

What is Geography?

GEOGRAPHY IS A TOOL. NOT A SUBJECT

Studying geography is more than a subject in school. When used correctly geography is a tool for understanding the world that can be applied to any subject imaginable. A **biologist** can use the tools of geography to study animal populations, while a **disease expert** employs it to track the spread of viruses.

Companies hire geographers to collect, organize and analyze spatial information to place new restaurants, stores and factories.

Paramedics use it to find the quickest route from an accident to a hospital. In all cases, geographic study provides insight that can help solve the problems that humans face as we interact with our environment.

Thinking geographically is a skill that must be learned through practice. By nature it requires curiosity and the desire to dig deeper, ask questions, and uncover connections between parts of our world that we might have never realized were bound to each other. This may sound like a tall order to fill; understanding what connects the entire world? Luckily for us, geographers have systems and methods that can be practiced, repeated and applied in new situations.

Defining Geography:

SIMPLE: The science that tries to understand how the Earth works and how humans change it.

COMPLEX: Fill in the blanks and explain each blank beside the arrow.

The _____ of how _____ change over _____ and _____ on the Earth's surface.



Physical Geography: The study of natural processes occurring on earth.

Example Topics:



Human Geography: The study of human activity and its interactions with natural systems.

Example Topics:

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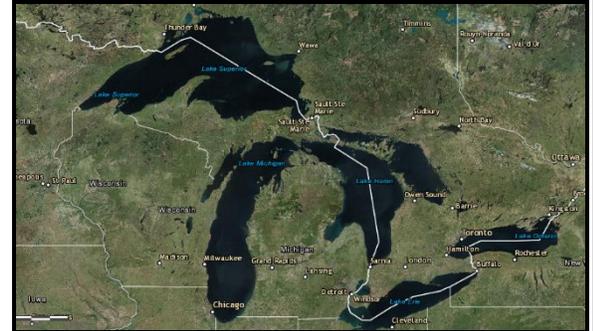
Geographers use the **Questions** to develop a “Sense of Place”.

1. The Great Lakes, North America

What is where?

Why there?

Why care?



- Important Stats:**
- ❖ 21% of world fresh water
 - ❖ 84% of North America's fresh water
 - ❖ 95% of USA's freshwater
 - ❖ 4 of 5 lakes are shared resources

2. Tornado Alley, USA

What is where?

Why there?

Why care?



Choose any city of your choice and complete the bottom. City _____

What is where?

Why there?

Why care?

What province/state, region, country, continent?
Who lives there? culture, customs, natural features
Why was it settled? What is unique about this place?
Why is it important to understand this place?
Economic importance, conflicts (war), issues, tourism, religious history, natural beauty etc

Concepts of Geographic Thinking: Spatial Significance

The importance of a particular location. This involves knowing “what is where, why there and why care” on the earth’s surface.

The **process/method** used to understand a location’s “spatial significance” has 4 steps, each with a purpose.

Tornado Alley, USA



Step 1: Identify where on earth this place event is occurring.

or

STEP 2: Identify and explain what is occurring naturally at this location.

STEP 3: Identify and explain important human activities occurring at this location.

STEP 4: Explain how natural and human features combine to make this place/event unique or important.

(Does it create **danger or conflict** (war, poverty, death, injustice)?
Does it **benefit** humans?
What can be learned from knowing more about this place or event?

Now it is time to try writing a spatial significance analysis on your own. **Pick A or B.**



A - Neskantaga First Nation



B - Whistler Ski Resort

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Bring it all together into an informative well-written SEEC paragraph

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