A Geographer’s World

Section 1

MAIN IDEAS
1. Geography is the study of the world, its people, and the landscapes they create.
2. Geographers look at the world in many different ways.
3. Maps and other tools help geographers study the planet.

Key Terms and Places

geography the study of the world, its people, and the landscapes they create
landscape the human and physical features that make a place unique
social science a field that studies people and the relationships among them
region a part of the world with one or more common features distinguishing it from surrounding areas
map a flat drawing that shows part of Earth’s surface
globe a spherical model of the entire planet

Section Summary
WHAT IS GEOGRAPHY?
For every place on Earth, you can ask questions to learn about it: What does the land look like? What is the weather like? What are people’s lives like? Asking questions like these is how you study geography. Geography is the study of the world, its people, and the landscapes they create.

Geographers (people who study geography) ask questions about how the world works. For example, they may ask why a place gets tornadoes. To find answers, they gather data by observing and measuring. In this way, geography is like science.

Geography can also be like a social science. Social science studies people and how they relate to each other. This information cannot be measured in the same way. To study people, geographers may visit places and talk to the people about their lives.

Underline the sentence that states how geography is like science.
LOOKING AT THE WORLD
Geographers must look carefully at the world around them. Depending on what they want to learn, they look at the world at different levels.

Geographers may study at the local level, such as a city or town. They may ask why people live there, what work they do, and how they travel. They can help a town or city plan improvements.

Geographers may also study at the regional level. A region is an area with common features. A region may be big or small. Its features make it different from areas around it. The features may be physical (such as mountains) or human (such as language).

Sometimes geographers study at the global level. They study how people interact all over the world. Geographers can help us learn how people’s actions affect other people and places. For example, they may ask how one region influences other regions.

THE GEOGRAPHER’S TOOLS
Geographers need tools to do their work. Often, they use maps and globes. A map is a flat drawing that shows Earth’s surface. A globe is a spherical (round) model of the whole planet.

Maps and globes both show what Earth looks like. Because a globe is round, it can show Earth as it really is. To show the round Earth on a flat map, some details have to change. For example, a place’s shape may change a little. But maps have benefits. They are easier to work with. They can also show small areas, such as cities, better.

Geographers also use other tools, such as satellite images, computers, notebooks, and tape recorders.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY
Critical Thinking: Solving Problems Pick a foreign country you would like to study. You want to develop the most complete picture possible of this place and its people. Make a list of questions to ask and tools you would use to find the answers.
DIRECTIONS  On the line provided before each statement, write T if the statement is true and F if the statement is false. If the statement is false, write the correct term on the line after each sentence that makes the sentence a true statement.

_____  1. A globe is a flat drawing of Earth’s surface.

_____  2. The study of the world, its people, and the landscapes they create is called geography.

_____  3. Geography is sometimes called a social science because it studies people and the relationships among them.

_____  4. An example of a small region that geographers might study is Chinatown in San Francisco.

_____  5. A map is a spherical model of the entire planet.

_____  6. The combination of human and physical features that make a place unique is called a landscape.

_____  7. Satellite images help geographers to create, update, and compare maps.