

Academic Standards for Geography

*May 2012 FINAL
Elementary Standards
Grades Pre-K - 3*



Pennsylvania Department of Education

ELEMENTARY STANDARDS
GRADES PRE-K - 3
Geography

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XX. INTRODUCTION

This document includes Academic Standards for Geography that describes what students should know and be able to do in four areas:

- ◇ 7.1. Basic Geographic Literacy
- ◇ 7.2. Physical Characteristics of Places and Regions
- ◇ 7.3. Human Characteristics of Places and Regions
- ◇ 7.4. Interactions Between People and the Environment

The Geography Standards describe what students should know and be able to do from third through twelfth grade. They reflect the increasingly complex and sophisticated understanding of geography that students are expected to achieve as they progress through school. Throughout the standards, all grade levels must address the local-to-global progression. Basic concepts found in lower grade levels must be developed more fully at higher grade levels.

Geography is the science of space and place on Earth's surface. Its subject matter is the physical and human phenomena that make up the world's environments and places. These standards build on using geographic tools as a means for asking and answering geographic questions, setting information into a range of spatial contexts, recognizing places and regions as human concepts, understanding the physical processes that have shaped Earth's surface and the patterns resulting from those processes, identifying the relationships between people and environments, recognizing the characteristics and distribution of people and cultures on Earth's surface, focusing on the spatial patterns of settlements and their resulting political structures, and exploring the networks of economic interdependence and the importance of resources. Teachers should employ the Five Fundamental Themes of Geography while proceeding through the Academic Standards for Geography. The themes provide a clear conceptual basis for teachers and students to use in organizing their knowledge.

Five Fundamental Themes of Geography	
Theme	Description
Location	The absolute and relative position of a place on Earth's surface
Place	How physical and human characteristics define and distinguish a place
Human- Environment Interactions	How humans modify and adapt to natural settings
Movement	How people, ideas and materials move between and among locations
Regions	How an area displays unity in terms of physical and human characteristics

A glossary is included to assist the reader in clarifying terminology contained in the standards.

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7.1. Basic Geographic Literacy						
7.1.PK. GRADE PK		7.1.K. GRADE K		7.1.1. GRADE 1	7.1.2. GRADE 2	7.1.3. GRADE 3
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his or her maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>						
Geographic Tools	7.1.PK.A. Explain how a map is a representation of places .	7.1.K.A. Interpret a simple map of a known environment .	7.1.1.A. Identify geographic tools .	7.1.1A. Identify how basic geographic tools are used to organize information.	7.1.3.A. Identify how basic geographic tools are used to organize and interpret information about people, places , and environment .	
	7.1.PK.B. Intentionally Blank	7.1.K.B. Describe the location of places in the home, school, and community to gain an understanding of relative location.	7.1.1.B. Describe places in geographic reference in physical features.	7.1.1B. Describe regions in geographic reference using physical features.	7.1.3.B. Identify and locate places and regions as defined by physical and human features .	

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7.2. Physical Characteristics of Places and Regions					
7.2.PK. GRADE PK		7.2.K. GRADE K	7.2.1. GRADE 1	7.2.2. GRADE 2	7.2.3. GRADE 3
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his or her maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>					
Physical Characteristics	7.2.PK.A. Describe the characteristics of home and frequently visited locations to gain an understanding of physical features.	7.2.K.A. Describe the characteristics of homes and businesses located in the community to gain an understanding of physical features.	7.2.1.A. Identify physical characteristics in the community and region.	7.2.2.A. Identify the physical characteristics of places .	7.2.3.A. Identify the physical characteristics of places and regions .
Physical Processes	7.2.PK.B. Intentionally Blank	7.2.K.B. Identify land and water forms.	7.2.1.B. Identify the basic physical processes that affect the physical characteristics of places .	7.2.2.B. Identify the basic physical processes that affect the physical characteristics of regions.	7.2.3.B. Identify the basic physical processes that affect the physical characteristics of places and regions .

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7.3. Human Characteristics of Places and Regions					
	7.3.PK. GRADE PK	7.3.K. GRADE K	7.3.1. GRADE 1	7.3.2. GRADE 2	7.3.3. GRADE 3
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his or her maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>					
Human Characteristics	7.3.PK.A. Intentionally Blank	7.3.K.A. Describe how weather affects daily life.	7.3.1.A. Identify the local climate and how it determines the way people live.	7.3.2.A. Identify the effect of local geography on the residents of the region (food, clothing, industry, trade, types of shelter, etc.).	7.3.3.A. Identify the human characteristics of places and regions using the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population • Culture • Settlement • Economic activities • Political activities

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7.4. Interactions Between People and the Environment					
	7.4.PK. GRADE PK	7.4.K. GRADE K	7.4.1. GRADE 1	7.4.2. GRADE 2	7.4.3. GRADE 3
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his or her maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>					
Impact of Physical Systems on People	7.4.4.PK.A. Intentionally Blank	7.4.K.A. Identify local bodies of water and landforms to gain an understanding of their impact on the local community.	7.4.1.A. Describe how lakes, rivers, and streams impact people.	7.4.2.A. Identify how environmental changes can impact people.	7.4.3.A. Identify the effect of the physical systems on people within a community.
Impact of People on Physical Systems	7.4.PK.B. Intentionally Blank	7.4.K.B. Intentionally Blank	7.4.1.B. Intentionally Blank	7.4.2.B. Intentionally Blank	7.4.3.B. Identify the effect of people on the physical systems within a community.

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XXI. GLOSSARY

Climate:	Long-term patterns and trends in weather elements and atmospheric conditions.
Environment:	Everything in and on Earth's surface and its atmosphere within which organisms, communities, or objects exist.
Geographic Tools:	Tools used by geographers to organize and interpret information. Tools range from the very simple (maps and globes) to the complex (Geographic Information Systems, population pyramids, satellite images, and climate graphs).
Human Features:	Tangible and intangible ideas associated with the culture, society, and economy of places or areas. These include the spatial arrangement of land uses including countries, states, cities, neighborhoods, latitude and longitude, time zones, transportation and trade, cultural ties, and population patterns including population density and mobility.
Place:	An area with distinctive human and physical characteristics; these characteristics give it meaning and character and distinguish it from other areas.
Physical Systems:	Systems that have an impact on the geographical formations of an area, such as weather systems, erosions, and hydrology.
Region:	An area with one or more common characteristics or features that gives it a measure of consistency and makes it different from surrounding areas.
Resource:	An aspect of the physical environment that people value and use to meet a need for fuel, food, industrial product, or something else of value.
Spatial:	Pertains to space on Earth's surface.