

SETON PRESS

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS

4



THE EASTERN UNITED STATES

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Geography

St. Francis of Assisi, Great Lover of Creation, pray for us.

Words to Know

Geography: the study of planet Earth – its land and water, and the human societies who make their homes on it

Map key: a visual guide that explains what colors and symbols on a map stand for

Continent: one of seven large continuous land masses on the Earth

Earth is an immense **sphere** – the shape of a ball – that follows a path around the sun. The most accurate model of the Earth is a globe, because a globe is also a sphere. A globe shows Earth's continents and oceans. **Continents** are the seven large continuous land masses.

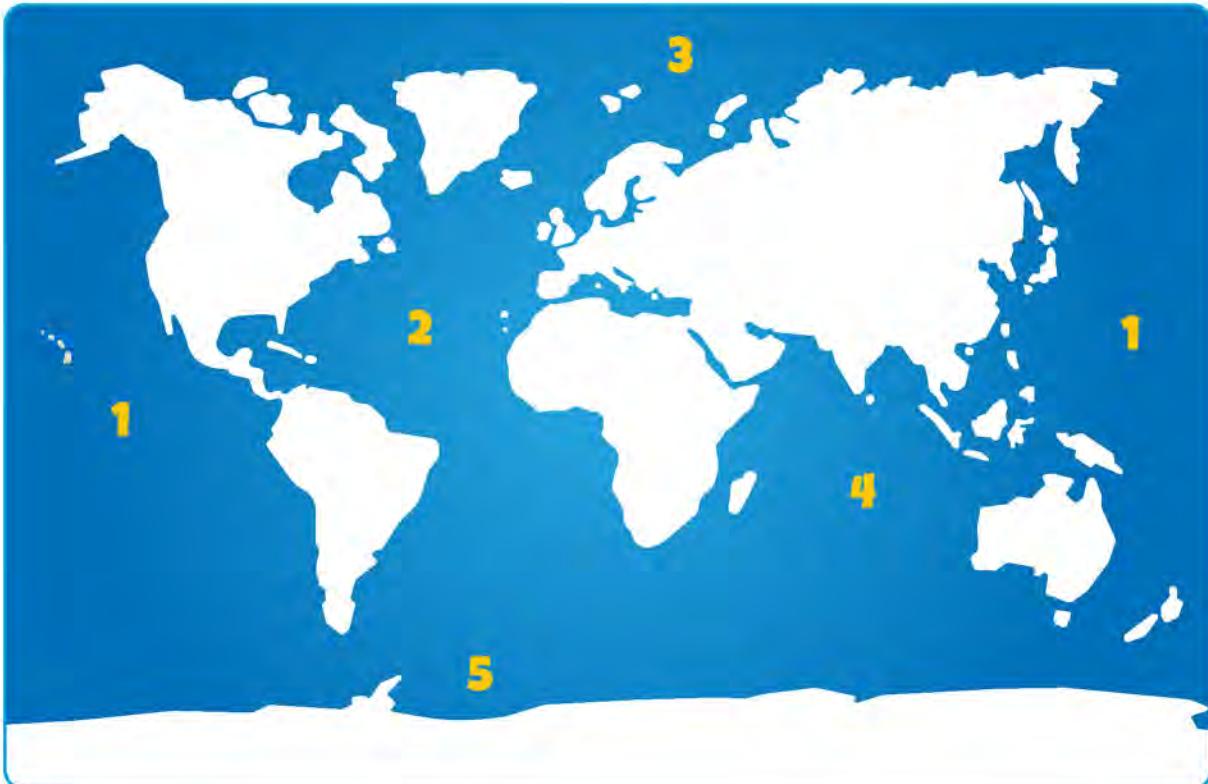
Continents are surrounded by an immense global **ocean** of saltwater that covers almost three-fourths of the Earth. Although this global ocean has no beginning or end, geographers have given five different parts of the ocean different names.

Geography is the study of planet Earth – its land and water, and the human societies who make their homes on it. Although a globe is the best representation of Earth, sometimes geographers find maps are more practical. A map is a flat drawing that can show all of the Earth or parts of it. Sometimes maps show just a city, a neighborhood, or even a backyard.

What is being studied on a map is often represented by symbols. For example, mountains might be shown by a tiny picture  or by plain symbols ^^^^^ or by a color 

A **map key** explains what colors and symbols on a map stand for.





Make Your Own Map!

See if you can fill in this map from what you've learned in previous grades.
If you need help, you can take a peek at the map in Lesson 2.

- I. Locate each of the five oceans on your world map. Write the name of each ocean next to the correct numbers below.

1. _____ 4. _____
2. _____ 5. _____
3. _____

- II. Make your own **map key**. Assign a color to each of the seven continents, by filling in the box after its name. Then color the continent on the map.

North America

Asia

Australia

South America

Africa

Antarctica

Europe

The United States and Its Regions

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, pray for us!

Words to Know

Contiguous: sharing a common border, touching

Inset map: smaller map shown inside a larger one

Region: an area of land that might have a similar history, culture, climate or language



The national flag of the United States contains fifty stars, one for each state.

The United States, one of the largest countries in the world, is divided into fifty states. Forty-eight of these states are called **contiguous**. This means they are connected and share borders. All the contiguous states are on the continent of North America. Alaska is located at the far northwestern part of North America, but shares a border with Canada, not another state. Hawaii is not in North America at all. It is about two thousand miles west of the continent. Hawaii is a series of islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

The forty-eight contiguous states share a border with Mexico in the south and Canada in the north. Part of the Canadian border is a group of immense inland freshwater lakes. Together they are called the Great Lakes. To remember the names of the Great Lakes, think of the word HOMES: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior.



Working With Maps

Use the Political Map of North America to answer the questions.

1. Which ocean is the eastern border of the United States? _____
2. Which ocean is the western border of the United States? _____
3. Along with Mexico, which body of water forms the southern border of the United States? _____
4. Which state, in the southeastern United States, is a peninsula?

5. Which of the Great Lakes does not share a border with Canada, but is entirely in the United States? _____
6. What is the capital of the United States? (Hint: Look for the red capital star.)

Because the United States is such an immense country, it is easier to study it by regions. A **region** is an area of land that might have a similar history, culture, climate or language. The map on the next page divides the states based on their location on the North American continent. Two **inset maps** show Alaska and Hawaii. Do you notice the difference in size (also called scale) of the three maps? For each map, the scale is not the same. Although Alaska appears to be smaller than Texas, it is actually the biggest state and has the area of several smaller states combined.

Abbreviations are short ways of writing longer words. The Regional Map uses abbreviations, set by the United States Postal Service. Each state has a two-letter abbreviation, both capital letters, with no periods.



When Alaska is shown at the same scale as the contiguous states, it is far bigger than it looks in other maps.

Regions of the United States

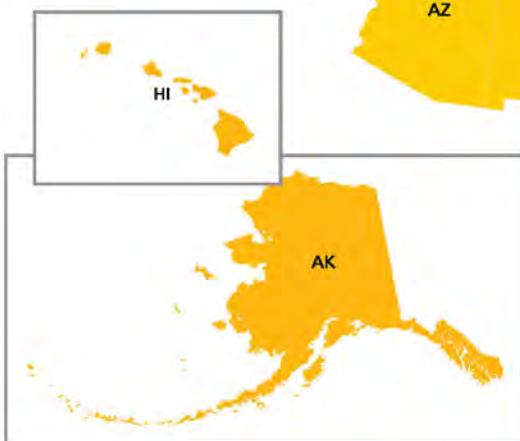
WEST



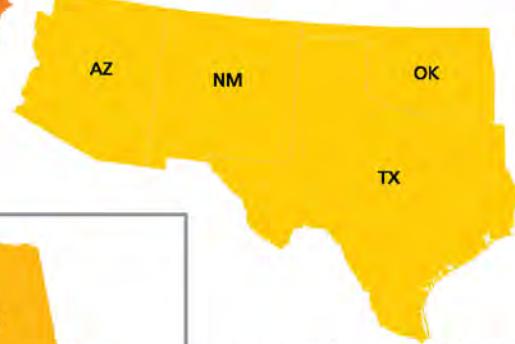
MIDWEST



NORTHEAST



SOUTHWEST



SOUTHEAST

Working With Maps

Compare the political map and the regional map of the United States to find the postal abbreviations for the following states:

7. Texas _____
8. Montana _____
9. Pennsylvania _____
10. California _____
11. Florida _____
12. Oregon _____
13. Illinois _____

14. Virginia _____
15. Minnesota _____
16. Colorado _____
17. Arkansas _____
18. Georgia _____
19. New York _____
20. Iowa _____

The Northeast Region: New York

Words to Know

Canal: a man-made waterway built to allow the passages of ships and boats across land

Natural harbor: a place in the water close to land that has deep water and is protected from strong winds and waves

Transportation: moving people, animals and objects from one place to another

Urban: a city or having to do with a city



New York **The Empire State**

Our Lady, Help of Christians, Patroness of New York, pray for us.

New York Basics

Capital: Albany

State Flower: Rose

Postal abbreviation: NY

State Motto: *Excelsior* (Ever upward)

State Bird: Eastern bluebird

Tribes of native Algonquin and Iroquois people lived in the area that is now New York State. New York State is the only state that borders both an ocean, the Atlantic, and Great Lakes, Lakes Ontario and Erie.

New York State has the fourth highest population of the fifty states. More people live in its biggest city, New York City, than any other city in the United States. Over eight and one-half million people live in the five counties of New York City.

On this map, the dense **urban** area of New York City is shown in yellow. Areas in cities, or areas that are densely populated like cities, are called urban areas.

New York City was the first capital of the United States and George Washington took his oath of office there. Why was New York so prominent in the nation's history? The reason can be summed up in one word – water. In the days before automobiles and airplanes, how were people, farm crops, and other items brought from place to place? Although people had horses and wagons, there were few roads. Water was the key to **transportation**.

The water around New York City is a **natural harbor**. Ships carrying goods from Europe could dock close to shore. From there, other ships carrying people and goods could travel up and down the Atlantic coast, or north up the Hudson River. Boats traveled on other rivers in the state. Where there were no rivers, canals were dug to allow for water transportation. Cities grew up along waterways. The interstate highway system was built to connect cities, so highways often followed rivers and canals.

CANADA



Working With Maps

Use both maps of New York State to answer the following questions.

1. Interstate 90 follows which river as it travels from Albany to Utica?

2. Which interstate highway runs from Binghamton to Schenectady? _____

3. Which canal connects Syracuse to Lake Ontario? _____

4. Which waterway would you take to travel south from Albany to New York City? _____

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS 4

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