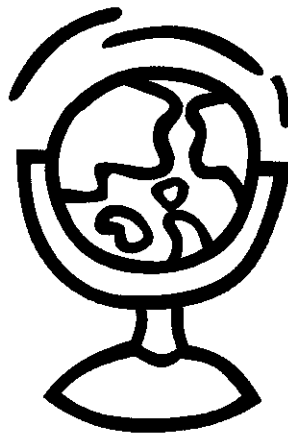


LOCATION

Every point on Earth has a specific location that is determined by an imaginary grid of lines denoting latitude and longitude. Parallels of latitude measure distances north and south of the line called the Equator. Meridians of longitude measure distances east and west of the line called the Prime Meridian. Geographers use latitude and longitude to pinpoint a place's absolute or exact location.

To know the *absolute* location of a place is only part of the story. It is also important to know how that place is related to other places- in other words, to know that place's *relative* location. Relative location deals with the interaction that occurs between and among places. It refers to the many ways- by land, by water, even by technology- that places are connected.

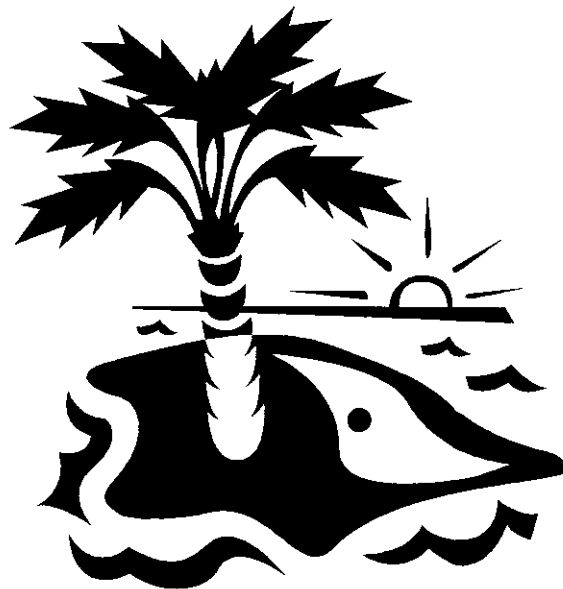
The theme of location is the basis of geographic education. It asks the question "Where is it?" Every day we are faced with opportunities to answer such a question. As we watch the news or read the newspaper, we organize the information we hear in many ways. One category always exists- location. **Everything happens somewhere.**



PLACE

All places have characteristics that give them meaning and character and distinguish them from other places on earth. Geographers describe places by their physical and human characteristics. Physical characteristics include such elements as animal life. Human characteristics of the landscape can be noted in architecture, patterns of livelihood, land use and ownership, town planning, and communication and transportation networks. Languages, as well as religious and political ideologies, help shape the character of a place. Studied together, the physical and human characteristics of places provide clues to help students understand the nature of places on the earth.

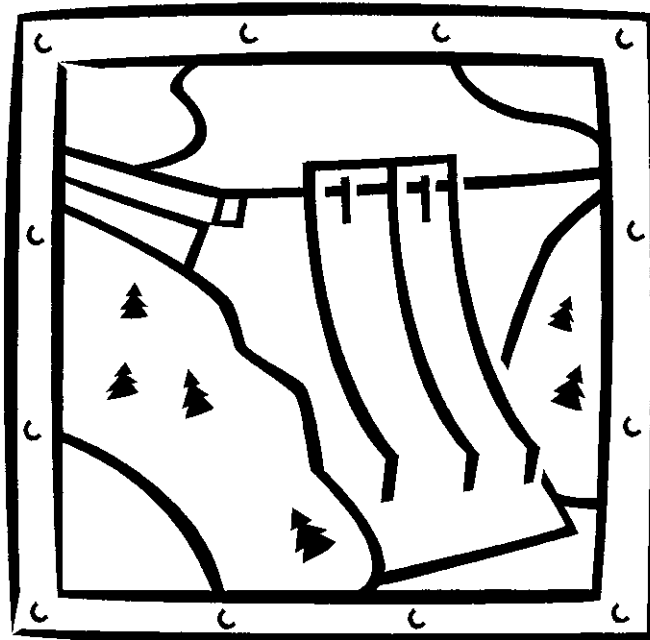
Place is a theme of geography that conjures up a mental picture of a place with people going about their everyday lives in the familiar environment. *Place is the personality of geography.*



HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

How do people affect the environment? How does the environment affect people? Looking at the effect that each has on the other is another important part of studying geography.

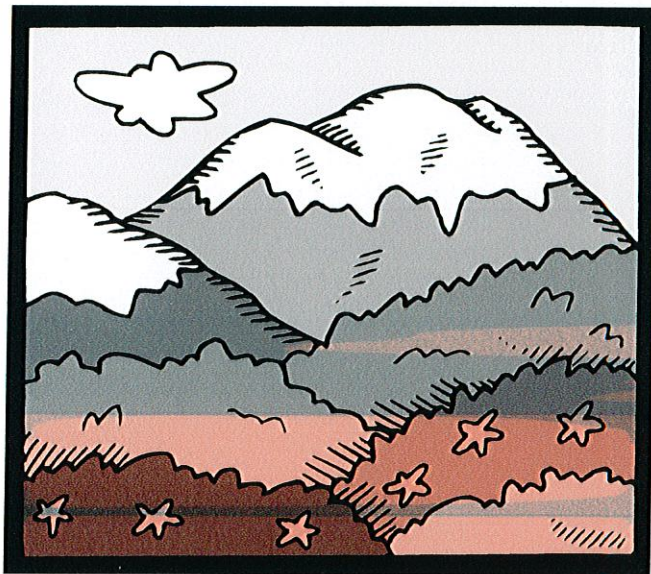
The environment means different things to different people depending on their cultural backgrounds and technological resources. In studying human/environment interaction, geographers look at all the effects-positive and negative- that occur when people interact with their surroundings. Sometimes a human act, such as damming a river to prevent flooding or to provide irrigation, requires consideration of the potential consequences. The construction of Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, for example, changed the natural landscape, but it also created a reservoir that helps provide water and electric power for the arid Southwest. Studying the consequences of human/environment interaction helps people plan and manage the environment responsibly.



REGIONS

A basic unit of geographic study is the region, an area on the earth's surface that is defined by certain unifying characteristics. The unifying characteristics may be physical, human or cultural. In addition to studying the unifying characteristics of a region, geographers study how a region changes over time. Using the theme of regions, geographers divide the world into manageable units for study.

Regions can change over time due to changes in climate, economic conditions, accessibility of trade routes, and many other factors. Geographers study how regions change to predict the needs of the people and the effects on the environment. The theme of regions is important in terms of our learning to manage the differences and similarities which allow our world to function as a unit.



MOVEMENT

People interact with other people, places, and things almost every day of their lives. They travel from one place to another, they communicate with each other; and they rely upon products, information, and ideas that come from beyond their immediate environment.

When considering the theme of movement as a way to study geography, one should ask these five W questions: who, what, where, when, and why do things, people, and information move? Also, how do they move? There are patterns of movement which make our lives in the United States predictable and orderly. Sometimes these patterns are interrupted and people feel a ripple effect from the system breakdown. Many countries, however, do not have a pattern of movement to depend on and this can worsen things such as famine or wartime relief efforts.

Students should be able to recognize where resources are located, who needs them, and how they are transported over the earth's surface. The theme of movement helps students understand how they themselves are connected with, and dependent upon, other regions, cultures, and people in the world.

Movement is very important to the study of geography because it can contribute to the development of the human characteristics of a place, such as cultural traits, governmental practices, and tolerance of diversity.

