



Geography Skills Handbook

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Geography Skills Handbook

Five Themes of Geography

Vocabulary

geography

Geography is the study of Earth. This study can be divided into five themes: Location, Place, Human/Environmental Interaction, Movement, and Region. You can use the themes to better understand how each place on Earth is different from any other place, as the example of the Great Lakes shows.

Where can the Great Lakes be found?

The Great Lakes are located in the United States and Canada. The five lakes include Lake Erie, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Ontario, and Lake Superior.



Place



How is this place different from others?

The Great Lakes have 35,000 islands. The islands in Lake Superior, which is the largest of the five lakes, include Isle Royale and the Apostle Islands.

Human/Environment Interaction



How have people changed a place?

Canals are human-made waterways that are dug across land. Canals around the Great Lakes connect these lakes to other lakes and to rivers in the area. In Illinois, for example, a canal connects Lake Michigan to the Illinois River.

Movement



How has movement changed a place?

Since the Great Lakes connect to the Atlantic Ocean by the St. Lawrence Seaway, shipping is a major industry here.

Region




What is special about the region that includes the Great Lakes?

There are many natural areas where birds can nest or take shelter.



Reading Globes

This is an image of Earth. It shows some of Earth's large landforms, called continents. It also shows Earth's large bodies of water, called oceans.

1.  **Reading Check** Identify the two continents and the two oceans shown in this photo of Earth.

This is a **globe**, a round model of Earth. Some globes are small enough to hold in your hands. It shows the true shapes and locations of Earth's continents and oceans.

A globe often shows two lines that divide Earth into halves. These two lines are called the prime meridian and the equator. You can see the equator on this globe.

Vocabulary

globe
hemisphere
prime meridian
equator

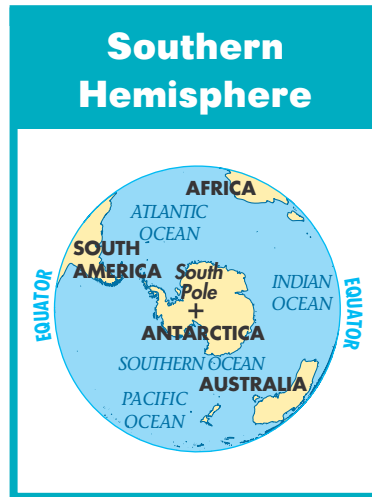
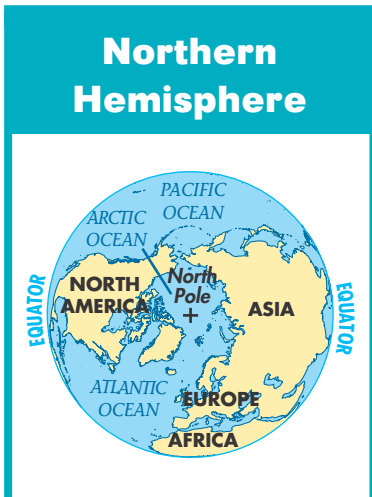
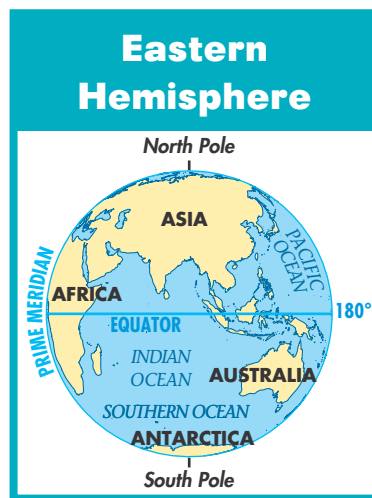
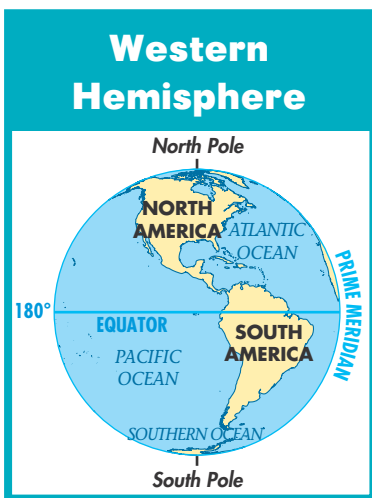


Earth's Hemispheres

The equator and the prime meridian divide Earth into halves called **hemispheres**. The **prime meridian** is a line drawn from the North Pole to the South Pole that passes through Europe and Africa. That line divides Earth into the Western Hemisphere and the Eastern Hemisphere.

The **equator** is a line drawn around Earth halfway between the North Pole and the South Pole. It divides Earth into the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Because Earth is divided two ways, it has four hemispheres.



2. ☒ **Reading Check** Identify the two hemispheres that North America is located in.

3. **Identify** whether Asia is north or south of the equator.

Maps Show Direction

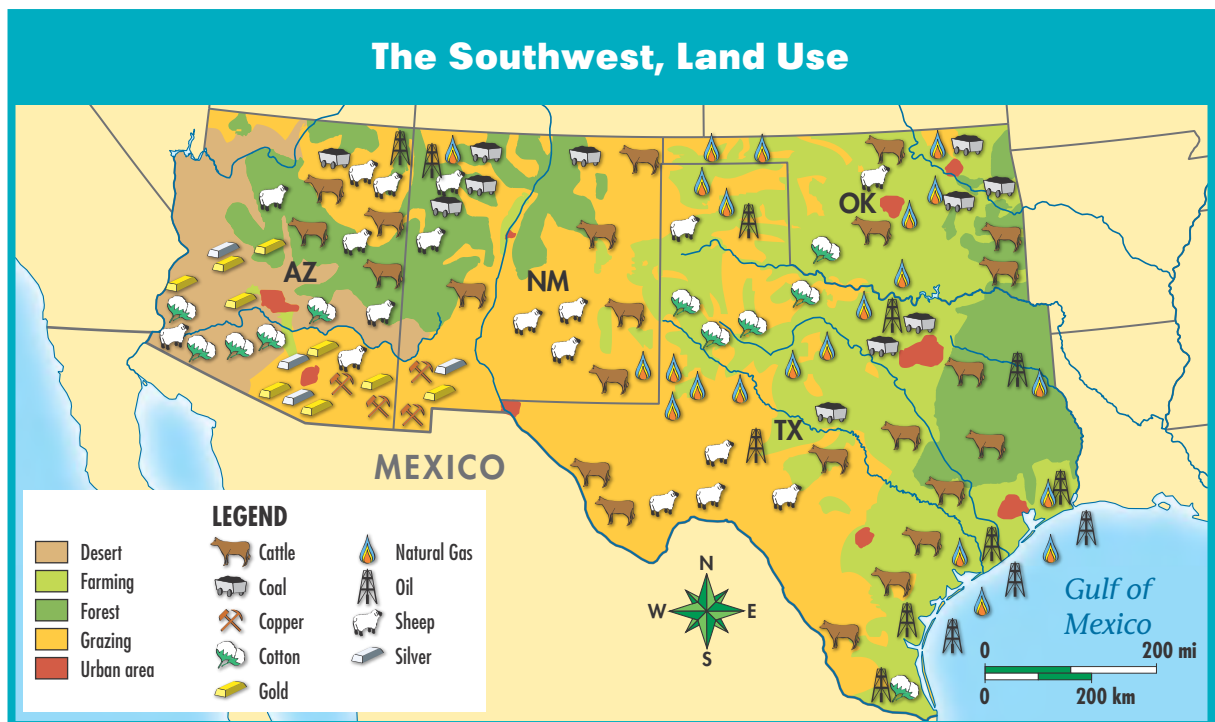
Vocabulary

compass rose
cardinal direction
intermediate direction
map scale

Maps show real directions. A **compass rose** is a symbol that shows directions on a map. There are four **cardinal directions**—north, south, east, and west. North points toward the North Pole and is marked with an *N*. South points to the South Pole and is marked with an *S*.

Look at the compass rose on the map below. In addition to showing the cardinal directions, it shows directions that are midway between them. These are the **intermediate directions**. They are northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest.

This map shows land use in the Southwest. It is called a special purpose map and has a compass rose to show direction.



4. ☒ **Reading Check** Identify the resource in the northeast corner of Oklahoma.

5. **Identify** the body of water that is southeast of Texas.

Maps Show Distance

A map is a very small drawing of a large place. However, you can find real distances in miles or kilometers from one point to another on Earth by using a map scale. A **map scale** shows the relationship between distance on the map and distance on Earth. One way to use the scale is to hold the edge of a piece of paper under the scale and copy it. Then place your copy of the scale on the map to measure the distance between two points.

The map below shows the path of Hurricane Sandy. You can use the scale to track the miles the storm traveled.



6. **Reading Check** **Identify** the country where Hurricane Sandy became a Category 3 hurricane.
-
7. **Identify** about how many miles Hurricane Sandy traveled as a tropical storm, after it made landfall.
-
-

Political Maps


Vocabulary

political map
symbol
map legend
physical map
atlas

A map is a flat drawing of all or part of Earth. It shows a place from above.

Different kinds of maps show different information. A map that shows boundaries for counties, states, or nations, as well as capital cities, is called a **political map**. This kind of map often shows major landforms and bodies of water to help locate places.

Each map has a title. The title tells you what the map is about. Maps use symbols to show information. A **symbol** is a small drawing, line, or color that stands for something else. The **map legend** or key tells what each symbol on the map stands for. On this political map, a star stands for the state capital. Lines show the state boundaries, or borders. Color is used to show the area that is the Midwest. The areas that are not part of the Midwest are a different color. For example, Pennsylvania is a lighter color to show that it is not the subject of the map.

8.  **Reading Check** **Identify** the symbol that stands for state capital by circling it in the legend. **Identify** the state capital of Nebraska.

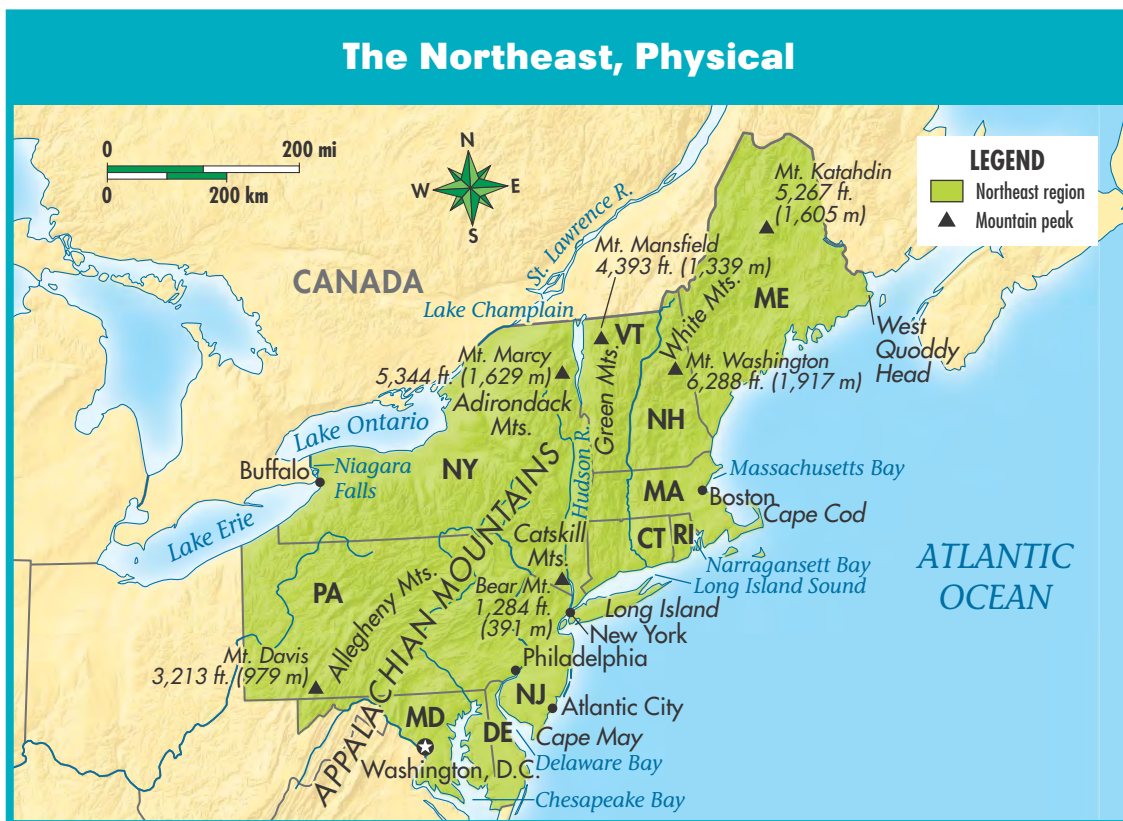


Physical Maps

A **physical map** shows landforms, such as mountains, plains, and deserts. It also shows bodies of water, such as oceans, lakes, and rivers. Physical maps often show borders between states and countries to help locate these landforms. A good place to look for political and physical maps is an atlas. An **atlas** is a collection or book of maps.

The physical map of the Northeast includes labels for islands, or land that is completely surrounded by water. It also has labels for bays and capes. A bay is a body of water that is partly surrounded by land. A cape is an area of land that sticks out from the coastline into an ocean, sea, or lake. This physical map not only identifies mountains of the Northeast, it also tells you how high these mountains are.

9. **✓ Reading Check** **Identify** the tallest mountain in the Northeast. **Identify** the bay that is southeast of Washington, D.C.




Elevation Maps

Vocabulary

elevation
grid

An elevation map shows you how high the land is. **Elevation** is height above sea level. A place that is at sea level is at the same height as the surface of the ocean's water.

Elevation maps use color to show elevation. To read this kind of map, first look at the map legend. Note that there are numbers next to each color on the map legend. The numbers show the range of elevations that each color represents. On this Pennsylvania map, dark green represents the lowest elevations. The range for dark green is between 0 and 500 feet above sea level.


10.  **Reading Check** Identify the elevation range of the Allegheny Plateau.



Use a Grid

A city map shows the streets of a city. It might also show points of interest and natural features. To help locate places more easily, this city map has a grid. A **grid** is a system of lines that cross each other forming a pattern of squares. The lines are labeled with letters and numbers. These squares give every place on the map a location.

To find a specific location, the map has an index. An index is an alphabetical listing of places. The index gives the letter and number of the square where the place is located.

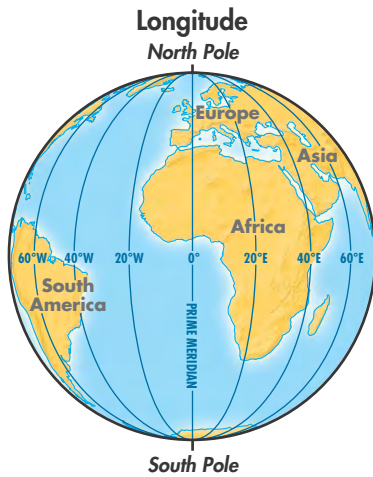
11.  **Reading Check** Identify the number and letter set for Forest Park and add it to the index.

Index	
Lilburn	A4
Stone Mountain Park	B4
Forest Park	



Vocabulary

degree
longitude
latitude



Use Latitude and Longitude for Exact Location

Long ago, mapmakers made a system for locating exact places on Earth. The system uses two sets of lines that form a grid around the globe. These lines are numbered in units called **degrees**.

One set of lines runs from the North Pole to the South Pole. These are lines of **longitude**. The prime meridian is labeled 0 degrees (0°) longitude. Lines of longitude are labeled from 0° to 180° . Lines east of the prime meridian are labeled with an *E*. Lines west of it are labeled with a *W*.

12. ☒ **Reading Check** **Identify** about how many degrees east the center of Africa is from the prime meridian.




Halfway between the poles, the equator circles the globe. This line is 0 degrees (0°) **latitude**. Lines north of the equator are labeled with an *N*. Lines south of the equator are labeled with an *S*. These lines get smaller and smaller until they end as points at the poles. The North Pole is 90°N . The South Pole is 90°S .

13. ☒ **Reading Check** **Identify** the line of latitude that is closest to the southern tip of South America.

Maps Show Events

Maps can also show events. These might be current events, such as a map of battles that are being fought between different countries, or a weather map that shows the path of a severe storm. Another example of an events map is a map of special activities at a fairground or festival.

Maps can also show events from the past, or historic events. You can use the lines of longitude and latitude on the map of explorers in the Americas to locate and compare events that happened long ago.

14.  **Reading Check** **Locate** and circle the island that was explored at 80°W .
15. **Identify** and circle the explorer who traveled above 50°N .






Writing Workshop

Keys to Good Writing

Good writers follow five steps when they write.



1.  **Reading Check** **Cause and Effect** **Explain** how not completing one of these steps might affect your writing piece.

There are three main writing genres. They are opinion, informative, and narrative writing. They all have a different purpose.

Opinion Writing

When you write an opinion piece, you share your point of view on a topic. Your goal should be to make your point of view clear. You also need to support your point of view with evidence. Read the steps and sample sentences below to see how to write effective opinion pieces.



CityCenter in Las Vegas, Nevada, is made up of “green” buildings.

1	Introduce the topic. <i>Today, many businesses are building so-called “green” buildings that are better for the environment.</i>
2	State your opinion. <i>It is a good idea to build more “green” buildings, because they help conserve natural resources.</i>
3	Support it with reasons, including facts and details. <i>A group of new “green” buildings in Las Vegas, Nevada, were designed to save more than 50 billion gallons of water each year.</i>
4	Make sure that your ideas are clear and organized to support your purpose.
5	Support your opinion statement with a conclusion. <i>“Green” buildings will help conserve important natural resources such as water.</i>

2. ☒ **Reading Check** Explain how you support your point of view.
-



The cotton gin was invented by Eli Whitney in 1793.

Informative Writing

Informative writing is also called explanatory writing, because you are writing to inform, or teach, and explain a topic to your reader. Credible, or reliable, sources are very important to use in this kind of writing. Make sure to avoid plagiarism. This means using someone else's words without giving that person credit. Take notes on your sources, including what they say and where you found them. Keep in mind that a reader may know nothing about your topic. You must be the expert and be clear in what you write. Read the steps and sample sentences below.

1	Introduce the topic. <i>The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 boosted the economy of states in the Southeast region.</i>
2	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and concrete details. <i>Before the cotton gin, seeds found in cotton had to be picked out by hand. This was difficult and time-consuming labor. After the cotton gin was invented, cotton production became much faster. As a result, cotton production increased and the economy of the Southeast, which depended on cotton, expanded.</i>
3	Link an example with words, phrases, or clauses. <i>In 1800, cotton production in the southeastern state of Mississippi was practically nothing. In 1860, Mississippi produced about 500,000 bales of cotton.</i>
4	Use precise language and content words. <i>A bale is about 500 pounds of cotton bundled together.</i>
5	Write a conclusion that supports your introduction. <i>The invention of the cotton gin had a significant effect on the economy of the Southeast.</i>

3. **Reading Check** **Draw Conclusions** **Discuss** with a partner why it is important to use concrete details and precise language in your writing.

Narrative Writing

When you write a narrative piece, you are telling a story. The story can be about a real or made-up event or experience. Use sensory words to show, rather than tell, the reader what happened. Sensory words describe what a person sees, hears, touches, tastes, or smells. You want the reader to be able to visualize, or see, what you are describing. The events in your narrative should be clear and connect to each other. Read the steps and sample sentences below.

1	Introduce the story and characters. <i>Javier wanted to warm up before his game, and he needed a catcher. His father had promised to help him warm up, but he was busy at work picking almonds. It was harvest time.</i>
2	Use dialogue and descriptive words. <i>"Dad, when will you be finished? I have to be at the field in less than an hour!" Javier yelled over the huge pile of almonds. Javier had been practicing his fastball all week because it was the championship, and he was going to pitch.</i>
3	Use details to develop your writing. <i>Javier's eyes lit up when he saw his father shake the last almond tree in the row and grab his mitt from the ground. They hurried to the championship game and had time for a couple practice pitches.</i>
4	Strengthen your writing with sensory words. <i>During the last pitch of the big game, Javier rubbed the baseball against his sleeve, noticing the strong scent of the leather from his glove. He could almost taste victory.</i>
5	Write a strong conclusion to close the narrative. <i>After Javier received the championship trophy, he handed it to his father. He felt he would not have won without his father's help, love, and support.</i>

4.  **Reading Check** **Draw Conclusions** **Analyze** this question with a partner: Do you think the conclusion is strong and wraps up the story?

Researching on the Internet

There are many Web sites on the Internet, but not all of them can be used for research. Look for Web sites with .org, .edu, or .gov, which have reliable content. Content from sites that end in .com cannot necessarily be trusted. If you do use them, check one or two other sources from reliable sites. Also check to see who published the information and how old it is. Is there an author's name listed? Is there a date?


Using a Library Media Center to Write a Research Paper

When you are writing a research paper, it is helpful to use the resources available in your Library Media Center. To use them effectively, make sure that you:

- Use different kinds of print and digital sources and make sure they are reliable.
- Compare the information you find in sources.
- Take notes by paraphrasing or categorizing content from your sources.
- Ask a librarian for help if you are unsure what sources to use for your topic.

Follow these steps to write a research paper:

1. Write down two or three questions to guide your research.
2. Use reliable sources to do your research and answer the questions. Revise the questions if needed.
3. Based on the answers to your questions, organize your topic so that details for each part of your topic are together.
4. Write a statement about your topic based on your research and evidence. This will become your introduction.
5. Use evidence in the form of details, examples, and quotes to support your statement.
6. Use transitions and clauses to connect your ideas.
7. Write a strong conclusion that goes back to what you stated in the introduction.
8. Make a list of your sources.

5.  **Reading Check** **Draw Conclusions** Explain why it is important to check more than one source when you are researching a topic.





Using Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary and Secondary Sources

A **primary source** is one made or written by a person who witnessed an event firsthand. Primary sources can include diaries, letters, historical documents, photographs, videos, newspaper articles, and interviews. Artifacts, or objects made or used by people, are also a primary source. So are buildings and their architecture, or design. Sources can be written down, like a letter. They can also be **oral**, or spoken, like a recording of a speech or an interview.

A **secondary source** is a source written or created by someone who did not witness an event. The writer of a secondary source did not experience events he or she writes about firsthand. Most books about history are secondary sources even though their writers do much of their research using primary sources. This textbook, for example, is a secondary source. Reference books like atlases and encyclopedias are secondary sources. **Biographies**, or books about people's lives, are also secondary sources.

1. **✓ Reading Check** Identify two examples of primary sources.

2. **Identify** and underline in the text examples of secondary sources.

Vocabulary

primary source

oral

secondary source

biography

This photo of the city of Richmond, Virginia, after the Civil War is an example of a primary source since the photographer was at the event when the picture was taken.



Comparing Primary and Secondary Sources

Read these two sources of information about the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. Then answer the question below.

Primary Source

Zellerbach: I don't think I've told you about the earthquake and fire.

Nathan: No. I'd like to hear about that.


Zellerbach: . . . I was asleep when it started to shake. I buried my head in the pillow; it felt like this was the end of the world. . . . When it finally settled down the side of the house had gone out, right alongside of my room. It opened up the side of the house, and here I was, looking up in the sky. . . . The fire was moving up . . . So our house burned down.

–Interview with Harold Zellerbach, Regional History Office,
University of California Berkeley, 1971

Secondary Source

On the morning of April 18, 1906, a massive earthquake shook San Francisco, California. Though the quake lasted less than a minute, its immediate impact was disastrous. The earthquake also ignited several fires around the city that burned for three days and destroyed nearly 500 city blocks.

–National Archives, “San Francisco Earthquake, 1906”

3.  **Reading Check** Compare the primary source and secondary source. How are they similar? How are they different?


How to Interpret an Artifact

The Mississippians were an American Indian group who lived in the Southeast region from about the year 700 to the year 1600. This piece of pottery was discovered by archeologists at the Etowah Indian Mounds Historic Site in Georgia. The pottery is an artifact. One way to interpret or understand an artifact is to study the object and then ask questions. Asking questions helps you understand what type of source you are looking at and what it can teach you.

Study the artifact. Then answer the questions to help you interpret it.



This artifact was found at the Etowah Indian Mounds Historic Site in northwestern Georgia.

4.  **Reading Check** **Interpret** the artifact. What do you think it was used for? **Describe** what you see. Write two questions you have about the artifact.

5. What can you learn about the Mississippians from the artifact? **Explain** why the artifact is a primary source and not a secondary source.

How to Interpret a Historical Document

Just like artifacts, you can interpret historical documents by studying them and asking and answering questions. The United States Constitution is a historical document and a primary source. The constitution provides a plan for the country's government and outlines the basic rights of all American citizens. Study Article I of the United States Constitution and use it to answer the questions.

Primary Source

UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION


ARTICLE I.

SECTION 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

SECTION 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States ...

SECTION 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State ... for six Years ...

—The United States Constitution, Article I, Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3, September 17, 1787

6.  **Reading Check** Identify some questions that you have about this document.

7. **Synthesize** Identify a secondary source connected to the Constitution.

How to Interpret Secondary Sources

This textbook will teach you about the different regions of the United States. But it was not written by someone who was there at the time. The authors did not see or live through the events that are described. They learned by reading other people's writing and looking at primary sources, such as photographs, diaries, and letters. We can ask and answer questions to interpret secondary sources just like primary sources. Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Secondary Source

Southeastern states are the leading producers of some crops. Georgia raises more peanuts, peaches, and pecans than any other state. Other main crops include fruits, corn, and soybeans. Soybeans are used to make food for livestock, vegetable oil, and other foods.

Peanuts and soybeans have not always been major Southeastern crops. In the 1700s and 1800s, the region mostly grew cotton. However, growing cotton damaged the soil. An agricultural scientist named George Washington Carver helped farmers with this problem. Carver was an expert in growing crops. While working in Alabama in the 1880s, he discovered that growing peanuts and soybeans restored the soil.

8.  **Reading Check** Explain how peanuts and soybeans became major crops in the Southeast.

9. Turn to a partner and **identify** one benefit to reading secondary sources about unfamiliar topics.



George Washington Carver's discoveries helped the economy of the Southeast change from growing mostly cotton to growing peanuts and soybeans.