

# Basic GEOGRAPHY



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ISBN 1-58804-568-4

*This product is available through PCI Education at 1-800-594-4263*

# Table of CONTENTS



Introduction	IV
Research and Standards	VI

## UNIT 1 Location

Teacher Notes	1
Lesson 1 What Is Geography?	3
Lesson 2 Using a Map	7
Lesson 3 Hemispheres, Oceans, and Continents	13
Lesson 4 Map Grids	17
Lesson 5 Latitude and Longitude	19
Lesson 6 Map Projections	28
Lesson 7 Types of Maps: General-Purpose Maps	34
Lesson 8 Types of Maps: Special-Purpose Maps	40
Unit 1 Review	47
Unit 1 Test	52

## UNIT 2 Places and Regions

Teacher Notes	56
Lesson 1 Landforms and Water Systems	58
Lesson 2 Wet and Dry Climates	69
Lesson 3 Medium Climates	73
Lesson 4 Cold Climates	77
Lesson 5 Plant and Animal Life	81
Lesson 6 Cultural Geography	85
Lesson 7 United States Culture	89
Lesson 8 Boundaries	93
Unit 2 Review	97
Unit 2 Test	107

# Table of CONTENTS



## UNIT 3 Movement of People, Ideas, and Goods

<b>Teacher Notes</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Lesson 1</b> Population	<b>113</b>
<b>Lesson 2</b> Migration	<b>117</b>
<b>Lesson 3</b> Population and Migration in the United States	<b>121</b>
<b>Lesson 4</b> Transportation: Railroads in the United States	<b>125</b>
<b>Lesson 5</b> Transportation: Highways in the United States	<b>130</b>
<b>Lesson 6</b> Transportation: Air Travel	<b>133</b>
<b>Lesson 7</b> Economic Geography	<b>137</b>
<b>Lesson 8</b> World Trade	<b>145</b>
<b>Lesson 9</b> Interpersonal Communication and Technology	<b>148</b>
<b>Lesson 10</b> Mass Media	<b>150</b>
<b>Unit 3 Review</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Unit 3 Test</b>	<b>162</b>

## UNIT 4 The United States

<b>Teacher Notes</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Lesson 1</b> General Facts	<b>170</b>
<b>Lesson 2</b> Physical Features and Climates	<b>174</b>
<b>Lesson 3</b> People	<b>178</b>
<b>Lesson 4</b> Natural Resources	<b>182</b>
<b>Lesson 5</b> Overview of Regions	<b>186</b>
<b>Lesson 6</b> The West	<b>193</b>
<b>Lesson 7</b> The Midwest	<b>198</b>
<b>Lesson 8</b> The South	<b>203</b>
<b>Lesson 9</b> The Northeast	<b>208</b>
<b>Unit 4 Review</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Unit 4 Test</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>227</b>

# INTRODUCTION



Without an understanding of geographic concepts, students cannot fully comprehend current events, issues, and politics in today's world. This *Basic Geography* program provides students with the essential geography skills they need to develop a better understanding of the United States and the world.

This unique program was designed for middle-school and high-school students who need help learning basic geography concepts. In order to help struggling students understand geography fundamentals and to develop related skills, this binder breaks each concept into small chunks. Short lessons are followed by multiple activity sheets so students can firmly grasp a concept before moving on to the next lesson.

*Basic Geography* is intended to complement existing curriculum materials for world geography, world history, U.S. history, and state history courses. This binder covers key geography concepts with a focus on the United States, which helps make geography relevant to students' lives. Each lesson can stand alone so you can pick and choose the subjects you want to focus on, or use the entire binder to teach a complete basic geography course.

In order to help struggling readers understand complex geography concepts, the lessons are written at a 3.0–4.5 reading level. The short lessons are effective teaching tools for students with learning differences, attention or behavior problems, and limited reading skills. They are also helpful for teaching at-risk and ESL students. The activity sheets have a limited number of questions on each page so students can focus on the most important information. Multiple opportunities for practice allow students to learn and reinforce skills before they move on to the next lesson.

*Basic Geography* features four reproducible, 55-page units each with 8–10 lessons. Each lesson contains a short reading passage and several activity sheets. The lessons present key concepts every student needs to know. Students will practice reading-comprehension skills, demonstrate knowledge by answering questions, and create and interpret maps and charts. The activity pages include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, true/false, choose-the-answer, and crossword-puzzle questions. Students will also read maps to respond to short-answer questions.

At the end of each unit is a review and test to assess student learning. The tests evaluate students' knowledge of the most important information in each unit.

The four units are

- Location: maps, grids, latitude and longitude, map projections, types of maps;
- Places and Regions: landforms and water systems, climates, cultural geography;
- Movement of People, Ideas, and Goods: population, migration, transportation, economic geography, world trade, communication;
- The United States: physical features and climate, people, natural resources, regions.

# How to USE



A Teacher Notes section is provided at the beginning of each unit. Teacher Notes list objectives covered in the unit and give teachers a basic plan to facilitate each lesson.

## LESSONS

Each lesson includes a short passage followed by activity pages. Students should read the passage and then complete the activity pages. You can read the short passage with the class or have students read silently to themselves. Students can work on the activity pages individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

This binder is intended to supplement the teaching materials you already have in your classroom. The lessons are designed to be used either in sequence, one unit at a time, or one lesson at a time as needed.

## REVIEWS

Each unit contains a set of review pages. Students can work on the review pages individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Allow students to use their completed lesson activity pages to find the answers to the review questions. Students should use their completed review pages to study for the test.

## TESTS

Each unit concludes with a test that measures students' knowledge of the most important information in the unit.

## ANSWER KEY

For your convenience, an answer key is provided at the end of the binder.



Research on teaching content to students with special needs and reading difficulties has shown that modified instructional strategies are critical to improving comprehension. Sousa (2001) noted that teachers should “consider modifying instructional strategies to meet the various learning styles and abilities of students with learning problems.” Among the strategies he suggested were to “break the assignment into smaller tasks, adjust the reading level of the classroom material, relate the new learning to students’ experiences, reduce the number of concepts presented at one time ... and provide practice test questions for study.” Waldron (1992) stated “students with learning differences often have short attention spans and are so easily distracted that concentration is eroded. They simply cannot handle the same amount of information as students with longer attention spans. For these students, briefer assignments with frequent breaks work best to sustain their on-task behaviors.”

Each of these research-based strategies has been integrated into *Basic Geography*. Students will find the short passages easy to understand due to the controlled 3.0–4.5 reading level. Each set of activity sheets breaks the content into small chunks and provides ample practice, so the information is easier for students with learning differences to understand.

*Basic Geography* meets both state and national social studies standards, including *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* developed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). As students read the short passages and complete the activity sheets, they will meet many of the requirements of the ten social studies strands identified by NCSS, particularly the following:

- Strand I: Culture
- Strand III: People, Places, and Environments
- Strand VII: Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- Strand VIII: Science, Technology, and Society
- Strand IX: Global Connections

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Sousa, D. A. 2001. *How the special needs brain learns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Waldron, K. A. 1992. *Teaching students with learning disabilities*. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group.

# UNIT 1 Location



## Teacher Notes

### OBJECTIVES

After completing the lessons in this unit, students will be able to

- use geographic tools such as maps, charts, grids, and globes to collect and interpret data;
- answer questions about geographic patterns shown on maps, charts, grids, and globes;
- name the hemispheres, oceans, and continents;
- find locations using latitude and longitude;
- explain the reason for map projections and identify the most common projections, including the Winkel Tripel projection, Robinson projection, Goode's Interrupted Equal-Area projection, and the Mercator projection.

### LESSON 1 What Is Geography?

Photocopy pages 3–6 for each student. Students will read the passage on pages 3–4. Then they will complete the activities on pages 5–6.

### LESSON 2 Using a Map

Photocopy pages 7–12 for each student. Students will read the passage on pages 7–8. Then they will complete the activities on pages 9–12.

### LESSON 3 Hemispheres, Oceans, and Continents

Photocopy pages 13–16 for each student. Students will read the passage on pages 13–14. Then they will complete the activities on pages 15–16.

### LESSON 4 Map Grids

Photocopy pages 17–18 for each student. Students will read the passage on page 17. Then they will complete the activity on page 18.

### LESSON 5 Latitude and Longitude

Photocopy pages 19–27 for each student. Students will read the passage on pages 19–20. Then they will complete the activities on pages 21–27.

# UNIT 1 Location



## Teacher Notes

### **LESSON 6 Map Projections**

Photocopy pages 28–33 for each student. Students will read the passage on pages 28–30. Then they will complete the activities on pages 31–33.

### **LESSON 7 Types of Maps: General Purpose Maps**

Photocopy pages 34–39 for each student. Students will read the passage on pages 34–35. Then they will complete the activities on pages 36–39.

### **LESSON 8 Types of Maps: Special Purpose Maps**

Photocopy pages 40–46 for each student. Students will read the passage on pages 40–41. Then they will complete the activities on pages 42–46.

### **UNIT 1 Review**

Photocopy pages 47–51 for each student. Allow students to use their completed Unit 1 activity pages to complete the review. Have students study their completed review sheets for the test.

### **UNIT 1 Test**

Photocopy pages 52–55 for each student.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# What Is Geography?

Lesson 1

**UNIT 1 Location**

**Directions** Read the passage. Use the information to complete the activities on the following pages.

**absolute location** the exact place where something is  
**geographer** a person who studies the earth and its features  
**geography** the study of the earth and its features  
**human geography** the study of how people live on the earth  
**location** the place where something is  
**physical geography** the characteristics of the earth's surface  
**relative location** a description of where a place is compared to something else

**Geography** is the study of the earth and its features. As you study geography, you will learn about **physical geography**, or the characteristics of the earth's surface. These characteristics include land, water, and plant and animal life.

You will also learn about **human geography**, or the study of how people live on the earth. Human geography covers the people of the world and their effects on the environment around them. Economics, culture, and politics are also part of human geography.

People who study the earth and its features are called **geographers**. It is their job to organize all the information about the geography of our planet.

Geographers start with **location**, or the place where something is. There are two different kinds of location. **Absolute location** is the exact place where something is. For example, your address tells the absolute location of your home. When you give someone directions to your home, you tell them the name of the street and the house or apartment number. This is so your visitor will know exactly where to go to find your home.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# What Is Geography?

Lesson 1

## UNIT 1 Location

The other type of location is **relative location**. This is a description of where a place is compared to something else. For example, when giving directions to your home, you might say, “It is down the street from Felder Foods and across from the park.” When you give the relative location of a place, you describe it in relation to other things. Geographers often describe countries this way. For example, they might say, “Canada is located to the north of the United States.”



Just like knowing the location of your home is helpful to you, knowing the location of places around the world is helpful to geographers. Understanding location is the first step for geographers in studying a place.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# What Is Geography?

Lesson 1

**UNIT 1 Location**

**Choose the answer** Circle the best answer that completes each sentence.

1. **(Physical, Absolute)** geography includes the study of the land, water, and plant and animal life of the earth.
2. **(Human, Physical)** geography is the study of how people live on the earth.
3. **(Absolute, Relative)** location is the exact place where something is.
4. Relative **(geography, location)** is a description of where a place is compared to something else.
5. Geographers organize all the information about the **(location, geography)** of our planet.

**True/False** Decide if each statement is true or false, and write **TRUE** or **FALSE** in the blank. If you decide the statement is false, strike through the words that make it a false statement and rewrite them to make the statement true.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. The address of a house is an example of absolute location.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. People who study the earth and its features are called geologists.

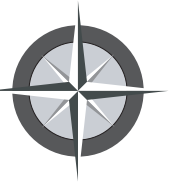
\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Economics, culture, and politics are all a part of physical geography.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Geography is the study of living things.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. Canada's absolute location can be described as "north of the United States."

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# What Is Geography?

Lesson 1

## UNIT 1 Location

**Short Answer** Use the map to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.



1. Describe the relative location of Colorado.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe the relative location of your city.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Describe the relative location of Florida.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe the relative location of California.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Describe the relative location of your state.

\_\_\_\_\_