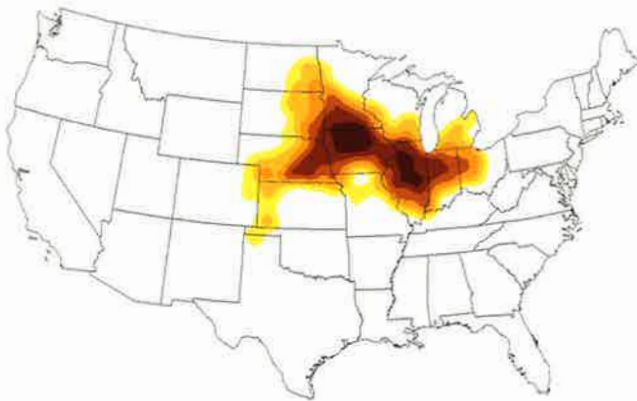


GEOGRAPHY STANDARD 5: That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity

Map credit: University of North Alabama/Lisa Keys-Mathews

This map displays the Physiographic Divisions in the conterminous United States representing 24 distinctive regions having common topography, rock types and structure, and geologic and geomorphic history. Data source: USGS.



Map credit: Eastern Illinois University/Chris Laingen

The US Corn Belt, an agricultural region, is defined in this thematic map by the density of acres of harvested corn based on the 2007 Census of Agriculture Data. The darkest color represents the highest density of harvested acres of corn.

The geographically informed person must understand the origins and functions of regions. Regions are human creations used to manage and interpret the complexity of Earth's surface. They help us understand and organize the arrangements of people, places, and environments. People's lives are structured within multiple regions.

Therefore, Standard 5 contains these themes: The Concept of Region and Regional Change.

A region has characteristics that give it cohesiveness and distinctiveness and set it apart from other regions. The boundaries and characteristics of a region are derived from a set of criteria that organizes Earth's complex surface on the basis of the presence or absence of selected physical and human characteristics. Regions can vary in scale from local to global; overlap or be mutually exclusive; be nested into a hierarchy (e.g., counties, states, countries); and exhaustively partition the entire world or capture only selected portions of it.

Geographers recognize three types of regions. The first type is the formal region characterized by a common human property, such as the presence of people who share a language, religion, nationality, political identity, or culture; or it is characterized by a common physical property, such as the presence of a type of climate, landform, or vegetation. The Rocky Mountain region, the Corn Belt, and Latin America are examples of formal regions.

The second type is the functional region. It is organized around a node or focal point, with surrounding areas linked by transportation systems, communication systems, or other associations such as manufacturing and retail trading. Chicago, with its highways, railways, Great Lakes shipping, airlines, and telecommunications, is a focal point in the north-central region of the United States.

The third type of region, the perceptual region, is based on human feelings and attitudes about areas and is defined by people's shared subjective images. Southern California, Dixie, the Riviera, and Australian Outback are perceptual regions. These spatial units may be without precise borders or even commonly accepted regional characteristics and names.

All types of regions are dynamic, changing as the physical and human properties of Earth's surface change. Thus, with global climate change, ecosystem and biome patterns will change. With economic globalization, structural relationships between trading regions will shift, as capital and people move to take advantage of changing opportunities.

Students must understand the meaning and complexity of regions, their physical and human characteristics, and how geographers use and analyze regions to interpret and organize Earth's surface. Understanding these themes enables students to put people, places, and environments into multiple spatial contexts.

GEOGRAPHY STANDARD 5: That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity

4th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

The Concept of Region

1. Regions are areas of Earth's surface with unifying physical and/or human characteristics

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Describe the distinguishing characteristics and meanings of several different regions, as exemplified by being able to
- ▶ Identify unifying areas on a map that define those areas as regions (e.g., a zoo map showing how animal exhibits are organized by regions related to climate, landforms, and vegetation zones).
 - ▶ Identify the physical and human characteristics that can be used to define a region within the local community (e.g., the characteristics of a retail strip mall area, downtown or central business district, boundaries of ethnic neighborhoods).
 - ▶ Describe the characteristics that define a physical region in the state (e.g., Front Range in Colorado, Sand Hills in Nebraska, Hill Country in Texas).



Image credit: D.J. Zeigler

Chinatown in Adelaide, South Australia, is an example of an ethnic neighborhood, a region that includes Chinese style gates as cultural markers.

8th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

The Concept of Region

1. Different types of regions are used to organize and interpret areas of Earth's surface

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Identify and explain the criteria used to define formal, functional, and perceptual regions, as exemplified by being able to
- ▶ Identify and explain the bases for the formal region(s), functional region(s), and perceptual region(s) for the community or state where the students live (e.g., for Michigan, the Kalamazoo–Battle Creek Metropolitan Statistical Area is a formal region, the fruit belt in Southwest Michigan is a functional region, Kalamazoo as the snow belt capital of Lake Michigan is a perceptual region).
 - ▶ Identify and describe the spatial extent of a local perceptual region by searching a web-based telephone directory or mapping site to identify businesses and their locations (e.g., Michiana, Cascadia, Cajun Country, Capital City, Twin Cities).
 - ▶ Analyze collected maps with regional labels as examples of formal, functional, or perceptual regions (e.g., maps of physical regions as formal, weather maps as functional, tourist maps as perceptual).

Regional Change

2. The boundaries and characteristics of regions change

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Describe and explain the changes in the boundaries and characteristics of regions, as exemplified by being able to
- ▶ Describe and explain how the formal regional boundaries and names of US territories and states have changed over time.
 - ▶ Describe and explain the changes in regional boundaries and names of African states during colonization and after independence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
 - ▶ Describe and explain how the transition of ethnic groups moving in or out of city neighborhoods results in changes in the names, boundaries, and characteristics of the neighborhoods.

12th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

The Concept of Region

1. Regions are defined by different sets of criteria, and places can be included in multiple regions of different types

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Identify and explain how a place can exist within multiple regional classifications, as exemplified by being able to
- ▶ Construct a map showing the boundaries of the multiple regions within which the school is located (e.g., school district, city limits, county, state, physiographic region, US Federal Court Districts, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regions, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regions, country, continent) and explain the basis for each of the regional boundaries.
 - ▶ Construct a perceptual region's boundary on a map, compare with the maps of other students, and explain why individuals can have different perceptions of a region's character and spatial extent (e.g., Pacific Northwest, New England, Midwest, South).
 - ▶ Identify a location in the world and explain a number of possible different regions that may include the location (e.g., Tunisia in the North African region, the Arabic speaking language region, and the Mediterranean region; Texas in the Great Plains region, the Southern US region, the Gulf Coast region).

Regional Change

2. Regional change is caused by multiple interacting processes

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Describe and explain the processes that have resulted in regional change, as exemplified by being able to
- ▶ Describe and explain how the breakup of the Soviet Union led to changes in formal, functional, and perceptual regions in the areas that originally comprised that country.
 - ▶ Analyze how the boundaries and names of regions have changed over time and explain the reasons for those changes (e.g., political boundaries, economic or military alliances, land use, historic districts).
 - ▶ Explain some of the results expected from climate change models on the physical characteristics of selected world regions (e.g., effect of glacial melting in the Arctic on shipping lanes, deteriorating coral habitats in the tropics, changing vegetation patterns in midlatitude grasslands).