

★ A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES ★

AMERICAN

VOICES

Scott Foresman



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# What is History?

What is history? As one noted historian has explained, historians have three definitions of history. First, there is what happened, which may or may not be open to investigation. Second, there is what the past left behind for historians to investigate, or what is referred to as the historical record. This includes not only written and printed sources — diaries, journals, memoirs, court records, newspapers, and the like — but physical and institutional artifacts as well, such as buildings, language, laws, and theories of government. Third, there is the interpretation of that historical evidence. This is the principal concern of the historian.

Because most historical facts are not questionable, historians seldom argue about what happened. For example, you will not find historians debating whether the Civil War occurred, but you will find them arguing about why it happened and debating its consequences. This is not to suggest that facts are irrelevant. However, historians do more than merely record events. Rather, they try to explain and interpret what happened. As the late E.H. Carr wrote, “The historian without his facts is rootless and futile; the facts without their historian are dead and meaningless.”

In formulating an explanation of the past, historians refrain from looking at events in isolation. Instead, they consider events within their complex historical context, or as a part of a long chain of events. The task of the historian is to sort out the complexity of the past, to determine which events are most significant, and to explain why he or she believes so. Different historians will have different answers. Every historian has a bias that will influence how he or she interprets the past. Moreover, historical questions are often determined by present issues. The example of how historians have interpreted Reconstruction will demonstrate this point.

Writing in 1897, U.S. historian William A. Dunning argued that the experiment in extending civil liberties to African Americans had been a mistake. Like many people of his

day, Dunning believed in the natural inferiority of blacks and was convinced that the two races were incapable of coexisting. Any attempt to legislate equality, therefore, was doomed to fail.

The Dunning interpretation remained the accepted view until the 1950s, when a new school of scholars, influenced by the civil rights movement, reevaluated Reconstruction. Led by Professor Kenneth Stampp, these historians accused Dunning of distorting and

exaggerating Reconstruction's failures and of overlooking its accomplishments. The 14th and 15th amendments, they argued, were radical achievements that provided the legal basis for the civil rights movement.

Historian Eric Foner has provided the most recent interpretation of Reconstruction. Although he praises Stampp's challenge to Dunning, Foner criticizes Stampp for seeing African Americans as passive victims of the actions of others. Instead, Foner views African Americans as active participants.

As the example of Reconstruction illustrates, history is a dynamic discipline. Historians often see the same events differently. Facts can be marshalled to reach opposite conclusions and diametrically opposed interpretations. Moreover, you can see that each generation of historians reinterprets the past. The orthodox, or accepted, interpretation of a generation also has given way to a new orthodoxy. Today's accepted interpretations of the American past are not final.

For these reasons, you should approach all works of history, including your textbook, with a questioning mind. You should realize that what you are reading is not the definitive word on the past but only contemporary historians' interpretations of the past. It is up to you, the critical reader, to determine whether they are convincing.

**H**uman history  
*is in essence a  
history of ideas.*

H.G. Wells,  
*Outline of History, 1920*



## Definitions of History

**I**t is somewhat unfortunate that the word history should be used in several different senses. In its origin (Greek . . .) it meant learning by inquiry. The historian . . . was a searcher after knowledge, an investigator. But by a subtle transformation the term came to be applied to the record or narrative of what had been learned by investigation; and in this sense it passed over into the Latin historia and into modern speech. . . . Meantime another ambiguity . . . caused confusion in thought. The word history is used to denote not only the record of what has been learned by inquiry, but also the course of events themselves.

Allen Johnson,  
*The Historian and Historical Evidence*, 1926

**H**istory is the witness of the times,  
the light of truth, the life of memory,  
the teacher of life, the messenger of  
antiquity.

Marcus Tullius Cicero,  
106–43 B.C., Roman statesman

**H**istory is . . . the record of what one age finds  
worthy of note in another.

Jakob Burckhardt, 1818–1897,  
Swiss historian

**T**he history of the world is but the biography  
of great men.

Thomas Carlyle,  
*Heroes and Hero-Worship*, 1841

**H**istory is made out  
of the failures and  
heroism of each  
insignificant moment.

Franz Kafka, 1883–1924,  
Czech novelist

**M**y image of History would have . . . at least  
two persons, talking, arguing, always listening  
to the other as they gestured at their books; and  
it would be a film, not a still picture, so that you  
could see that sometimes they wept, sometimes  
they were astonished, sometimes they were  
knowing, and sometimes they laughed with  
delight.

Natalie Zemon Davis, American historian, 1988, on  
the complexity and multiple vision of history

**H**istory . . . is indeed little more than the regis-  
ter of crimes, follies, and misfortunes of  
mankind.

Edward Gibbon,  
*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776–1788

**T**he history of all hitherto existing society is  
the history of class struggles.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,  
*The Communist Manifesto*, 1848

**T**he history of the world is the record of  
[people] in quest of . . . daily bread and butter.

Hendrik Van Loon,  
*The Story of Mankind*, 1921

**T**he subject of history is the life of peoples and  
of humanity.

Count Leo Tolstoy,  
*War and Peace*, 1869



## The Role of the Historian

**H**istorians ought to be precise, truthful, and quite unprejudiced, and neither interest or fear, hatred nor affection, should cause them to swerve from the path of truth, whose mother is history.

Miguel de Cervantes,  
*Don Quixote*, 1605–1615

**T**he whole past . . . consists of the infinite number of things which each person who ever lived has said, thought, and done. . . . Historians select a few of these thoughts, words, and deeds that seem to have general significance, and these become history as we ordinarily think of it. Because . . . ideas of what is significant change from time to time and because new knowledge frequently becomes available[,] history is constantly being rewritten.

Bernard Norling,  
*Towards a Better Understanding of History*, 1960

**H**istory repeats itself, says the proverb, but that is precisely what it never really does. It is the historians (of a sort) who repeat themselves.

Clement F. Rogers, 1866–1949,  
British theologian

**I** teach kings the history of their ancestors so that the lives of the ancients might serve them as an example, for the world is old, but the future springs from the past.

Djeli Mamoudou Kouyaté,  
an African griot (historian), 1950s

**F**aithfulness to the truth of history involves far more than a research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and yet the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue. The narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the time. He must study events in their bearings near and remote; in the character, habits, and manners of those who took part in them. He must himself be, as it were, a sharer or a spectator of the action he describes.

Francis Parkman,  
*Pioneers of France in the New World*, 1865



## The Uses of History

**T***o enable [people] to understand the society of the past and to increase [their] mastery over the society of the present is the dual function of history.*

Edward H. Carr,  
*What Is History?*, 1962

**S***tudy the past if you would divine the future.*

Confucius,  
Chinese philosopher, 500s B.C.

**T***hose who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

George Santayana,  
1863–1952, American philosopher

**F***or policy making, history offers no blueprint, no specific solution to problems. One of its lessons is the folly of expecting such, for the essence of history is change. Still, history reveals much about human behavior; its possibilities and its limits, what may be expected under certain conditions, the danger signs to be considered, the aspirations to be taken into account, the scourges of pride and dogma, and the fruits of endurance and attention to detail.*

Paul A. Gagnon,  
American historian, 1988

**T***he study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind. Why? Because . . . it gives it a power of judging of passing events, and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them, which before it did not possess.*

John Henry Cardinal Newman,  
*On the Scope and Nature of University Education*,  
1852

**O***ur custom of taking records and preserving them is the main barrier that separates us from the scatter-brained races of monkey. For it is this extension of memory that permits us to draw upon experience and which allows us to establish a common pool of wisdom. . . . Knowledge of things said and done . . . is a knowledge which not merely sees us through the trivial decisions of the moment, but also stands by in the far more important time of personal or public crisis.*

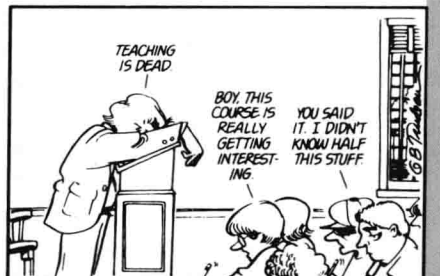
Sherman Kent,  
*Writing History*, 1941



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People who think critically demonstrate “reasoned judgment.” People who don’t think critically jump to conclusions or accept arguments without considering whether they are

Why do you need to know how to think critically? To be an effective, capable citizen, you must learn how to think critically. Will you vote for the candidate with the winning smile and personality, or will you vote for the one who spoke to issues and took positions that you believe are important? Will you believe everything you read in a newspaper or hear





on television? Will you be able to tell when the media are biased? Will you be able to make important decisions in life based on fact or on intuition? Dealing with such situations effectively requires you to think critically.

What does critical thinking have to do with U.S. history? *American Voices* is first and foremost a comprehensive course in the history of the United States. However, it also can be used to help you develop critical thinking problem-solving strategies that will serve you well in a wide range of subjects and situations. Critical thinking strategies are embedded throughout *American Voices*. Each chapter teaches or emphasizes one critical thinking skill, but you will find several opportunities to practice each skill throughout the book. The following 17 critical thinking skills are taught in *American Voices*.

### Critical Thinking Skills for Problem-Solving Strategies

**1. Identifying central issues** is identifying the main ideas or points of, for example, a passage, argument, or political cartoon. It sometimes involves distinguishing real issues, which are often unstated, from stated issues. It requires separating crucial information from secondary or peripheral information. In Chapter 3, for example, you will identify the central issues of George Washington's Farewell Address.

**2. Making comparisons** is finding similarities and differences between or among two or more things, ideas, or situations. In Chapter 21, for example, you will compare the treatment returning Vietnam veterans received with that received by returning veterans of World War II.

**3. Determining relevant information** is making distinctions between essential and incidental information in, for example, an argument or passage. It also involves determining how important pieces of information are to an issue or question. This skill can help you analyze and understand different interpretations of the significance of information related to a single subject. In Chapter 12, for example, you will determine the relevant information in a magazine advertisement from the 1920s.

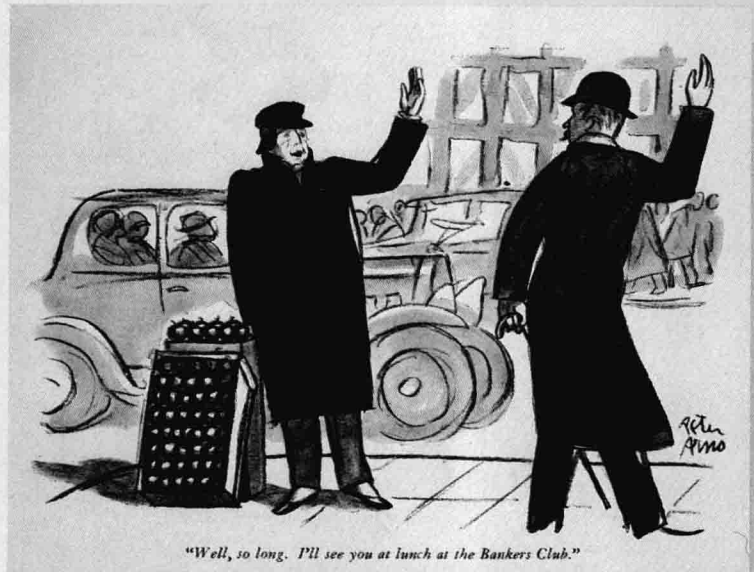




**4. Formulating appropriate questions** is developing relevant questions aimed at clarifying and increasing your understanding of an issue or situation. In Chapter 10, for example, you will formulate questions you might have asked President Woodrow Wilson about the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations.

**5. Expressing problems** is stating issues or views clearly and concisely. It requires you first to recognize or isolate an issue or problem in a passage or situation and then to put it into words. In Chapter 17, for example, you will express problems that have prevented the United Nations in the past from becoming an organization that can effectively deal with international problems.

**6. Distinguishing fact from opinion** is separating verifiable statements from unverifiable ones. It further involves separating opinions from reasoned opinions (opinions based on facts). In Chapter 13, for example, you will analyze a political cartoon from the Great Depression to determine whether the images reflect facts or opinions.



**7. Checking consistency** is analyzing a passage or situation for cohesion. It involves checking statements and images to determine whether they are consistent with one another and with their context. In Chapter 20, for example, you will check the consistency of President Johnson's statements with his domestic policy decisions.



**8. Identifying assumptions** is finding the unstated beliefs (what is taken for granted) in an argument or passage. In Chapter 14, for example, you will identify the assumptions President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made about his power following his landslide election in 1936 and judge whether his assumptions were accurate.



**9. Recognizing bias** is identifying partialities or prejudice in graphic or verbal materials and judging the credibility of sources. It involves recognizing emotional factors, propaganda, stereotyping, and clichés. In Chapter 18, for example, you will recognize bias in a political cartoon depicting U.S. progress in the space race with the Soviet Union and you will convert biased or prejudicial statements into unbiased form.



**10. Recognizing values** is identifying statements based on deeply held beliefs or philosophies. It involves recognizing various value orientations and ideologies. In Chapter 7, for example, you will recognize the value that some parents place on religious instruction for their children in school.



**11. Distinguishing false from accurate images** is separating images that are misleading or oversimplified from images that fairly represent a person, institution, idea, or thing. In Chapter 21, for example, you will be asked to view one or more films produced about the Vietnam War and determine whether these accounts of the war are false or accurate representations.

**12. Analyzing cause and effect** is identifying contributing factors to particular outcomes. It also involves recognizing multiple causation and judging adequate and inadequate grounds for establishing cause and effect. In Chapter 19, for example, you will analyze the causes and effects of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**13. Drawing conclusions** is reaching or generating conclusions based upon available information. It may require making inferences or hypotheses in order to draw reasonable conclusions. In Chapter 15, for example, you will draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the Maginot Line in preventing a German attack on France.

**14. Identifying alternatives** is finding or proposing alternatives, especially alternative solutions to problems. It also involves evaluating the alternatives. In Chapter 23, for example, you will consider several alternatives President Jimmy Carter could have pursued in foreign policy.

**15. Testing conclusions** is determining the validity of conclusions by evaluating the quality and quantity of their supporting evidence or information. In Chapter 16, for example, you will test the conclusions President Truman used to defend the use of the atomic bomb on Japan.

**16. Predicting consequences** is predicting the probable consequences of an event or series of events. It also involves assessing the desirability or undesirability of predicted consequences. In Chapter 24, for example, you will predict the consequences to the human race of the abuse of the environment.

**17. Demonstrating reasoned judgment** is producing conclusions or arguments based on all available evidence. It involves recognition that the strength of an argument is directly related to the strength of the evidence. It requires you to detect faulty reasoning, make generalizations, and develop a line of reasoning that takes into account opposing points of view. In Chapter 22, for example, you will decide whether allowing the National Guard to fire into the crowd at Kent State University demonstrated reasoned judgment.

These 17 skills are an integral part of *American Voices*. When you have learned to use these critical thinking strategies, you will have mastered important analytical tools that will be of value to you for the rest of your life.



# Geography : Background for American History

## Geography Seeks a Global Perspective



A view of the earth from space reveals a new way to look at the Pacific Ocean as it edges toward the Americas.

Before the first word was written, a map had been drawn. That mapmaking is an older art than writing tells us how fundamental and urgent is our need to know our earth and our place within it. Geography is a discipline that continues the ancient human quest to know the world and to understand the multitude of physical and human systems that make it work.

**Geography is personal and global.** Our understanding of geography might begin with the recognition that geography is first of all personal. We are individually shaped and influenced by the "where" of our lives. The writer Annie Dillard has vividly expressed the power of place in these words:

*When everything else has gone from my brain—the president's name, the state capitals, the neighborhoods where I lived, and then my own name and what it was on earth I sought, and then at length the faces of my friends, and finally the faces of my family—when all this has dissolved, what will be left, I believe, is topology: the dreaming memory of land as it lay this way and that.*

Though geography may begin with the personal and local, it persistently pushes outward, pursuing the interactions within and between places, following networks of interaction that finally embrace its true and final subject—the earth itself. Geography may be thought of as the science of the living organism of earth, seeking to understand the anatomy of its landforms and water bodies, the respiratory systems of climate and weather, the circulatory systems of migration and trade, the mechanisms of growth and decay.

The globe is more than a tool for geographers. The globe is a symbol of the wholeness and unity of their subject. However tightly they focus on a particular locality, however closely they scrutinize a particular interaction, however narrowly they specialize, geographers always maintain a global perspective. Students of history should do the same.

**Geography and history are interwoven.** The strands of history and geography are closely knit. When we attempt to unravel them, we tend to produce generalizations such as "History describes human activity over time; geography describes the place in which that activity occurs." Or, "History asks 'who, what, when, how, and why' questions; geography asks 'where' questions." Or, "History provides the drama; geography provides the stage."



Such simplifications usually understate the significance of geography. Geography is more than the “where” of history. History’s “how” and “why” questions often have geographic answers. Geography is more than history’s passive background; geography is a dynamic influence on human activity—a cause of action as well as a place of action.

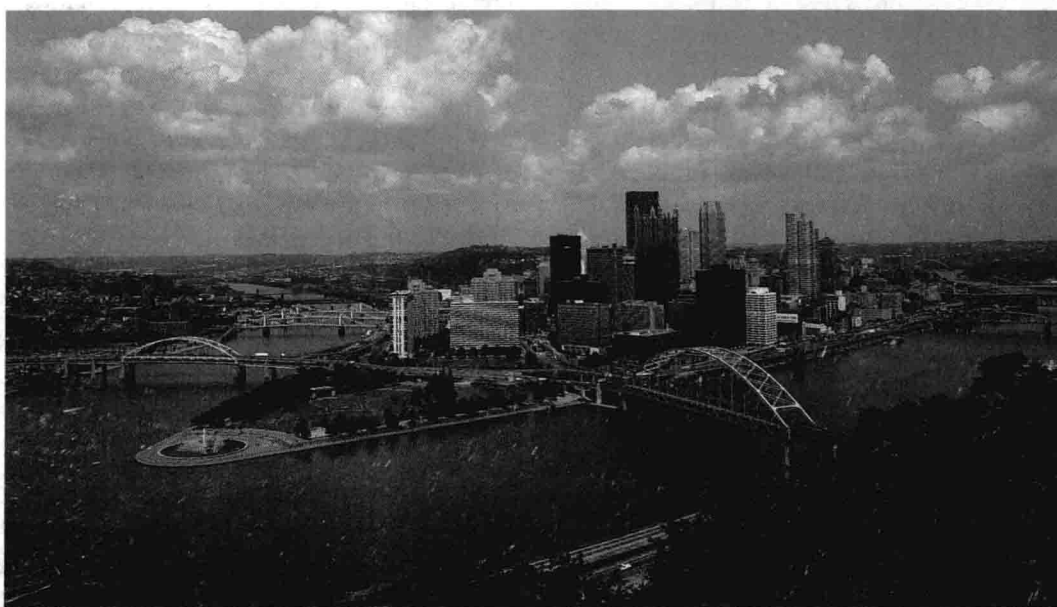
A city begins, develops, and thrives not alone by the decisions of its founders and the ambitions of its citizens, but also by the gifts of geography: a deep-water harbor, for example, a stable climate, rich mineral deposits, smooth avenues of transportation. An epic battle was fought at Gettysburg not by any general’s choice, but because that Pennsylvania town was centered in a spider web of roads that drew the armies toward collision. The battle was won by the army that held the highest ground and the shortest lines of communication—the geographic advantage.

The interactions of geography’s personal and global issues—and the interweaving of geography with history—may be explored in an incident involving one wilderness, two young men, and three rivers. In 1754 France and Britain competed for dominance in the North American wilderness. A geographic key to that wilderness was a union of rivers, the location where the Allegheny and the Monongahela meet to form the Ohio. The French built a fort

there, and alarmed colonists in Virginia responded by dispatching a small militia force led by a tall young officer of large ambition but little experience. A French scouting party, led by an equally young and untried officer, was sent to shadow the Virginians. On a drizzling morning in May, the two groups met in a brief explosion of violence.

The encounter was fatal to the French officer, Ensign Jumonville, and for a time it marred the reputation of the young Virginian, Lt. Colonel Washington, though he was physically unscathed. This tangle of personal fate, minor combat, and obscure location would hardly seem worthy of an historical footnote—except that it proved to be the opening action of the vast and lengthy French and Indian War, a conflict that affected hundreds of thousands of lives and determined the fate of a continent.

George Washington, it is known, proceeded to other accomplishments; so too did the region of the three rivers. As the United States developed, the meeting place of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio continued to flex its potent geographic influence, no longer in military advantage but in economic and industrial effects. The transporting powers of the rivers combined with the resources of iron ore, limestone, coal, and human energy to forge a great city of steel where the rivers meet. We call it Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

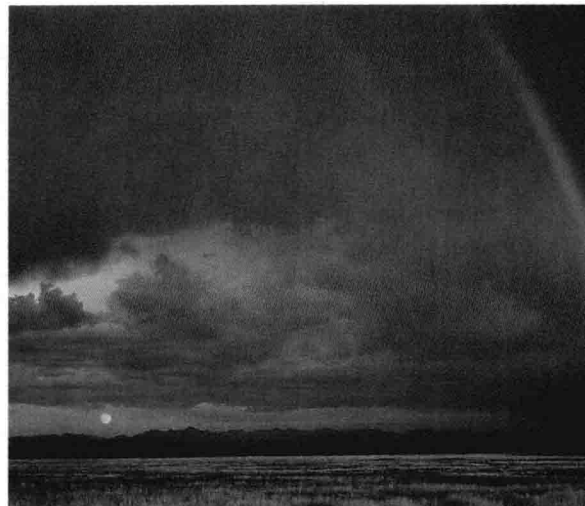


**In Pittsburgh the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers converge to form the Ohio—creating a golden triangle that has influenced both the history and development of that city and the area surrounding it.**





Two different images of climate—winter in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and a rainbow over North Park, Colorado—present a contrasting view of the physical geography of the United States.



**Geography has two main branches.** The tasks of geography can be divided into two distinct categories, physical and cultural. **Physical geography** focuses on the natural features and systems of the earth: waters and landforms, rocks and soils, weather and climate, plants and animals. **Cultural geography** focuses on human activities, studying the changes made on earth by human thought and effort and exploring the reasons for such change. Cultural geographers study such particulars as cities,

languages, agriculture, architecture, religions, and social development.

We are accustomed to encountering most of these physical and cultural topics within the domains of specialized branches of science and scholarship—geology, botany, sociology, and anthropology, for example. Geographers do not compete with the specialists of these disciplines. Their task is to study these elements from geography's unique global perspective, to see them clearly in terms of earthly location and earthly interrelation.

A basic procedure of both physical and cultural geographers is to study patterns of distribution, to examine how a given something occurs on the surface of the earth—whether it be human population, oak trees, largemouth bass, rainfall, killer bees, iron ore, personal computers, or chicken pox. Distributions, or patterns of location, are readily shown on maps, and their graphic depiction stimulates questions about causes and interconnections.

For example, the distribution of certain diseases might be displayed on a world map. Some diseases would appear concentrated in some areas of the world and virtually nonexistent in other areas. These patterns would stimulate geographers (and medical researchers) to investigate possible reasons for the pattern. Is climate or latitude a factor? Diet? Genetics? Air or water quality? Cultural or religious practices?



Interaction between people and earth, that is, cultural geography, takes on new dimensions when viewed with Landsat, or heat-sensitive photography. The image of southern Florida, with Miami on the eastern coast, glows with deep blues (water) and reds (vegetation).



# Five Themes Create a Geographical Perspective

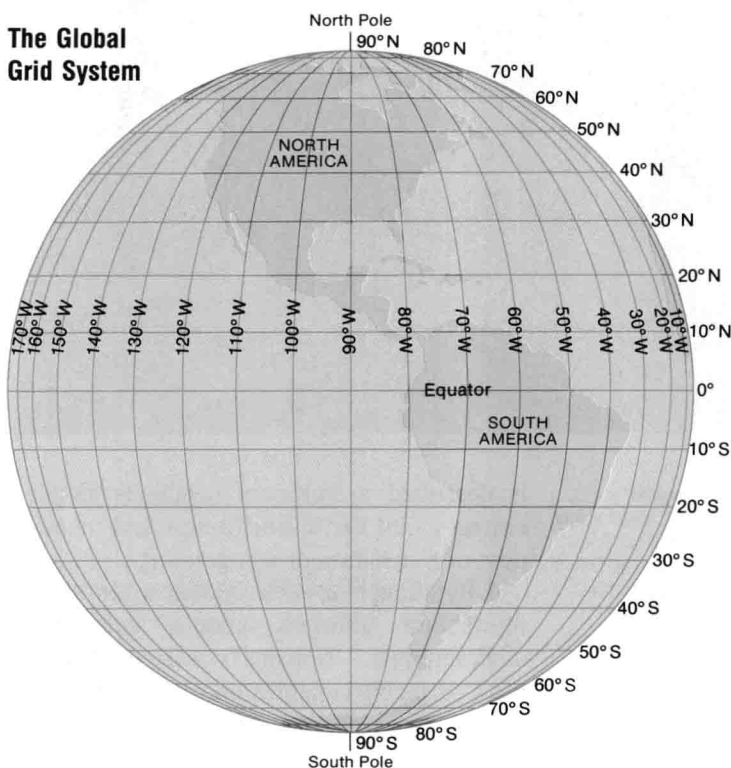
Geographers have developed a framework of five themes to create a comprehensive understanding of geography: location, place, relationships within places, movement, and regions. Any thorough understanding of geography will encompass those five themes.

**1. Location focuses on "where."** The location theme examines one of geography's most basic questions: "Where on earth is it?" At a personal level we are attentive to nuances of location: it can be pleasant to live near a beach; it can be stressful to live on a floodplain. On a global level it is usually not difficult to appreciate the locational merits of a given point on the earth.

Location may be described in relative and absolute terms. **Relative location** establishes an approximate position in relation to a known, familiar place. "I live two blocks east of the post office." "New Orleans is at the mouth of the Mississippi River." Relative location is not exact enough to get your mail delivered, however. **Absolute location** establishes exactly where something is placed on the earth. Your postal address is one kind of absolute location. People frequently joke about mail delivery, taking for granted that a few jotted lines on a stamped envelope will routinely direct a letter to the one person out of earth's five billion for whom it was intended.

Geographers have developed an even more efficient system for pinpointing absolute location by imposing an imaginary grid system on the surface of the earth. **Latitude** lines (also called parallels) run parallel to the equator and measure distance north or south. Distance is expressed in degrees, from 0° at the equator to 90° at the North or South poles. Each degree is subdivided into 60 minutes; each minute is subdivided into 60 seconds; a part of a second can be shown as a decimal fraction. **Longitude** lines (also called meridians) measure distance east or west of the Prime Meridian, which passes through Greenwich, England. Distance again is measured in degrees east or west from the 0° line of Prime Meridian to the 180° line on the opposite side of the globe.

**The Global Grid System**



Any place on earth can be pinpointed with only a few numbered coordinates. For example, New Orleans is located at 90°W 30°N. No other location on earth has those coordinates.

**2. Place examines unique characteristics.** The theme of place explores the physical and human factors that create the unique identity of a particular location. Any place may be described in terms of its prominent natural features such as landforms, climate, vegetation, soil quality, and so on. We might speak of a certain place as "mountainous," "cool," "thickly forested," and "rich in mineral deposits."

The presence of people also defines a place: their number; their languages, religions, and cultures; the changes they have produced by their use and abuse of physical resources. The "human touch" pervades nature. A wild plant or animal may have been transplanted by human management. Even "untouched" areas of the earth wear human names and boundaries.

Physical and human characteristics combine to create the identity of a place. When a place

The grid system shown on the globe above indicates both lines of latitude—which run parallel to the equator and measure distance north or south—and longitude—which measure distance east or west of the Prime Meridian.





Environmental interaction takes many different forms. For example, the Amish, a religious group that lives primarily in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Ohio, rely on simple farming techniques and low-energy forms of transportation.

is described in sufficient detail, its identity emerges with the distinctiveness and uniqueness of a signature or a fingerprint.

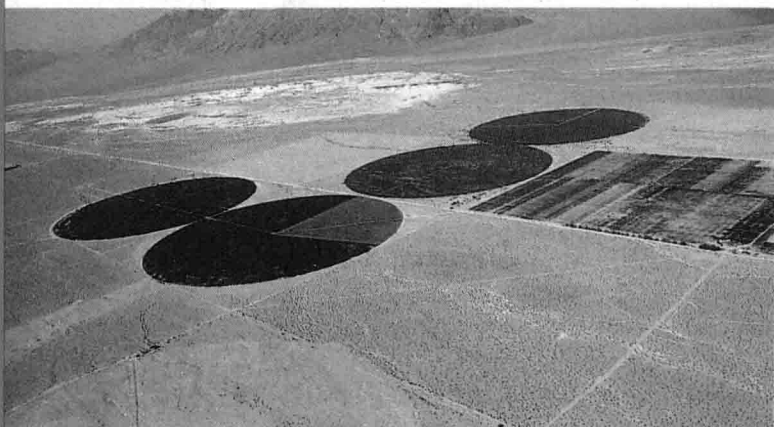
**3. Relationships within places explores the interaction between people and their environments.** Humans have been called the most adaptable creatures on earth. People live in virtually every environment earth offers, adapting their shelter, clothing, diet, and habits of life to survive and thrive even in the harshest circumstances.

As they adapt themselves to their environment, however, humans also alter their environment. People have been changing their world from earliest times, from the simple trails

made by their footsteps to the furrows they scratched in fields for their first crops. Today people have a far greater degree of control over their environment. We can cool a hot room; we can irrigate a parched land. We can literally move mountains and reverse the course of rivers. Our cities tower into the sky; air and water are stained with our use; asphalt and concrete carpet a vast acreage of our world. How and why did people make these changes? What are the consequences? The interactions of people with their environments raise these vital questions for historians, geographers—and all the rest of us.

**4. Movement examines links of transportation and communication.** The theme of movement encompasses not only such obvious factors as the flow of people and goods in migration and trade; it includes the movements of language, culture, religion, technology—even the spread of microbes. The Pilgrims at Plymouth planted their first crops in fields left tragically vacant by an Indian people annihilated by disease. The spread of lethal illness had a darkly significant influence in the colonial settlement of North America.

A happier contagion was provided by the ideas of enlightenment and human freedom generated in Europe by thinkers such as Rousseau, Locke, and Montesquieu. These ideas spread through the North American colonies,



Americans have found a variety of ways to harness the natural power of water—including irrigating the dry lands of Nevada, at left, and building dams such as the one at right on the Skagit River in Washington State.

