

Chapter 1, Section 1

What is Geography?

Name: _____

From your study of Michigan in third grade, do you remember the answer to this question: What is geography? Talk with your group and write your answer here:

Geographers ask lots of questions and they usually want to know “where?” One of the first questions they may ask when studying a place is, “**Where is it?**” Where are the Everglades? Where is Mount Washington? Where are the Great Lakes? Where is the Grand Canyon?

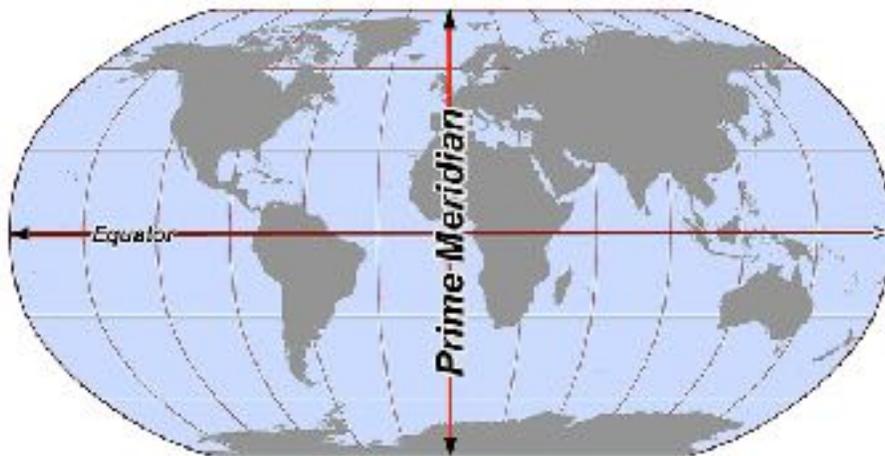
Geographers use lots of tools when studying places in the world. Maps are the number one tool they use. In this map, most of the United States has been circled. How would you describe where the United States is located on this map?



This world map does not contain the circle, but does show the Equator. How might you describe where the United States is located now?

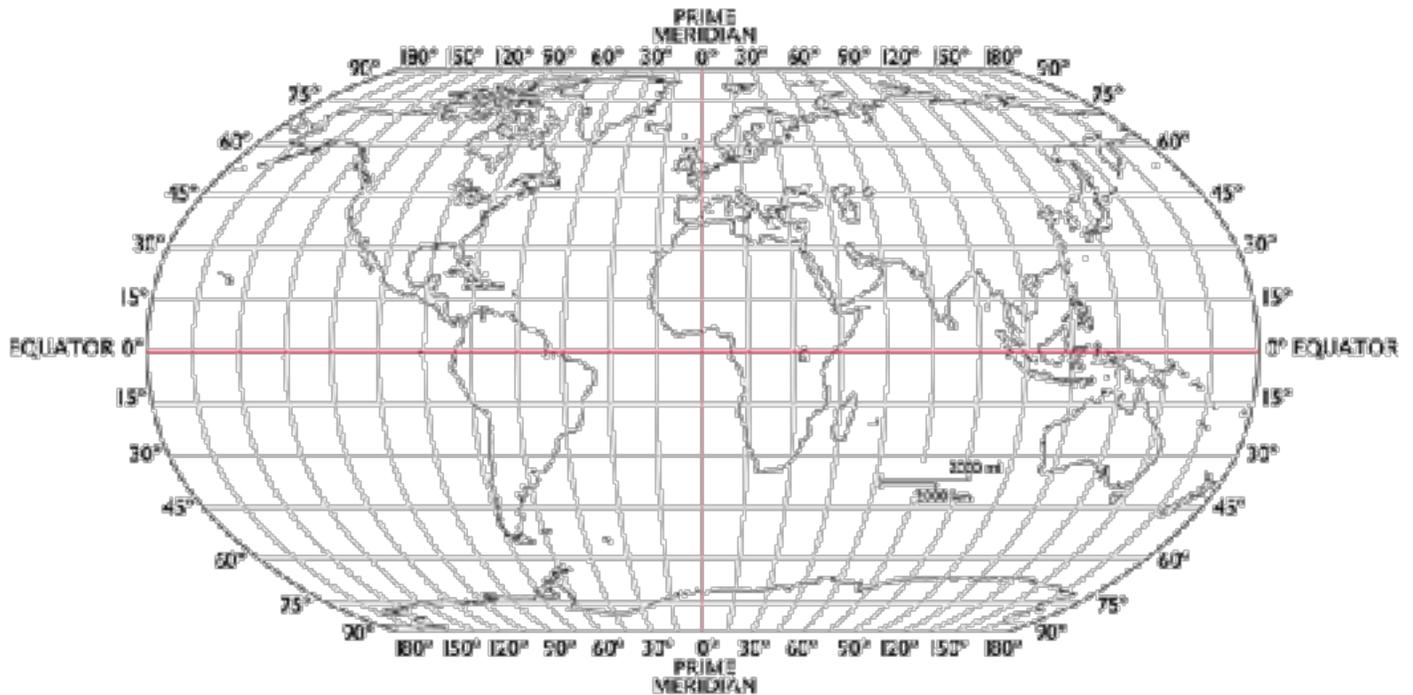


The United States is located in the continent of North America, but we can be even more specific. The U.S. is located in two of Earth's four hemispheres. Hemispheres are regions created when the Earth is divided in half. The Equator divides the Earth into the Northern and Southern Hemispheres and the Prime Meridian divides it into the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.



The United States is located in the _____ Hemisphere and the _____ Hemisphere.

The Equator and Prime Meridian are just the starting points for lines of latitude and longitude. As you can see in the map below, there are many more lines that allow geographers to locate specific locations. All these extra lines don't have names, like the Equator and Prime Meridian. They are labeled with degrees (numbers) on each line. What lines come closest to Michigan?



Can you find one important difference between lines of latitude and lines of longitude? Talk with your group and write your answer here....

Maps can represent a place such as a neighborhood, a town, a country, or the World, but maps are flat and we all know the Earth is not. The Earth is a sphere. What do we call a map that is in the shape of a sphere? Yes, a **globe!** Imagine putting that in your pocket as you head out on a trip! A globe is a much more accurate representation of the Earth, but not very useful as you walk down a path, drive across town or travel across the country.

Geographers also use aerial photography and satellite imagery to study the Earth. Check out the collection of images on the web site to see how amazing these can be. There is one satellite image of the United States where the gold on the map shows major centers of population. As you look at this map, what do you notice or what can you “pick out”? Notice how much more populated the eastern half of the U.S. is compared to the western half, except the west coast.

Can you find these places....

_____ Detroit, Michigan

_____ Florida Keys, Florida

_____ Long Island, New York

_____ Chicago, Illinois

_____ Omaha, Nebraska

_____ Dallas, Texas

_____ Los Angeles, California

_____ Why is it so easy to see Lake Erie but not Lake Superior?

_____ What are the two easiest states to locate on that satellite image and why?

