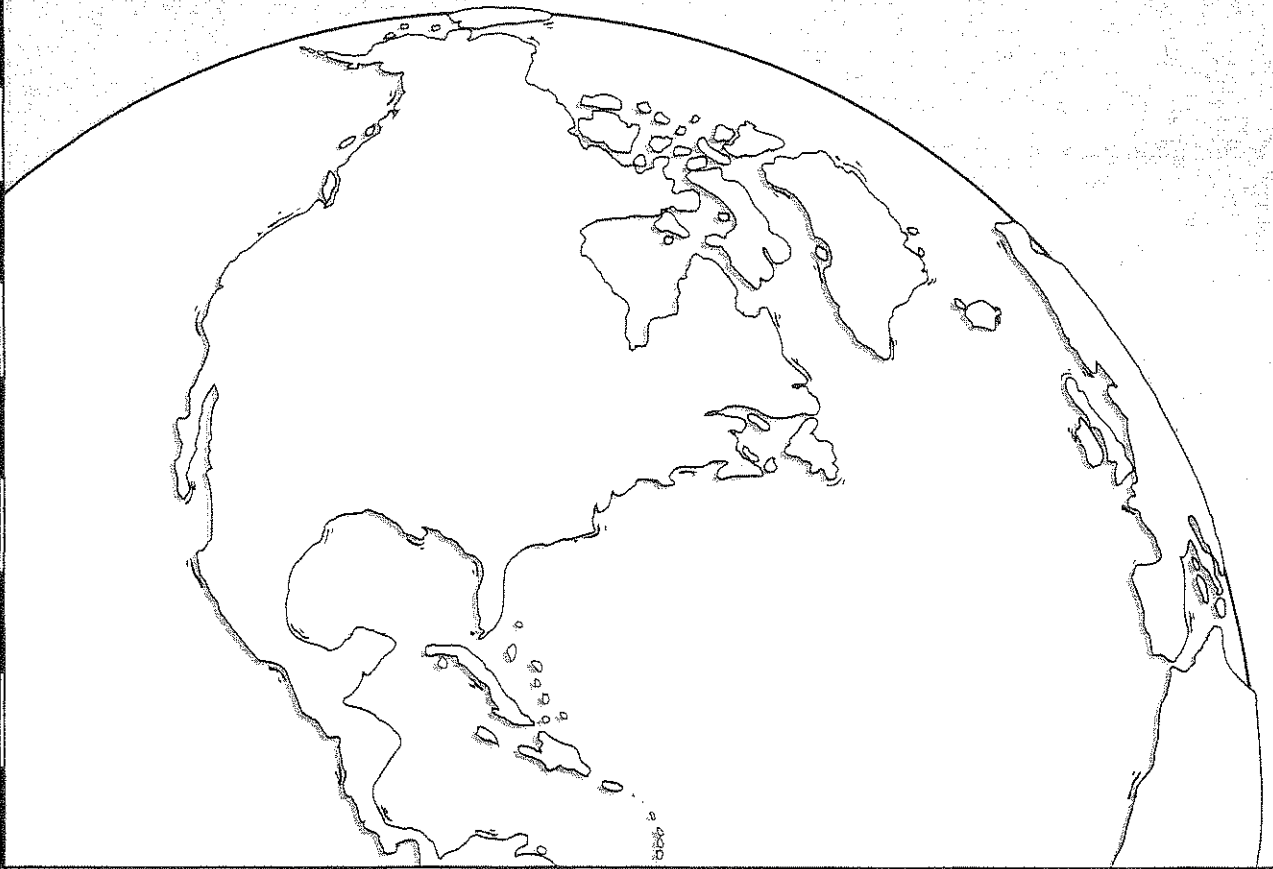


# Geography Glossary

belongs to:

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## Glossary

**absolute location** description of a place using grid coordinates (latitude and longitude)

**agriculture** the business of farming

**air carrier airport** airport that serves planes of commercial airlines

**ancient civilization** a very old complex society with a stable food supply, specialization of labor, a government, and a highly developed culture

**archipelago** a group of islands

**Arctic Circle** a line of latitude that runs through northern North America, northern Asia, and northern Europe (66.5°N latitude)

**arctic climate** a climate of extreme cold

**Arctic region** region of continuous cold around the North Pole; includes Arctic Ocean, thousands of islands, and the northern parts of Asia, Europe, and North America

**artesian basin** land formed by underground water

**bar scale** a graphic that compares the distance on a map to the actual distance it represents, as in *one inch represents 100 miles*

**basin** land drained by a river

**bight** a bay formed by the curve of a coastline

**biome** a large area or environment that shares the same general climate of temperature and rainfall; different biomes support different types of plants and animals

**borough** any of the five political divisions of New York City

**butte** a flat-topped hill with steep sides; a column of rock

## Glossary

**Canadian Shield** a U-shaped region of ancient rock that curves around the Hudson Bay; southern part of shield is thick with forests and northern part is tundra

**cape** a point of land that extends into a sea or an ocean

**capital** a city in a country or state where the government is based

**Capitol** the building in Washington, D.C., occupied by the Congress of the U.S.

**Capitol Hill** the hill in Washington, D.C., on which stands the Capitol building

**cardinal directions** directions of north (N), south (S), east (E), and west (W)

**cargo** all freight, except baggage, carried by an airplane

**cartographer** mapmaker

**census** an official count of all the people living in a country or district

**Central America** a region of seven countries between Mexico and South America including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama

**city planner** a person who advises local governments on ways to improve the community

**city-state** a self-governing unit made up of a city and its surrounding villages and farmland

**climate** usual weather in a particular place over a period of time

**climate zone** a region in which usual weather patterns occur over time

**commercial area** an area where businesses and stores are located

## Glossary

**community services** public places that provide for the needs of a community such as schools, hospitals, police stations, and parks

**compass rose** a directional arrow that shows cardinal and sometimes intermediate directions on a map

**concourse** a large open space for passage of crowds

**contiguous** sharing an edge or boundary; touching

**control tower** a glass-enclosed booth equipped with radar, radio, signal lights, and other equipment for directing air traffic

**coordinates** the latitude and longitude address of a place on a map

**coral** a substance made up of skeletons of tiny sea creatures

**coral reef** a ridge made of coral and other materials that have solidified into rock

**cropland** land used regularly for production of crops

**crude oil** yellow-to-black oil as it occurs naturally in a reservoir

**cultural landmark** a place selected and pointed out as important to a group of people

**cultural map** a map that shows patterns of ethnic groups, religious practices, languages spoken, educational levels, and recreational choices

**culture** language, beliefs, traditions, arts and crafts, political systems, and technologies of a group of people

**Daylight Saving Time** a plan in which clocks are set one hour ahead of standard time for a specific period

**degrees** units of latitude or longitude ( $^{\circ}$  is the symbol for degrees)

**dependency** land and waters controlled by a state, nation, or government

## Glossary

**desert** a dry region with little or no rainfall

**District of Columbia (D.C.)** an area of land controlled by the federal government

**diverse** varied

**dune** a mound or ridge of windblown sand

**economy** the way a state or country develops, distributes, and uses its money, goods, and services

**ecosystem** a community of animals and plants interacting with their environment

**elevation** height of the land above sea level

**Ellipse** an oval-shaped, park-like area in Washington, D.C.

**equator** an imaginary line that runs around the center of Earth, halfway between the North and South Poles at 0° latitude

**equidistant projection** projection that shows land and water in relation to a central point

**erg** a vast sea of sand

**ethnic** having to do with a group of people sharing the same national origins, language, or culture

**Eurasia** a landmass made up of the continents of Asia and Europe

**export** to send products to another country to be sold there

**fossil fuels** mineral fuels of coal, oil, and natural gas

**gate** an airport terminal entryway used for boarding or leaving an airplane

**geographic grid** the intersecting pattern formed by the lines of latitude and longitude

**geopolitical map** shows political and physical features on one map

**grazing land** a field covered with grass suitable for feeding livestock

**Greater Antilles** an island group of the West Indies including Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti), and Puerto Rico (U.S.)

**grid** a pattern of lines that form squares

**gulf** a large area of ocean that is partly surrounded by land

**hemisphere** half of the Earth

**highway interchange** a place where major roads meet or join

**history map** a map that shows places or events from the past

**index** an alphabetical listing of place names on a map and the grid squares in which they are found

**industrial area** an area where factories or large industries are located

**inset map** a small map set within the border of a larger one

**intermediate directions** directions of northeast (NE), northwest (NW), southeast (SE), and southwest (SW)

**international border** a border between countries

**interstate highway** a major public road that is part of a nationwide highway system; the interstate highway system was created after the U.S. highway system

**isthmus** a narrow strip of land having water on each side and connecting two larger bodies of land

## Glossary

**land use** the range of uses of Earth's surface made by humans; includes such uses as agricultural, industrial, open space, forestry, recreational, and residential

**legend (key)** a list that explains the symbols on a map

**Lesser Antilles** an island group of the West Indies including eight countries and eight dependencies

**lines of latitude (parallels)** imaginary lines on Earth that run parallel to the equator

**lines of longitude (meridians)** imaginary lines on Earth that run between the North and South Poles

**map sketch** a rough drawing of a mental map

**master plan** a comprehensive plan that shows how land use of an area may be developed or improved

**memorial** something built to honor a person or an event, such as a monument or a statue

**mental map** a map that a person pictures in his or her mind

**meridians (lines of longitude)** imaginary lines on Earth that run between the North and South Poles

**mesa** a flat-topped hill with steep sides; larger than a butte

**Middle East** a large region that covers parts of northern Africa, southwestern Asia, and southeastern Europe

**mileage** total number of miles traveled

**mineral** a natural substance such as copper, gold, and salt

**mountain** any point of land that rises quickly to at least 1,000 feet above its surroundings

**mountain peak** the summit, or highest point, of a mountain

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## Glossary

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**mountain range** a group or chain of mountains

**mountain system** a group of mountain ranges

**mouth** the part of a river where it empties into another body of water

**National Mall** a public walkway in Washington, D.C.

**national park** an area set aside by a nation's government to protect natural beauty, wildlife, or other remarkable features

**natural resources** materials supplied by nature that are useful or necessary for life

**nomad** a person who moves from place to place looking for food, water, and grazing land for his livestock

**North Pole** the point on Earth located at 90 degrees (90°) north latitude, where the lines of longitude meet

**oasis** a place in the desert where there is a source of water and where plants grow

**parallels (lines of latitude)** imaginary lines on Earth that run parallel to the equator

**passage** another name for a channel; a body of water joining two larger bodies of water

**petroleum** another name for oil

**physical map** a map that shows natural landforms and waterways on Earth's surface

**plains** a large flat area of land

**plateau** a flat-topped hill with steep sides; larger than a mesa

**polar projection** a kind of equidistant projection that includes one of the poles as its center



## Glossary

- political map** a map that shows human-made features and boundaries such as cities, highways, and countries
- population (populous)** total number of people who live in a place
- port** a harbor where ships can dock or anchor safely
- precipitation** rain, snow, sleet, hail, or drizzle
- prime meridian** an imaginary line that runs from the North Pole to the South Pole of Earth at 0° longitude
- product** something that is made by a natural process
- projection** a system for mapping the round Earth on a flat surface
- region** an area of land or water with certain characteristics that make it different from other areas
- relative location** description of a place using the relation of one place to another
- residential area** an area where people's homes are located
- rice paddy** a rice field
- river system** a river and the smaller streams that supply water to the river
- road map** a map for motorists that shows the highways of an area
- sand sea** a vast region covered by sand and dunes
- sea** a body of salt water that is part of an ocean, yet is partially enclosed by land
- source** the place where a river begins
- South Pole** the point on Earth located at 90 degrees (90°) south latitude where the lines of longitude meet

**standard time zone** a region in which the same time is used;  
Earth is divided into 24 time zones

**staple** a basic food that is always produced and sold

**statistic** a fact or piece of information expressed as a number  
or percentage

**strait** a narrow channel connecting two bodies of water

**tableland** a high, broad, level plateau

**temperate climate** a climate without extremes of either cold  
or heat

**terminal** a main airport building for passenger services

**tourism** tourist travel, especially when regarded as a source of  
income for a state or country

**traffic pattern** a pattern of flight around an airport for arriving and  
departing aircraft

**tributary** a small stream or river that flows into a larger one

**tropical climate** a climate of heat and rain

**unproductive land** land not usable for crops, grazing, or forests

**U.S. highway** a major public road that is part of a nationwide  
highway system; the U.S. highway system was created before  
the interstate highway system

**weather** conditions in the Earth's atmosphere at a certain place  
and time

**West Indies** an island chain that divides the Caribbean Sea from  
the rest of the Atlantic Ocean

