



# California World History Studies Weekly

GRADE  
6

## Our Home

How much do you know about your home? No, not the house or apartment you live in, but our planet, Earth. It's big and round, and it's where we all live, but how much do you know about it? Can you name the continents and the oceans? Do you know where the coldest place on the Earth is found? Do you know the Earth's largest island? Before we start our exploration of the ancient world, this issue will give you lots of information about your home, planet Earth!

Get in groups of six or eight students and put a globe in the middle of each group. (You'll probably need to borrow some globes from other classrooms.) First, let's look at the large bodies of water on the planet. Did you know that the Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest of all the oceans? Or that the word "pacific" means peaceful?

Next, take a look at those large landmasses called continents. Some geography books use a model that counts seven continents, with the Ural Mountains of

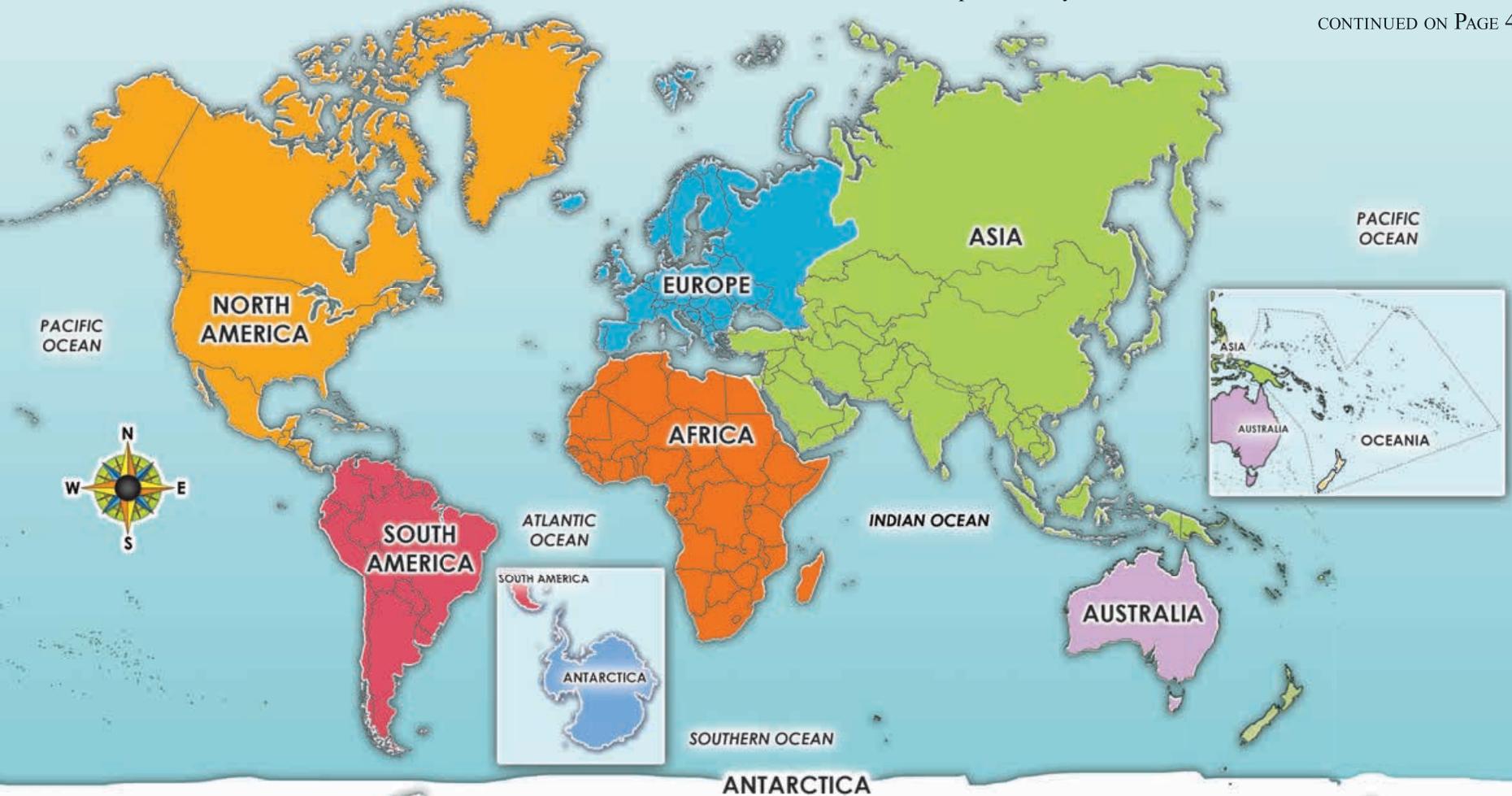
Russia being the dividing line between Europe and Asia. Others think it makes more sense to call the gigantic landmass one continent named Eurasia. Either way, scientists agree the continents are all about 25 miles (40 kilometers) thick. They have also determined that the landmasses are slowly and constantly moving about 1 to 3 inches a year.

Next, find India or Italy. These countries are called peninsulas. A peninsula is land that is surrounded on three sides by water. Can you find other examples?

Find the water separating the state of Alaska from Russia. This is called the Bering Strait. A strait is a narrow section of water connecting two larger bodies of water. Can you name these bodies of water? The opposite of a strait is called an isthmus. Can you find a long narrow body of land connecting two larger bodies of land? Central America is probably the most famous isthmus. It connects North and South America.

Find the European country of Switzerland. Like the states of Iowa and

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### Connections

## All Sorts of People

Often when we study our Earth, we divide people into groups by geographic region, race, religion and culture, and study our differences. But, we are all people of the world. You might think, well, of course we are! But, did you consider that we are more alike than we are different? For example, everyone has the same needs: food, water, shelter, air. Those are indisputable. What about other ways we might be the same? Does everyone need a family? Does everyone laugh and cry? Does everyone have hopes and dreams?

Sometimes we see people with disabilities as "different" just because of the disability. Isn't everyone else different from you? Some of us use devices to get around or communicate. Some people speak different languages at home. Some people getting certain medical treatments have no hair. Some people have pink hair. Some people have one arm. Some have freckles on their arms. Some people think one way; you may think the opposite. We don't all have to look the same or always agree, but we are more the same than different.

When studying people who have some differences from ourselves, or live in distant lands, it's good to think about their perspective. How do they see the world in ways you may not have thought of? How do they go about daily life in ways you've never considered? What do they think about the world, and about people like you? And how are they part of the same, human family here on Earth? What are their hopes and dreams? If we accept both our similarities and our differences, we keep an open mind.



# Planet Earth

## Continental Drift Theory

Look at a map of the world. It kind of looks like a giant jigsaw puzzle doesn't it? Can you find sections that might fit together like a puzzle?

Alfred Wegener was one man who was very interested in the Earth's jigsaw puzzle look. He was a geologist (scientist who studies the Earth) and a meteorologist (scientist who studies weather). Wegener had an idea called the Continental Drift Theory, which said a supercontinent existed about 200 million years ago. He named the supercontinent Pangaea, meaning "all Earth."

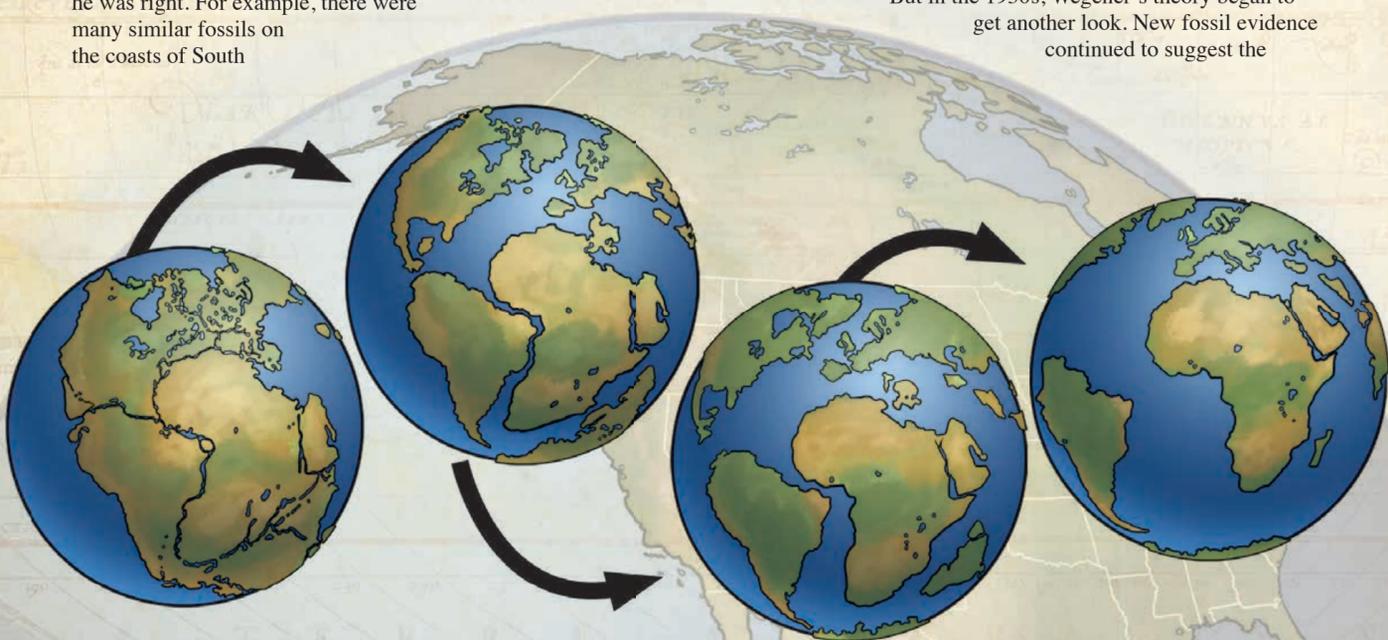
Wegener's theory said that as the continents moved over time, Pangaea broke apart into what Wegener called Laurasia and Gondwanaland. From Laurasia came North America and Eurasia. From Gondwanaland came South America, Africa, India, Australia and Antarctica. Wegener searched for evidence to support his theory.

It didn't take long to find some evidence that made him believe he was right. For example, there were many similar fossils on the coasts of South

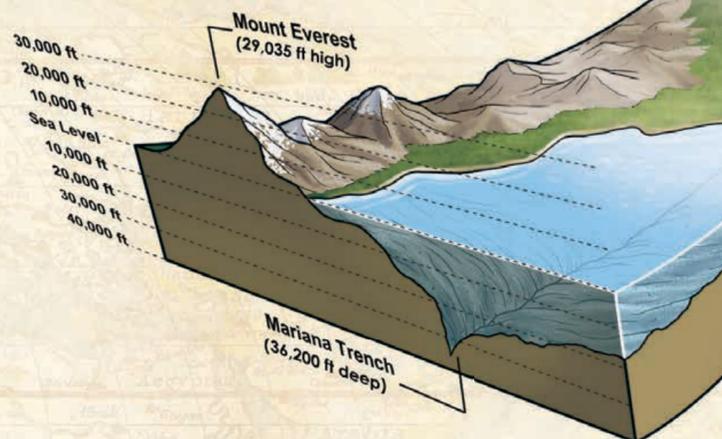
America and Africa. Wegener reasoned that there was no way for those animals to cross the large Atlantic Ocean, and South America and Africa must have been joined at one time. There was lots of other evidence too. A species of earthworm was found in South America and South Africa where the two continents may have been joined. A fossil of a tree-like plant called Glossopteris was found in the areas that made up Gondwanaland. Similar coal was found in areas of North America and Europe. Fossilized tropical plants in Antarctica and glacier evidence in India suggest that these landmasses were at one time in different climate areas, closer to the equator.

Most people didn't think much of Wegener's theory. Why? They didn't believe continents could plow through water and move. There weren't instruments available yet that could detect such movement. Wegener died in 1930 on an expedition to Greenland's ice cap searching for more evidence to prove his theory. He never lived to see his theory given much credit.

But in the 1950s, Wegener's theory began to get another look. New fossil evidence continued to suggest the



As you read this week's lesson, look for pronouns. Circle or highlight subjective pronouns in yellow, possessive pronouns in green and objective pronouns in blue. ELA/Literacy L.6.1a



theory may be correct. New photographs of the ocean floor showed ridges, or chains of mountains, which was evidence that continents move. Another theory, the plate tectonic theory, later helped explain how the continents could move. Think about a soft-boiled egg. Think of the Earth's crust (the tectonic plates) as the shell. The white inside is the Earth's mantle. The plates move around on the soft mantle. The Earth's liquid core is like the yolk of the egg. New instruments detected movement and confirmed that continents do move. Some move up to a couple inches a year. Africa is moving toward Europe, pushing the Mediterranean Sea as it does. North America is moving toward Asia. Lower California is moving northwest, away from the rest of the continental United States. Hawaii is moving closer to Japan.

## More Planet Earth Facts

- If you like heights, then Mount Everest is for you. It is the highest mountain in the world at 29,035 feet (8,850 meters) high. In 1953, Edmund Hillary, a New Zealander, and Tenzing Norgay, a Sherpa, were first to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Since then, thousands have attempted the climb. More than 200 people have died trying to get to the top.
- If you could move Mount Everest to the deepest point on Earth, you'd have to dive more than a mile underwater to see it. That's because the deepest place on our planet is the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean. In 2012 filmmaker James Cameron went down into the trench, touching down at 35,756 feet (10,898 meters). That's almost seven miles deep.

# World Geography

## The First New Map of the World

Martin Waldseemuller was a cartographer born in Germany in 1470. A cartographer is a person who makes maps. Waldseemuller's world map from 1507 was the first map to use the term America for the continents located on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Waldseemuller selected the name America after explorer Amerigo Vespucci. Vespucci, who was also a cartographer, was the first to show that Christopher Columbus had not reached Asia, as Columbus himself had believed. Instead, he had discovered a continent previously unknown to the Europeans.

In later maps, Waldseemuller removed the name America and called the land Terra Incognita ("unknown land") instead. Some say he had second thoughts about naming the land after Vespucci. However, since more than 1,000 maps had already been printed, the name "America" stuck. Only one copy is known to exist of Waldseemuller's map that uses the name America. It was found in a castle in Germany in 1901. In 2001, the U.S. Library of Congress bought this map for its collection.

This map, called the First New Map of the World, had many firsts. It was the first map not printed in a book but as a separate document. It took 12 wood blocks to print the large map that showed the entire coastline of Africa for the first time. Waldseemuller's map was also the first to show the Pacific Ocean. This is very interesting since the map was made six years before explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa "discovered" the ocean for Europeans and 15 years before Ferdinand Magellan's famous journey. Waldseemuller's map also listed the location of Zipangri (Japan). Although Marco Polo wrote about the island nation, no European had seen Japan prior to 1507.



## Atlas

The Ancient Greeks have many stories called myths. These stories explained things in nature the Greeks didn't understand. One such myth explained who held up the sky and kept it from falling.

Atlas was one of a group of giants called Titans. He and his fellow Titans fought the Greek gods and lost. The chief Greek god, Zeus, punished the Titans. Atlas' punishment was to hold the sky up on his shoulders forever.

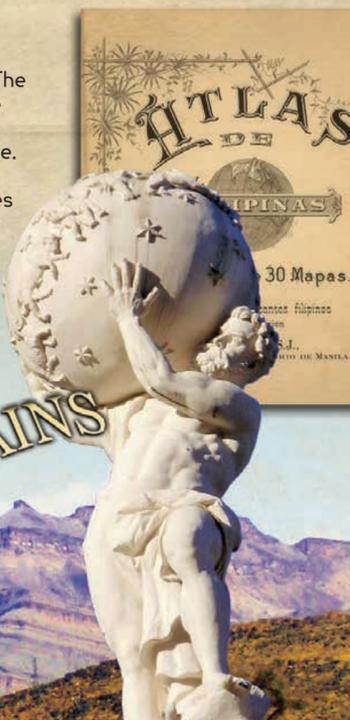
One day, after many years of holding up the sky, Atlas had a visitor. His name was Hercules. Hercules wanted to find some special golden apples, and he asked Atlas if he'd tell him where they could be found. Knowing the secret location, Atlas thought he could trick Hercules into taking his job, freeing him from his punishment. Atlas told Hercules that if Hercules held the sky, he'd get the golden apples and bring them to him. Hercules agreed, but when Atlas returned with the apples, Atlas said he wouldn't take back the sky. Hercules said holding the sky was very uncomfortable and asked Atlas

if he'd find something to use as a pad to cushion Hercules' shoulders. When Atlas returned with a pad, Hercules asked Atlas to take the sky for a minute as he adjusted the pad on his shoulders. The minute Atlas took the sky back, Hercules took the apples and left.

The story says Atlas eventually turned to stone. He became the Atlas Mountains in northwestern Africa. The Atlas Mountains are about 1,500 miles long and are in the countries of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. The highest point in the mountain range is the Toubkal peak, which is about 13,665 feet tall. It is located in Morocco.

The word for a book of maps is an atlas. The word comes from the word "to support," or from Atlas, the Titan. We'll learn more about mythology later in the school year!

## Mythology



## This Week's Question

### Which is better – a map or a globe?

Which do you think best represents Earth: a map or a globe? That depends on what you want to use it for. A globe more accurately represents the shape and size of the continents. A map can distort the shape and size of continents but is better for navigation. For example, look at a map and find Greenland. Now check the size of Greenland on a globe. It doesn't look nearly as big as it did on the map, does it? Greenland covers 823,000 square miles; it is the world's largest island. In comparison, Australia is about 2.6 million square miles and is a continent.

Fast Facts: The country with the largest area is Russia; it is about twice the size of the United States and is one of two countries spread across two continents, Europe and Asia. (The other transcontinental country is Turkey.) Vatican City, which is less than 0.2 square miles, is the world's smallest country. The entire country is inside Rome, Italy.

## Trades & Technology

### Cartography

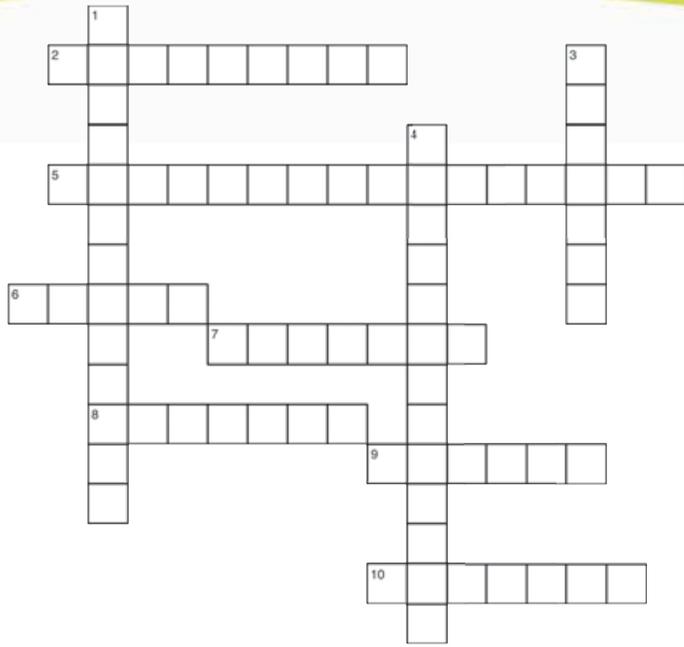
Have you ever looked at a map and wondered who made it? People who make maps are called cartographers, and cartography is the art and science of mapmaking. Because of its style and precision, mapmaking is both an art and a science. Cartography has evolved (changed) over time. In ancient times, people drew maps on walls. Today, we can access maps easily through a computer. Early mapmakers had little technology to help, and oftentimes maps were distorted and inaccurate (wrong). Modern mapmakers have the ability to use high-tech tools like satellites to make very accurate representations of locations on Earth.

There are many cartography companies. Look around your classroom and locate a map or two. Then try to find the name of the mapmaking company printed on the map.

Now that you know more about mapmaking, the next time you or your parents use a map to go somewhere, you can thank those hard working cartographers for helping you get to where you need to go!



Name \_\_\_\_\_



**ACROSS**

- 2. someone who studies the Earth
- 5. the theory that suggested the Earth once had a supercontinent
- 6. a book of maps; a Titan
- 7. name for the supercontinent
- 8. a narrow strip of land connecting two larger landmasses
- 9. the country with the largest area
- 10. scientist who came up with the Continental Drift Theory

**DOWN**

- 1. scientist who studies weather
- 3. Waldseemuller's map was the first to show this ocean.
- 4. a cartographer born in Germany in 1470



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

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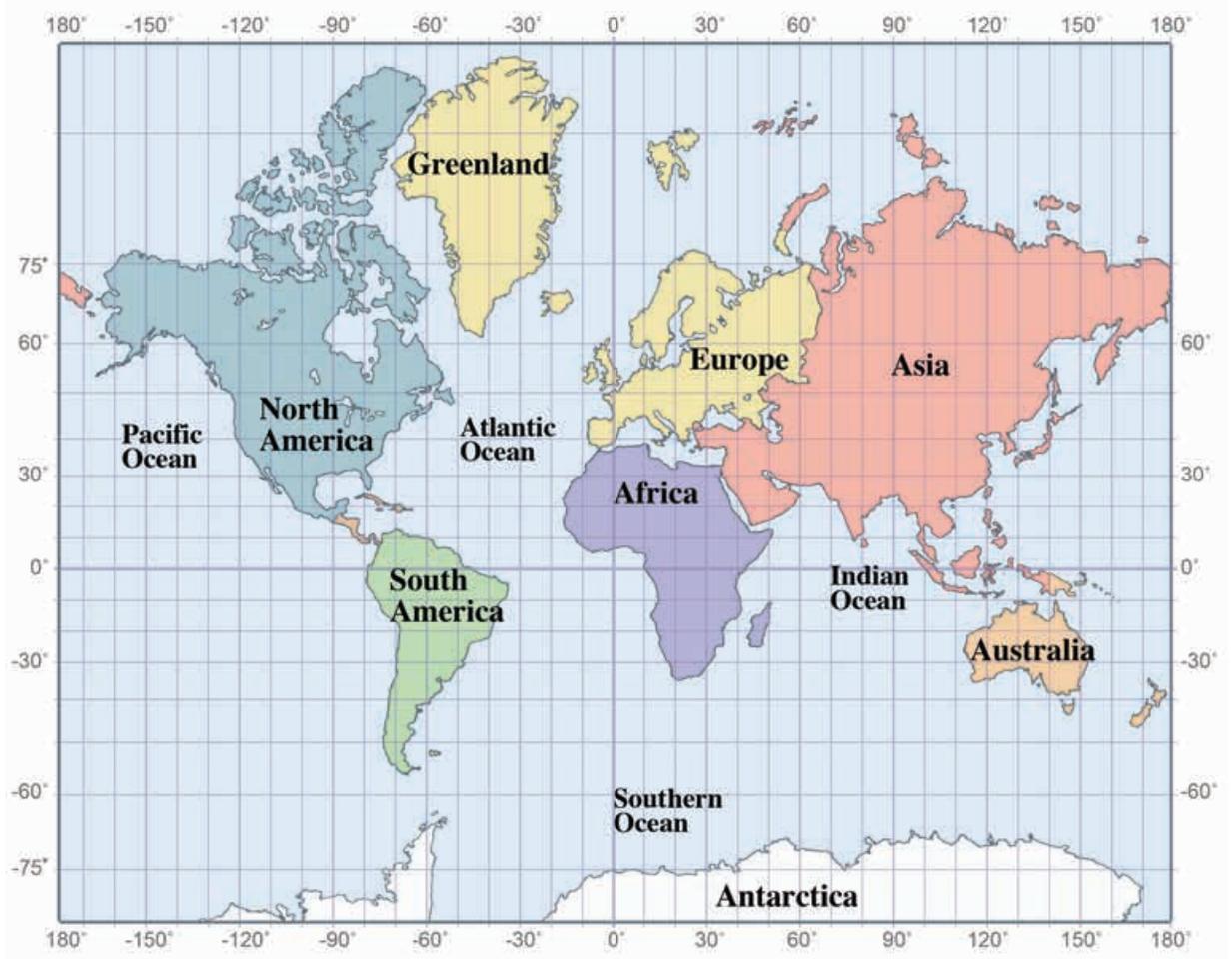
# Latitude and Longitude

## Mapping & Charting

Latitude and longitude were created to help find locations on Earth. Lines of latitude run east and west, while lines of longitude run north and south. Of course, there really aren't lines running across the continents or oceans. They're only on maps and globes to help people find absolute, or exact, locations.

The line at 0° latitude divides the Earth into two halves, or hemispheres, horizontally. This line is the equator. The Northern Hemisphere includes everything north of the equator, and the Southern Hemisphere includes everything to the south. The equator crosses parts of South America, Asia and Africa.

The line at 0° longitude cuts the Earth into two hemispheres vertically. This line is the prime meridian. Everything east of the prime meridian is in the Eastern Hemisphere, and everything west of the prime meridian is in the Western Hemisphere. The prime meridian crosses parts of Great Britain, France, Spain, Africa and Antarctica.



Look at the map of the world. On which continent or body of water would you be if you were at these coordinates?

A. 45° N Latitude, 90° W Longitude

- B. 30° S Latitude, 150° E Longitude
- C. 0° Latitude, 30° E Longitude
- D. 15° S Latitude, 90° E Longitude
- E. 30° N Latitude, 30° W Longitude
- F. 75° N Latitude, 45° W Longitude

### Think & Review

1. What evidence supported Wegener's Continental Drift Theory?
2. What is the significance of the Waldseemuller map?
3. What is one instance in which a globe can be more useful than a map?

If you'd like to make any editorial comments about our paper, please write to us at [support@studiesweekly.com](mailto:support@studiesweekly.com).

Want to do something pretty cool? You can go to Greenwich, England, and stand on two hemispheres at the same time. At the Old Royal Observatory at Greenwich, you can see the prime meridian. You can straddle the line and stand on both the Eastern and Western hemispheres at the same time. You can also stand in two different hemispheres (Northern and Southern) in Quito, Ecuador. The equator runs through what is called *Mitad del Mundo* (middle of the world). Imagine you are in one of these places. Write a postcard to someone explaining where you are and how it feels to be standing on two hemispheres.

### Let's Write

### Our Home

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kansas, Switzerland is a landlocked area. Landlocked means it doesn't touch any bodies of water. Can you find other countries of the world that are landlocked?

Did you know the world's longest river is the Nile River? Can you locate the country where you find that river? Do you know that the world's largest desert is called the Sahara? Can you find the continent where the Sahara Desert is located?

Planet Earth is a beautiful and exciting place—shared by about 7 billion people. It's our home, and it's time to learn more about it.