

SPECTRUM®

GRADE

4

Geography

Regions of the U.S.A.



**Excellent Tool for
Standardized Test Preparation!**

- Types of regions
- Canals and tributaries
- Natural and human events
- Cultural history
- Map skills
- Glossary
- Answer key



Reading a Globe

Maps and globes are different models of Earth. Both represent the real Earth at a size people can use easily. Figures 1 and 2 show Earth like a globe. A **globe** is a small model of Earth. A globe imitates the round shape of our planet.

A **map** is a flat model of Earth. The map in Figure 3 tries to “open up” the round globe and show it as a flat map. One problem with flat maps is that distances and directions sometimes look different than they really are.

Any one side of a globe shows only part of Earth. With a map, you can see all of Earth at once. Look at the globes in Figures 1 and 2. See if you can find some of the same places on the map in Figure 3.

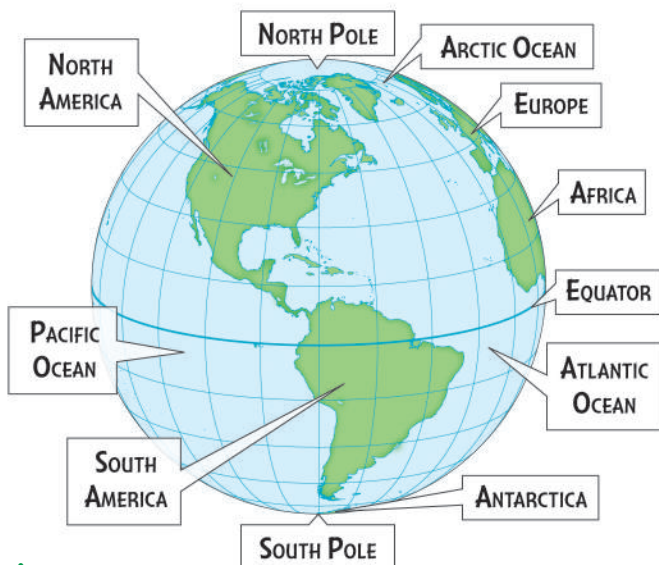


Figure 1

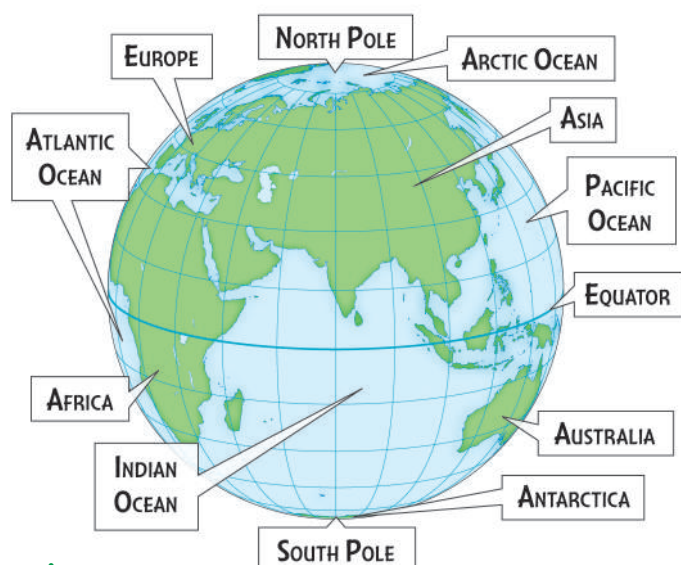


Figure 2

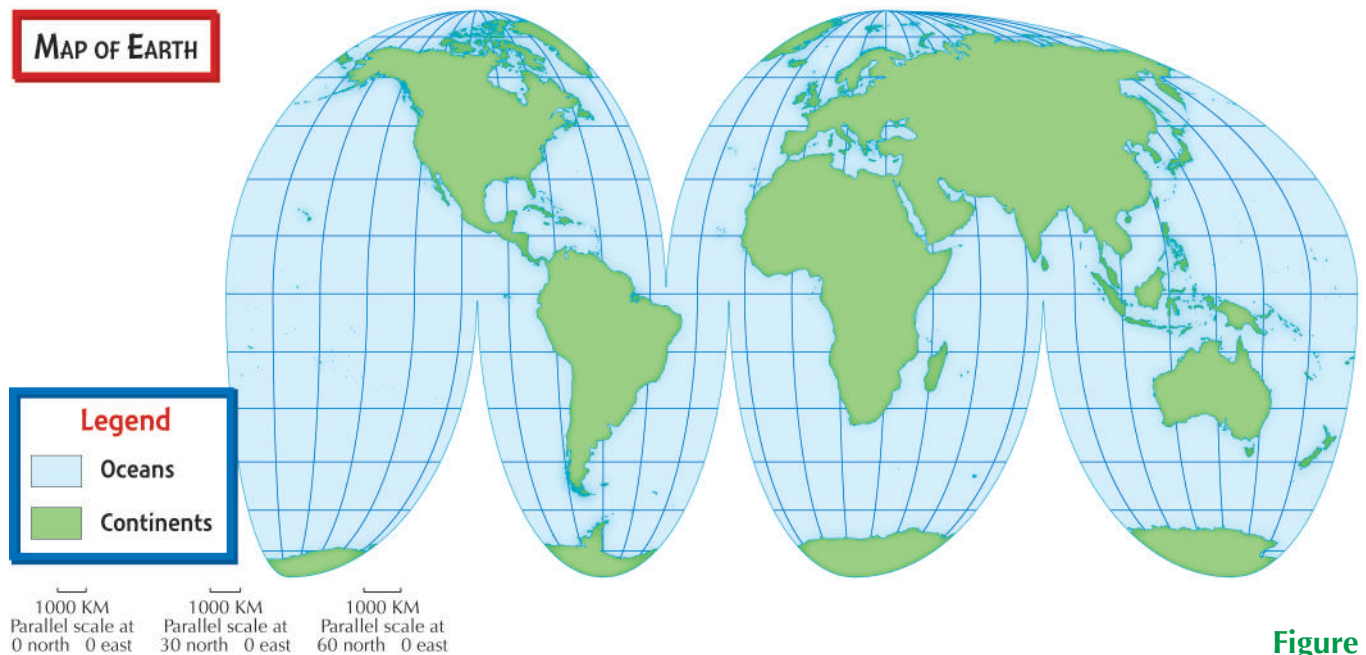


Figure 3

Find the equator on the globes. The **equator** is an imaginary line drawn around the center of a globe or map of Earth. The names of the seven **continents** (large land masses) and four **oceans** (large areas of water) are also given on the globes in Figures 1 and 2. Find the **North Pole** and **South Pole** on the globes. These are the most northern and southern points on Earth.

Because maps and globes cannot be the same size as Earth, they are drawn to **scale**. A scale shows how much smaller the map is than the real world. A map's **title** tells you what the map is about. **Symbols** are drawings, lines, or dots that stand for something else. The **legend** explains what each symbol on the map or globe means.

Maps and globes have many uses. They can help us find our way around as we travel. Scientists use maps to predict the weather. Can you think of some other ways that we use maps?

What can a map or a globe tell you about what it is like to live in a certain place? Consider that places near the equator have the hottest weather on Earth. The weather gradually gets cooler as you travel toward the North Pole or South Pole from the equator.

Build Your

Map Skills

Read a Climate Map of Earth

The symbol that looks like a star on Figure 4 is called a compass rose. A **compass rose** is a map symbol that shows directions. This compass rose shows the four main **cardinal directions** (north, south, east, and west). It also shows **intermediate directions**, which are northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast.

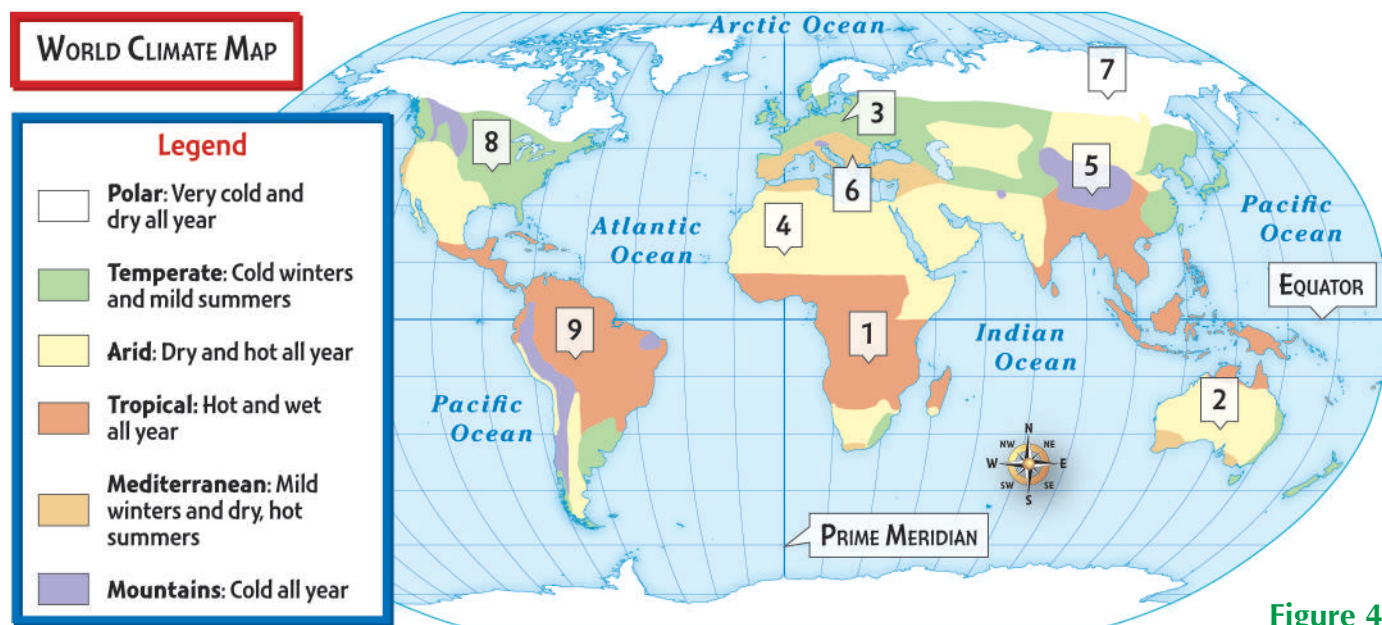


Figure 4

The map lines that are drawn parallel to the equator are called lines of **latitude**. The **prime meridian** is an imaginary line drawn from the North Pole to the South Pole. The lines drawn parallel to the prime meridian are called lines of **longitude**. For more information, see Appendix page 100.

This map is a climate map. **Climate** refers to the typical weather of a specific place on Earth. Several factors affect climate:

Latitude: At the equator, the sun's rays hit at a direct angle. This makes the air temperature very hot. As you move toward the poles, the Sun's rays become cooler due to the curved surface of Earth.

Altitude: It is usually cool on top of a mountain even in summer. This is because a mountaintop is at a high **altitude**.

Winds: Winds from hot areas of Earth raise temperatures and those from cold areas lower temperatures. Winds influence the amount of **precipitation** (rain or snow) each area gets.

Distance from the sea: Land near the sea has more moderate seasons than areas that are inland.

The climate map shows six different climate zones. Notice that there are numbers on the map in different climate zones. In the table, write the name of the continent where the number is located. Then, write a description of the climate.

	Continent	Description of the Climate
1	Africa	Tropical (hot and wet all year)
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		

Explore the World's Oceans

Something to
Think
About

How can you describe a trip over the world's oceans?

As you have learned, the oceans and continents look different depending upon which side of the globe you are viewing. In this activity, each globe shows you a different view of the world. You will label some of the continents and oceans on each globe. Then, you will use the globes to explore the world's oceans.

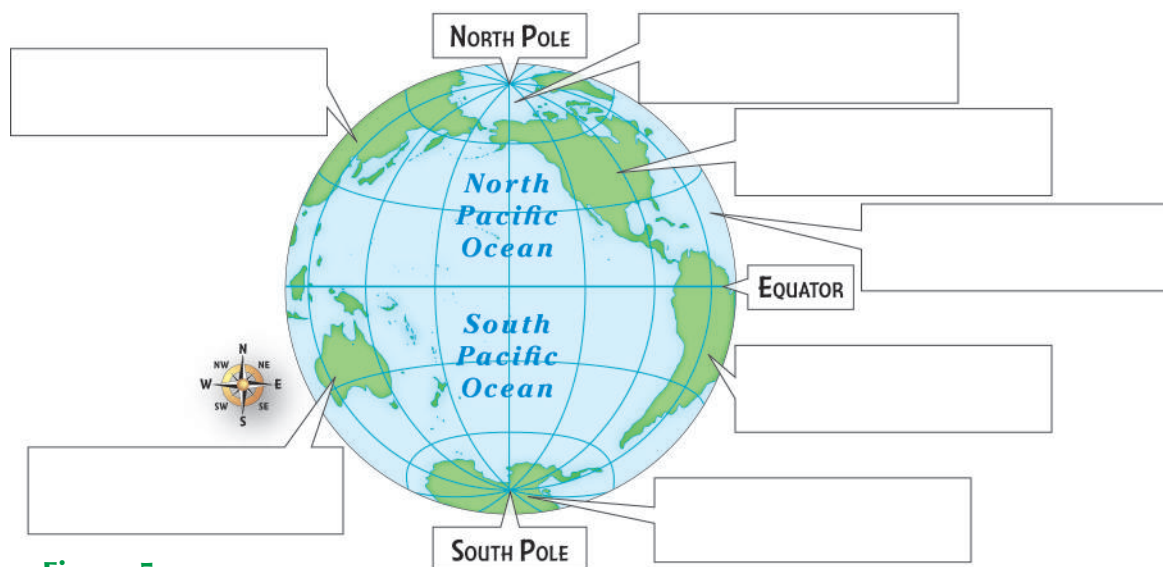


Figure 5

Use Figure 5 to explore the oceans and continents.

1. Fill in the boxes on Figure 5 to label the world's continents and oceans. If you need to, refer to page 2.

2. Plan your trip. Start at the southern tip of South America. From there, draw a line to eastern Australia. The line you draw shows the way you will travel. Answer these questions to describe your trip.

What continent will you pass to the south? _____

What ocean will you cross? _____

What direction will you travel? _____

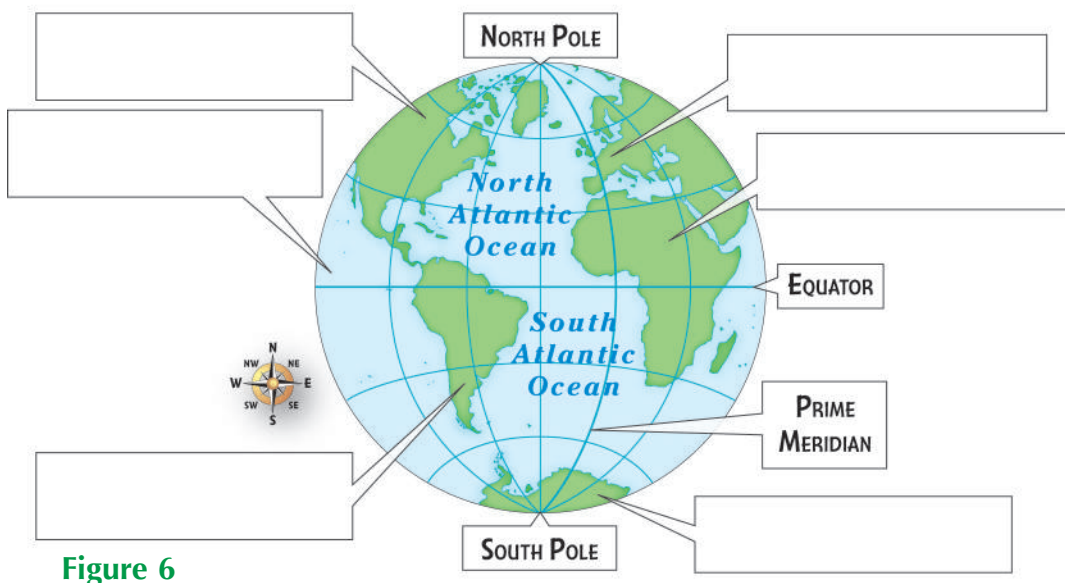


Figure 6

Use Figure 6 to explore the oceans and continents.

3. Fill in the boxes on Figure 6 to label the world's continents and oceans. If you need to, refer to the map on page 2.
4. Plan your trip. Start at the east coast of North America. From there, draw a line to the southern tip of Africa. The line you draw shows the way you will travel. Answer these questions to describe your trip.

What continent will you pass to the west? _____

What ocean will you cross? _____

What direction will you travel? _____

What Are Regions?

Some states within the United States can be grouped together based on things they have in common. States grouped together in this way are called a **region**.

Sometimes, the things the states have in common are based on human activity. For example, the map shows how the U.S. government groups the states together into regions based on the economy. An **economy** is a system of producing and distributing products and services.

Maps are also organized based on the physical characteristics of Earth's surface. States within these physical regions may have a similar climate or similar **landforms**, such as mountains, plains, or deserts.

Organizing the United States into regions allows us to compare different parts of the country and gives us a more complete understanding of the nation as a whole. For example, people in the Middle Atlantic region tend to live or work in large cities. The economy of this area is influenced by important seaports on the Atlantic Ocean.



New York City is a large city in the Middle Atlantic Region.