

Geographic Terms - Grade 6+

Glossary

a.m. before noon.

analemma a tool found on the globe that shows at what degree latitude the direct rays of the Sun are striking the Earth on a particular date.

Antarctic the area of the Earth that is located South of the Antarctic Circle - opposite of Arctic.

antipode a place that is located on the exact opposite side of the Earth from another place. (pronounced An-tip-po-dee)

Arctic the area of the Earth that is located north of the Arctic Circle.

attitude the position of one object in relation to another object in space. In this context, the way in which an object faces another. The Earth is tilted on its axis in relation to the Sun.

bay a part of an ocean, sea, or lake that has some or most of its sides surrounded by land. It is usually smaller than a gulf and larger than a cove.

boundary line a line that separates two or more political units such as states or nations.

cardinal direction the four main points on the compass: north, south, east and west.

city population the number of people who live within the boundaries of the city. (Should not be confused with the population of a metropolitan area of a city, which includes the population of adjacent, urban areas.)

clockwise moving in a circle, in the same direction as the hands on a clock.

continent(s) the larger land masses on the Earth's surface. There are seven continents: North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Antarctica.

continental locations where lines of latitude and lines of longitude intersect.

coordinates a line drawn on maps and globes that is halfway between the North Pole and the South Pole

day a measurement unit of time equal to one complete (360 degree) rotation of the Earth which lasts 24 hours.

dawn line the edge of the daylight area where the Earth is turning into the light, toward the Sun.

degree a unit of measure used to locate places on the perimeter of a circle. Latitude and longitude are measured by degrees.

due term used when referring to something that is exactly in a direction. Usually used with a cardinal direction, such as "It is due west of here." (directly west.)

dusk line the edge of the daylight area where the Earth turns into the dark or night side, away from the Sun.

Earth's orbit the track, or path of the Earth around the Sun.

Equator an imaginary circle around the Earth lying midway between the North and South Poles.

equinox from the Latin aequus meaning equal and nox meaning night. The equinox is when the day and night are an equal number of hours. When the Sun's rays are directly on the Equator.

great circle route a straight-line route from one place to another on the surface of the Earth. It is designated great circle because if completed, it circumscribes the entire world. If the world were severed along the line of a great circle it would be cut into two equal parts.

gulf a large part of an ocean or sea that has some or most of its sides surrounded by land.

hemisphere hemi means half: sphere means orb or ball. A hemisphere is literally one-half of a sphere. For these purposes, one half of the Earth.

hour a measurement unit of time equal to one 24th of a day.

International Date Line longitude 180 east and west. The location on the Earth where the date and day change.

island an area of land surrounded by water

island group several islands in close proximity; sometimes called an archipelago

island nation one or more islands which are politically united into one nation.

lake a body of water, sometimes larger, surrounded by land, usually of fresh water. It is larger than a pond or pool.

land elevation how high land areas are above the level of sea (oceans) usually measured in feet.

latitude measures distance in degrees north and south of the Equator.

latitude zone three areas of latitude in both the northern and southern hemispheres. These zones are approximately 30 degrees wide, and are generally used when describing climatic characteristics.

leg (of a journey) one part of a trip on which several stops and starts are involved.

legend an inset that is the key or explanation of the symbols on a map or globe.

line of latitude an east/west line that circles the globe a specific number of degrees from the Equator.

line of longitude a north/south line, between the poles that is a specific number of degrees from the Prime Meridian.

longitude	the measurement, in degrees, east and west from the Prime Meridian to the International Date Line.
map scale	a representation of distance on a map or globe
meridian	a name for a line of longitude
midnight	where the day and date change; 180 degrees from noon. Where p.m. ends and a.m. begins.
nation	a politically independent unit encompassing a geographic area.
north pole	the place on the Earth that is farthest north. The north end of the Earth's axis.
noon	the middle of the daylight period; 180 degrees from midnight. Where a.m. ends and p.m. begins.
ocean	the largest body of water on Earth. There are four oceans; the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Arctic and all are connected.
orbit	from the Latin orbita meaning tract and/or orbis meaning wheel. It is the track or path around something in space.
p.m.	post means after and meridian means line. The line this refers to is the noon meridian in your area. p.m. means after noon.
parallel	the name for a line or latitude
population	see "city population"
Prime Meridian	the beginning line of longitude from which all other longitude is measured, east and west. It is longitude zero. It is located to run through Greenwich Observatory in London, United Kingdom.
relative location	describing the location of a place by comparing its position to other places.
river	the largest stream of moving water within a land area. Has its origin from springs, streams, and other rivers. It usually ends,

empties, or exits into another river or an ocean.

rotation the turning of the Earth on its axis toward and away from the Sun.

sea a large body of water partly or nearly surrounded by land. It is often a part of an ocean which is larger than a gulf. Two seas, the Caspian and Aral are completely surrounded by land.

sea level the mean distance between high and low tide.

solstice from the word Sol meaning Sun and stice meaning standing. On December 21, the Sun is standing at the turning point of its travel south (on the horizon) - it is at the Winter Solstice.

South pole the extreme south end of the Earth. The south end of Earth's axis. The beginning and end of lines of longitude. Latitude 90 degrees South.

time a system of measuring duration.

tropic means turning point. This is the line where the rays of the Sun turn and travel in the opposite direction. The Tropic of Cancer is where the Sun's rays reach the point in the north where they turn and begin to move south.

vertical refers to the things that are straight up and down or perpendicular to the surface of the Earth. Sun's rays that are vertical come from straight overhead.

water depth describes the level of the land below the level of the sea, or how far it is down to the ocean floor. It is usually measured on maps and globes in feet.