

What is Geography?

Geography is the study of the Earth and its lands, features, inhabitants, and phenomena. A literal translation would be "to describe or write about the Earth".

Geography is commonly divided into two major branches - 1) cultural geography (also called human geography) and 2) physical geography.

Cultural geography is the branch of geography dealing with human culture and its impact on the earth. Cultural geographers study languages, religion, foods, building styles, urban areas, agriculture, transportation systems, politics, economies, population and demographics, and more.

Physical geography is the branch of geography dealing with the natural features of the earth. Physical geography looks at the water, air, animals, and land of the planet earth (i.e. everything that is part of the four spheres - the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere.) Physical geography is closely related to geography's sister science - geology - but physical geography focuses more on the landscapes at the surface of the earth and not what is inside our planet.

Other key areas of geography include regional geography (which involves the in-depth study and knowledge of a particular region and its cultural as well as its physical characteristics) and geographic technologies like GIS (geographic information systems) and GPS (global positioning system).

For this unit, we will focus on:

The earth and the features that comprise it.

Continents and oceans.

Hemispheres – latitude and longitude.

The affect of climate and geography on people and different areas – Earth's tilt.

How to use an atlas – mapping skills.