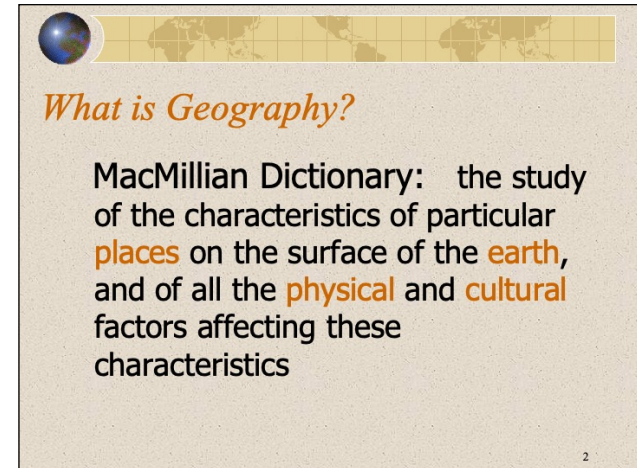


This presentation will discuss What is Geography from the perspective of the classroom teacher

First, take a minute and jot down your definition of What is Geography.

Please do not use any books, dictionary, or the internet.

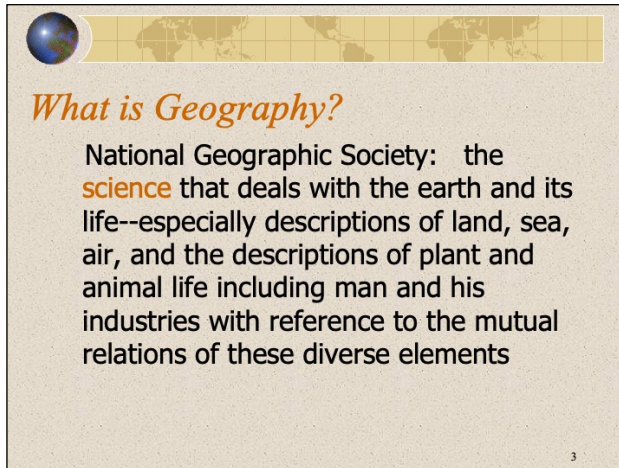
What are some of your key ideas?



If we look at a middle school level definition, you will see that a definition of geography will include the terms of places on Earth.

It divides the world into two realms: physical (created by nature like rivers, forests, deserts) and cultural (created by humans like roads, cities, dams, windmills).

How does your definition compare to this one? Thumbs up or down?

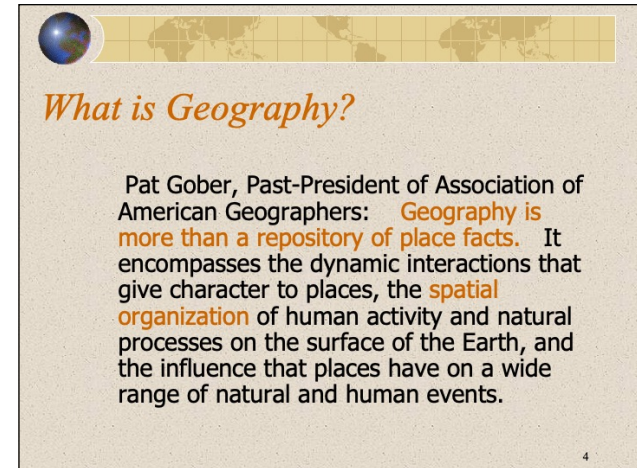


What is Geography?

National Geographic Society: the **science** that deals with the earth and its life--especially descriptions of land, sea, air, and the descriptions of plant and animal life including man and his industries with reference to the mutual relations of these diverse elements

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The definition from National Geographic Society was created for well-schooled individuals. So you can see from their definition, we have raised the level of understanding. Did your definition include science, land, sea, air, plants, animals, and man and his industries? Thumbs up, thumbs down.



What is Geography?

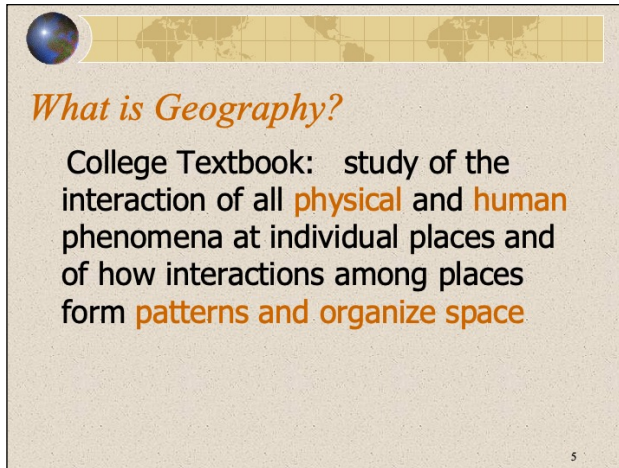
Pat Gober, Past-President of Association of American Geographers: **Geography is more than a repository of place facts.** It encompasses the dynamic interactions that give character to places, the **spatial organization** of human activity and natural processes on the surface of the Earth, and the influence that places have on a wide range of natural and human events.

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Pat Gober is an emeritus Professor of Geography at ASU. I like Pat Gober's definition because it clarifies that geography is NOT factoids: the highest mountains, the longest rivers, capitals of nations, etc. Many of you may have had a teacher that made geography a game of where is this located...like a Jeopardy game with one-word answers.

Don't be that teacher.

Instead, it is the spatial organization of human activity and natural processes on Earth. Take notice of the word "spatial." This is super important. And I will explain spatial next

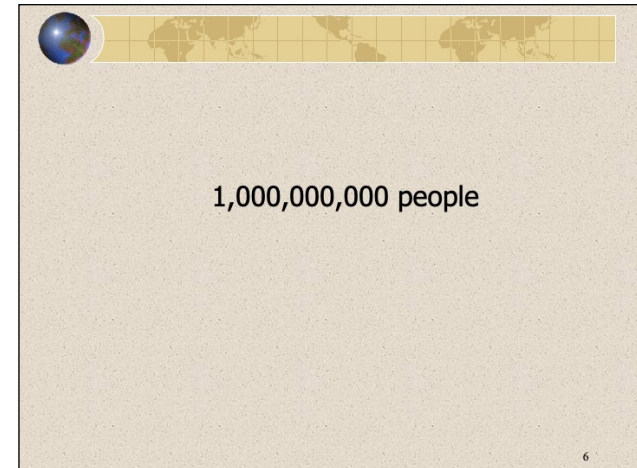


What is Geography?

College Textbook: study of the interaction of all **physical** and **human** phenomena at individual places and of how interactions among places form **patterns** and **organize space**

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The college textbook brings in the idea of what is spatial thinking. Geography looks at patterns and how space is organized. The patterns can be in natural processes (where volcanoes are formed) or in human activity (where people will migrate to in the next century). Look at your room right now. How is it organized? Is there storage in a certain spot? Is there technology in a central area? Is there a sitting area? How is the space of your room organized? Geographers do this for the world. How were these landforms created? Why do these cultures hold certain beliefs? Where can we use renewable resources to improve our world? For the next set of slides, we will look at spatial thinking. What patterns do we see, and how is our world organized? If I say 1 billion people, what image comes to mind? Do you see lots of people or do you see regions of the world or something else entirely?



1,000,000,000 people

6

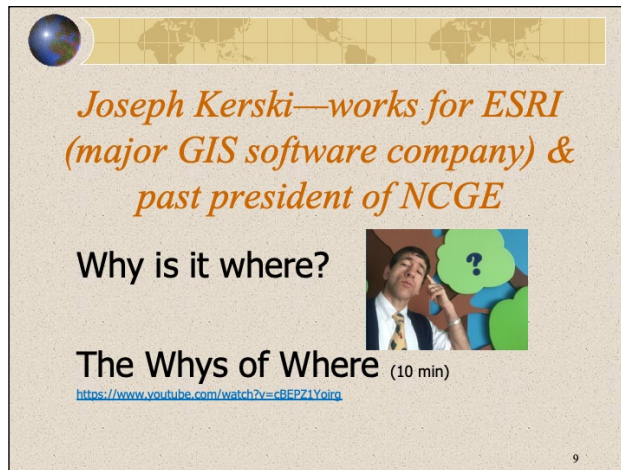
What do you think of when I say 1 billion people?



This is how a geographer might express 1B people. What patterns do you see? It takes all of North America, South America, Greenland, Iceland, Australia and New Zealand to make 1B. While it is only part of Asia to make 1B people.



Here is another way to look spatially at Earth's population.



*Joseph Kerski—works for ESRI
(major GIS software company) &
past president of NCGE*

Why is it where?

The Whys of Where (10 min)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBEPZLYoIrg>

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Joseph Kerski has coined the phrase to remind us of spatial thinking: Why is it where?
 To ask this question is to dig deeper and look for patterns.
 He has a TED talk that might interest you at the link given.

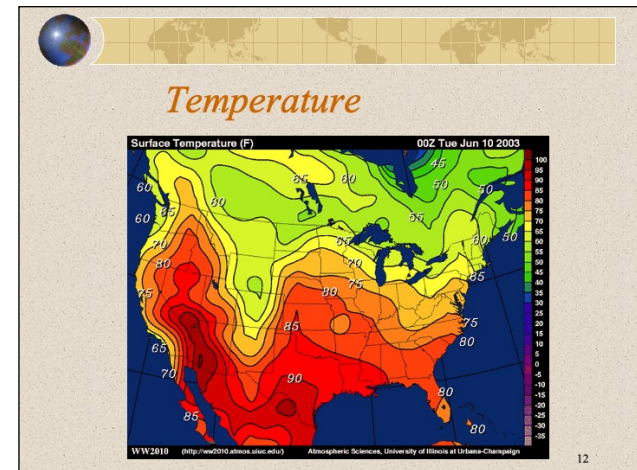


Why do 232 countries not have McDonalds?
 (Vegetarians? Hate hamburgers? Don't eat beef?)
 More likely the answer is McDonalds are found where
 people have enough extra income to buy restaurant food
 or where there is enough population to support the business.
 Now you are spatially analyzing the world by economic
 or population factors.

For the next slide, think of the Mississippi River.
 Where does it flow? Where does it get its water?



Are you surprised? A look at our physical world shows that all of these rivers flow into the Mississippi River. That is a huge part of the U.S. river systems draining into the Miss R. And why is the mouth (end of the river) so narrow when there are so many tributaries feeding into it?



There is also a spatial pattern to weather and climate. Look how the bars link similar temperatures and the colors show the spatial pattern of hot and cold.



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And what does this say about American sports?
Only a few of the highest paid public employees are not coaches.
BTW, Herm Edwards salary is 3.5M according to Google.

What is Geography?

Junior High Textbook:

Geography is the study of earth and all of its variety.

Physical geography includes land, water, plants and animals.

Human geography includes where people live, how they live, how they change and are influenced by their environment and how different groups compare to one another.

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Geography really does encompass just about anything you wish to teach. That is what makes the teaching of geography so fun.



What is Geography?


Yi-Fu Tuan
(1991)

“Geography is the study of Earth as the home of people.”





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This is an excellent definition to give students in grades K-2.



Three Dimensions to Geography



Geography Methods GIS-Cartography Field Studies Statistics Remote Sensing Demographics	Human Geography Economic Political Cultural Historical
Physical Geography Climate Plants and Animals Geology Land Water	

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There are three dimensions to geography.

Geography Methods are tools used by geographers.

So let's clarify something. Maps are not geography.

Maps are a tool for understanding.

A map helps you understand concepts in a visual way.

I equate maps to a fork or spoon for eating.

They are often necessary to get the full pleasure out of a meal.

In order to understand the spatial distribution of something or the need for change, a map might be necessary.

Traditionally, you find professional geographers divided into Human Geographers or Physical Geographers. In the K-12 classroom, geography is usually taught in social studies and science classes, but geography can be easily used to teach other subjects especially reading and writing. In fact, a 2020 study by the Fordham Foundation shows that teaching more social studies improves reading scores more than spending more time in language arts classes.



Social Studies Instruction and Reading Comprehension: Evidence from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (Fordham Institute 2020)

<https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/resources/social-studies-instruction-and-reading-comprehension>

- Though surely well intended...spending extra time on teaching ELA may not yield much in the way of reading improvement.
- Instead, elementary schools should consider making more room for high-quality instruction in history, civics, geography, and the other knowledge-rich—and engaging—subjects that comprise social studies.
- A focus on academic *content*—not generalized reading skills and strategies—will equip students with the background knowledge they need to comprehend all sorts of texts and make them truly literate.

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Why Study Geography?



1. to be a good traveler
2. to use the tools of geographers
3. to understand dominant characteristics of places
4. to be literate, “to know”
5. to make sense out of current events
6. to relate to other people
7. to link history, economics, civics, and geography together

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Geography is an important subject in a students’ lives.

It can shape their patterns of behavior.

It can prepare students for the world of work.

It can enhance students’ economic well-being.

It can improve their reading ability.

And it allows students to see the connections between school subjects and real life.



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Slide 6 <https://www.zmescience.com/other/feature-post/worlds-14-maps/>

Slide 7 <https://slideshare.net/Slide10721540/>

Slide 8 https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/1pex6s/map_of_mcdonalds_around_the_world_789x577/

Slide 10 <https://www.2010.atmos.uic.edu/>

Slide 11 https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/nj12y/oc_the_highestaid_public_employee_in_every_state/

Slide 13 and 15 <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/>