

## Local to Global: Geographic Connections



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Geo-Cosmos\\_Miraikan\\_cropped.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Geo-Cosmos_Miraikan_cropped.jpg)

Welcome to Local to Global, a fully developed online learning unit created by [Texas Alliance for Geographic Education](http://www.geo.txstate.edu/tage) and designed to provide rigorous, in-depth lessons on geographic concepts for 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers. This series of lessons informs students about the often-overlooked connections they encounter every day, exploring how and why people, ideas, and objects share links through space and time. This unit has a strong regional focus on Texas and the United States and also includes global extension topics. The content provided within the five geographic modules (Spatial Skills, Physical Systems, Human Systems, Places and Regions, and Environment and Society) includes case studies, state and national standards, embedded media and online resources, lesson planning, and much more.

## Local to Global: Geographic Connections

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The Local to Global: Geographic  
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The goal of this project is to  
equip Texas social studies  
teachers with geographic  
content and instructional  
materials.

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Please visit us on the World Wide Web -

<http://www.geo.txstate.edu/tage/>

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# Overview

Geography connects students to the world, near and far. From determining the best route to take to school, to the best location for a basketball court, to predicting flight delays due to volcanic eruptions, geography and its spatial skills are relevant to everyone's daily lives. This unit consists of five modules that introduce teachers to core geographic concepts through case studies, geographic instructional strategies, and TEKS-based instructional materials for use in the classroom. We hope that you find the information and resources in this unit helpful in your understanding and teaching of geography in your classroom.

In the Spatial Skills module, teachers learn about geographic skills and applications. This module focuses on HOW geographers study, necessary TOOLS and TECHNIQUES, and the STEPS to answering GEOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS. The module provides online and media resources to support this topic. There is a case study for teachers to learn more about geospatial technologies and how the ever-changing technology world is affecting geographic study.

The Places and Regions module is designed to assist in understanding the importance of places and regions in the study of geography, how they are understood, and how they can best be taught to upper elementary and middle school students. Places and Regions will also show how these commonalities connect people ideologically, culturally, geographically, and more.

In the Physical Systems module, teachers are introduced to part of the American landscape in the Colorado Plateau case study. Teachers learn about the breathtaking landforms of the Grand Canyon and Bryce Canyon National Park. This case study also gives background information on topics such as groundwater, aquifers, surface water, and the natural cycles found on earth.

In the Human Systems module, teachers delve into lessons regarding demographics, political and economic systems, and human culture. This module provides teachers with ways to challenge students to think of the "what if" with lesson plans covering topics like state population and settlement patterns, the founding of our national capital, and immigrant influences here in the United States.

The Environment and Society module gives teachers the opportunity to really look at the interactions between humans and the natural environment. Students will discover that with this exchange come consequences. A case study on urbanization gives teachers solid background information to further enhance what is shared with students.

Students will use these modules to gain their own local-to-global GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE. The embedded lesson plans, online interactive tools, maps and more will give them a new outlook. Additionally, there are many options within these lessons that will encourage interest from students that are possibly more science minded. The modules work well together to create a "global eye" for our students.

# Introduction – What is Geography?

Geography is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. The term itself comes from the ancient Greek *geo*, meaning “earth”, and *-graphy*, meaning “to write”. Geographer’s key area of study is a geographic **space**. They ask the questions “Where is it? And why is it there?” More than just looking at a map, geography is about understanding the underlying connections between things spread across a space.

National Geographic Education put together a series of videos explaining geo-literacy - what it is and why it is important. Please take a minute to watch the video before proceeding to the modules.

Video 1.1: What is Geo-literacy?, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb8yenSogzE>

Geo-literacy prepares us for decision-making in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It helps us to understand our world. In this video, geo-literacy is defined as being composed of three parts known as the 3 I’s. The 3 I’s are: interactions, interconnections, and implications. The interactions are between the human and physical systems. How do these interactions impact our decisions and the world we live in today? The interconnections are the connections between culture, society, and the world and the geographic reasoning behind these connections. The implications are geo-literacy’s impacts on decision making in today’s world. Overall, geo-literacy is critical for the future since we are living in an interconnected world.

- Spatial Skills
- Places and Regions
- Physical Systems
- Human Systems
- Environment and Society