’s main physical features?

North and west
- Mainly high mountains and inland drainage basins.
- Very cold winters and warm summers give a large annual range of temperature.
- Rainfall is light and spread evenly throughout the year.
- Snow may lie for over 100 days each year.
- Strong winds, especially in winter.
- Mainly desert and semi-desert.
- Hazards include extreme cold with a high wind chill in winter, strong winds causing dust-storms, and an annual drought.

Sichuan
- A large, low-lying region.
- Winters are cold and quite dry.
- Summers are very hot and wet.
- Hazards include high humidity in summer and river flooding.
- Two earthquakes since 2008 each killed about 70,000 people.

South and west
- Includes the Himalayas (Mt Everest 8,850 metres) and the high Plateau of Tibet (over 4,000 metres).
- Winters are very cold.
- Summers are quite warm but the nights are very cold.
- Large annual range of temperature.
- Wet summers and dry winters.
- Limited vegetation cover.
- Hazards include snow and high wind chill in winter.

River Yangtze
- Third largest river in the world both in length (6,380 km) and discharge.
- Has its source on the Plateau of Tibet and flows into the South China Sea near to Shanghai.
- It flows through deep gorges in its upper course and over a wide flood plain in its lower course.
- It is the only major natural routeway into central China.
- Hazards include river flooding and pollution.
Activities

1. Make a large copy of map B. Complete the descriptions for each of the four regions by using information given on these two pages.

2. Using the three climate graphs shown on these two pages, which region has:
   a. the warmest summer and the warmest winter?
   b. the coolest summer and the coldest winter?
   c. the lowest range of annual temperature?
   d. the most rainfall?
   e. the least rainfall?

3. Write out the following paragraph, filling in the missing words.

The Yangtze River
The Yangtze is the ............ longest river in the world (after the Nile and the Amazon) and has the third largest discharge (after the Amazon and the Congo). It flows ............ km from its source in ............ to its mouth in the ............ (near the city of ............ ). In its upper course it passes through deep ............ while in its lower course if flows over a wide ............ A large dam has been built to stop the ............ hazard and to improve transport and trade.

4. Use Google maps to track the River Yangtze from its source to its mouth. Describe three physical and three human changes that you notice along its course.

Summary
China is a huge country with high mountains and low-lying plains. Its climate includes places that are very hot, very cold, very dry and very wet. The Yangtze is China’s largest river.