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The National Geography Standards

The National Geography Standards includes six essential elements that highlight the major components of geography. Under the six major categories are the eighteen standards that focus on general areas in geography that children are expected to know and understand.

Essential Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

Geography studies the relationships between people, places, and environments by mapping information about them into a spatial context. The geographically informed person knows and understands the following:

- Standard 1** **Weeks 1–8**
how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective,
 - Standard 2** **Weeks 9–10**
how to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context, and
 - Standard 3** **Weeks 11–12**
how to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth’s surface.
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Essential Element 2: Places and Regions

The identities and lives of individuals and peoples are rooted in particular places and in those human constructs called regions. The geographically informed person knows and understands the following:

- Standard 4** **Weeks 13–18**
the physical and human characteristics of places,
 - Standard 5** **Weeks 19–22**
that people create regions to interpret Earth’s complexity, and
 - Standard 6** **Weeks 23–24**
how culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions.
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Essential Element 3: Physical Systems

Physical processes shape Earth’s surface and interact with plant and animal life to create, sustain, and modify the ecosystems. The geographically informed person knows and understands the following:

- Standard 7** **Week 25**
the physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth’s surface, and
- Standard 8** **Week 26**
the characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on Earth’s surface.

Essential Element 4: Human Systems

People are central to geography in that human activities help shape Earth’s surface, human settlements and structures are part of Earth’s surface, and humans compete for control of Earth’s surface. The geographically informed person knows and understands the following:

- Standard 9** **Week 27**
the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth’s surface,
- Standard 10** **Week 28**
the characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth’s cultural mosaics,
- Standard 11** **Week 29**
the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth’s surface,
- Standard 12** **Week 30**
the processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement, and
- Standard 13** **Week 31**
how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth’s surface.

Essential Element 5: Environment and Society

The physical environment is modified by human activities, largely as a consequence of the ways in which human societies value and use Earth’s natural resources. Human activities are also influenced by Earth’s physical features and processes. The geographically informed person knows and understands the following:

- Standard 14** **Week 32**
how human actions modify the physical environment,
- Standard 15** **Week 33**
how physical systems affect human systems, and
- Standard 16** **Week 34**
the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

Essential Element 6: The Uses of Geography

Knowledge of geography enables people to develop an understanding of the relationships between people, places, and environments over time—that is, of Earth as it was, is, and might be. The geographically informed person knows and understands the following:

- Standard 17** **Week 35**
how to apply geography to interpret the past, and
- Standard 18** **Week 36**
how to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

WEEK 1


 Daily Geography
ANSWER KEY**Monday**

1. compass rose, inset maps, legend, and title
2. It is a political map of the U.S.

Tuesday

1. cardinal and intermediate; or N, S, E, W and NW, NE, SW, SE
2. northeast; southwest

Wednesday

1. international borders, national capital, and state borders
2. dark heavy line; Canada and Mexico

Thursday

1. inset maps; Alaska, Hawaii, and North America with the U.S. highlighted
2. It shows the location of the U.S. in relation to North America, especially the location of Alaska.

Friday

1. They are not connected to the rest of the country.
2. North America inset map

Challenge

from left to right: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario. Use an atlas to help you.

Parts of a Map

Introducing the Map

Share with students that as they read a map, they should notice the different elements that are shown. The first element is the title, which tells readers what the map is about. Other common elements include a legend or key and a compass rose. Share the definitions of these elements with students.

Have students look at the map of the United States. Ask students to locate and describe the title. This is a political map of the United States. Explain what a political map shows. Also, talk about the legend and the compass rose. Students will notice that the legend shows state and international borders. Point out that international borders are borders between countries. Show students that this compass rose includes both cardinal and intermediate directions. Share the definitions of cardinal and intermediate directions.

Students should also notice this map contains another element—three inset maps. Discuss what an inset map is and what it shows. Have students locate the inset maps of Alaska and Hawaii. Talk about how maps of the United States have to show Alaska and Hawaii on inset maps because they are not connected to the rest of the country. Because of that, the location and size of these two states are distorted. The other inset map shows North America with the United States highlighted. Students should notice that Hawaii is not shown on the map of North America. Geographically, Hawaii is located farther out in the Pacific Ocean.

Introducing Vocabulary

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

compass rose a directional arrow that shows cardinal and/or intermediate directions

inset map a smaller map set within the border of a larger one

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

international border border between countries

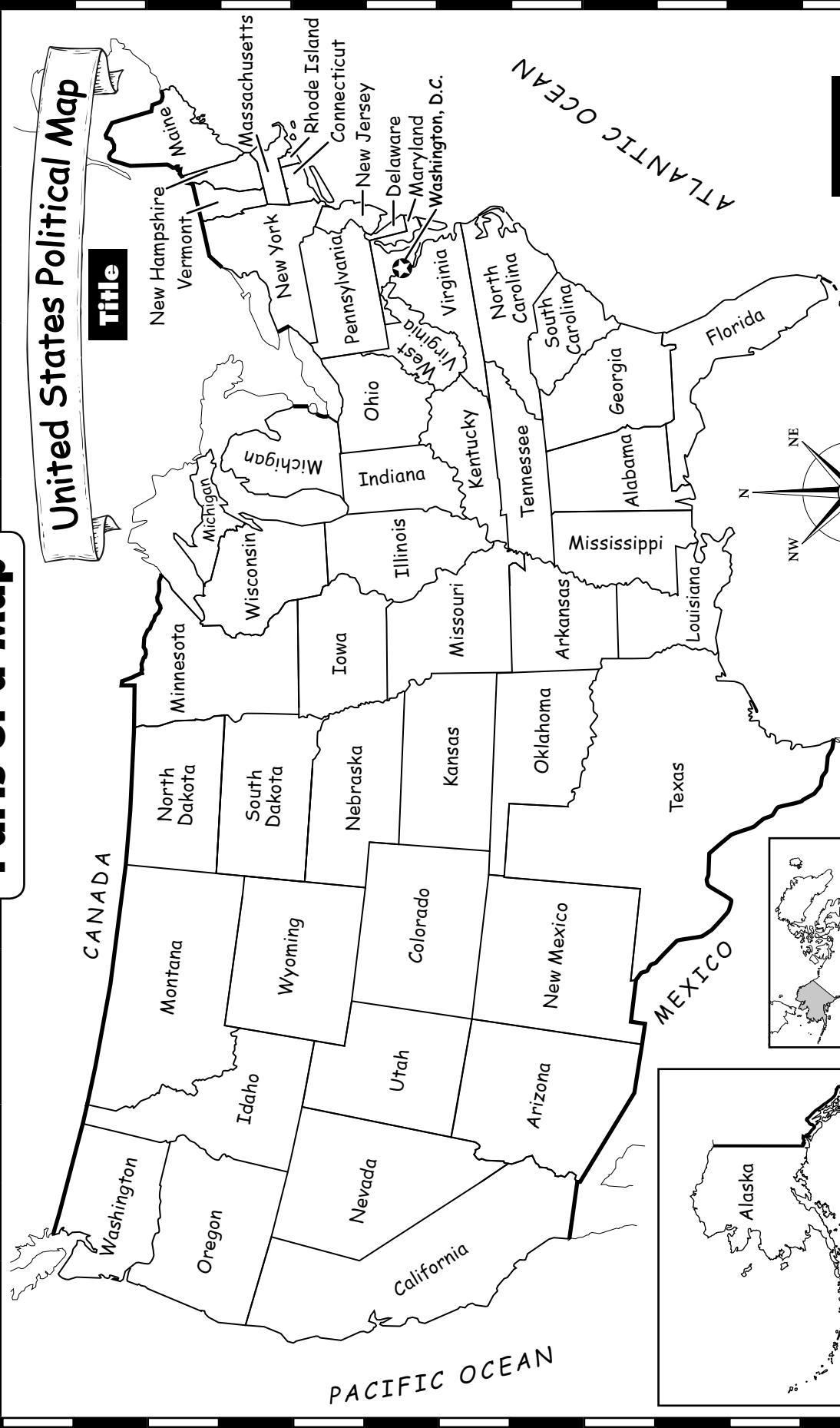
legend (key) a list that explains the symbols on a map

political map a map that shows human-made features such as borders, states, or countries

Parts of a Map

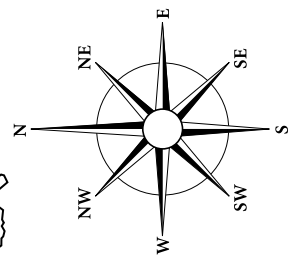
United States Political Map

Title

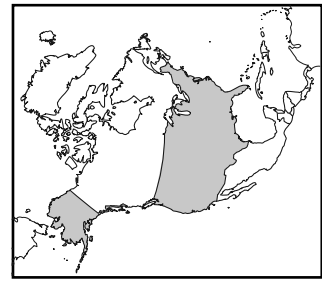


Legend

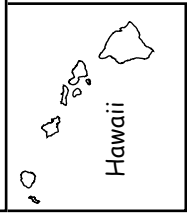
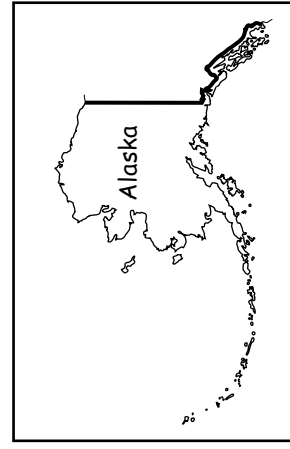
- state border
- international border
- national capital



Compass Rose



Inset Maps



Name



Parts of a Map

Monday

1. Name the four parts that are shown on the map.

2. What does the title tell you about the map?

Tuesday

1. Which directions are included on the compass rose?

2. In which direction is Maine from Texas? In which direction is Texas from Maine?

Wednesday

1. What kinds of things are shown on the legend?

2. What is the symbol for an international border? Which countries border the United States?



Parts of a Map

Thursday

1. What are the three smaller maps called? What does each of them show?

2. Why is the inset map of North America included?

Friday

1. Why do Alaska and Hawaii have to be shown on inset maps?

2. Alaska is the largest state in area. It is more than twice the size of Texas. Which inset map shows Alaska's size more accurately?

Challenge

Four of the five Great Lakes share a border with Canada and the United States. Label the five lakes on the map. Use a reference map or atlas to help you.