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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.

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### 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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 map, legend, scale, and title
2. It is a map of the contiguous or connecting states of the U.S.

**Tuesday**

1. 48; Alaska and Hawaii
2. cardinal: N, S, E, and W;  
intermediate: NW, NE, SW,  
and SE

**Wednesday**

1. key; symbols for international borders, the national capital, state borders, and state capitals
2. Canada and Mexico; inset map and legend

**Thursday**

1. It helps show the location of the contiguous U.S. in relation to other countries in North America.
2. approximately 450 miles

**Friday**

1. approximately 1,200 miles
2. approximately 2,325 miles

**Challenge**

Answers will vary, but students should write two questions, with answers, on the back of the map page.

# Elements on a Map

## Introducing the Map

Share with students that as they read a map, they should notice the different elements that are shown such as the title, legend, compass rose, inset map, and scale.

Have students look at the map of the United States. Ask students to locate and describe the title. Explain that this is a political map of the contiguous United States. Define the word *contiguous* for students. Also, talk about the legend and the compass rose. Students will notice that the legend, or key, shows state and international borders, plus the national capital and a sampling of state capitals. Show students that the compass rose includes both cardinal (N, S, E, and W) and intermediate directions (NW, NE, SE, and SW).

Students should also notice that this map contains another element—an inset map. The inset map shows North America with the contiguous United States highlighted. Remind students that Alaska is actually connected to Canada, and Hawaii is located farther out in the Pacific Ocean in an area called Oceania.

The last element is a scale. Most maps use a bar scale that is shown in both standard and metric measurements. For the purposes of this lesson, students will use a standard ruler to measure the distances between capitals on the map. Have students measure the line on the bar scale to see how many inches represent 450 miles (1½ inches). Talk about how many inches on the map would represent 225 miles (¾ inch). As a class, find the distance between two cities. Remind students that their measurements will be approximate.

## Introducing Vocabulary

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

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

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

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

**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** a border between countries

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

**political map** a map that shows human-made features and boundaries such as cities, highways, and countries





# Elements on a Map

## Monday

1. Name the five elements that are shown on the map.

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

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## Tuesday

1. How many states are part of the contiguous United States? Which states are not contiguous?

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2. Name the cardinal and intermediate directions shown on the compass rose.

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## Wednesday

1. What is another name for a legend? What kinds of things are shown on the legend?

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2. Name the two countries that border the United States. Which elements help to identify them?

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# Elements on a Map

## Thursday

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

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2. Use the scale and a ruler to find the approximate distance from Denver to Lincoln. Measure to the nearest  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch.

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## Friday

1. Use the scale and a ruler to find the approximate distance from Raleigh to Little Rock and then to Austin. Measure to the nearest  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch.

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2. Use the scale and a ruler to find the approximate distance from the nation's capital to the capital of California. Measure to the nearest  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch.

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## Challenge

Write two questions about the distance between capitals on the back of the map. Be sure to include the answers. Ask a classmate to solve the two problems.