



Geography Skills Handbook

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Geography Skills Handbook

Vocabulary

political map
title
map legend
map key
symbol
scale
compass rose

Using Maps

The map titled “Southeast United States” is a political map. A **political map** shows information such as state or national borders. Political maps often show the capital cities and major cities of states or countries.

Knowing how to read a map is an important skill. There are tools on the map to help you. Look at the Southeast United States political map and find each of these map tools.

Title: The title tells you what the map shows.

Map legend or **map key:** The legend or key explains the meaning of the symbols on the map.

Symbol: A symbol is a marking or color that stands for something else.

Scale: The scale on the map shows distance. It helps you see how far apart locations are.

Compass rose: A compass rose shows you the cardinal directions of north, south, east, and west.

1. ☒ **Reading Check** **Describe** what a political map shows.



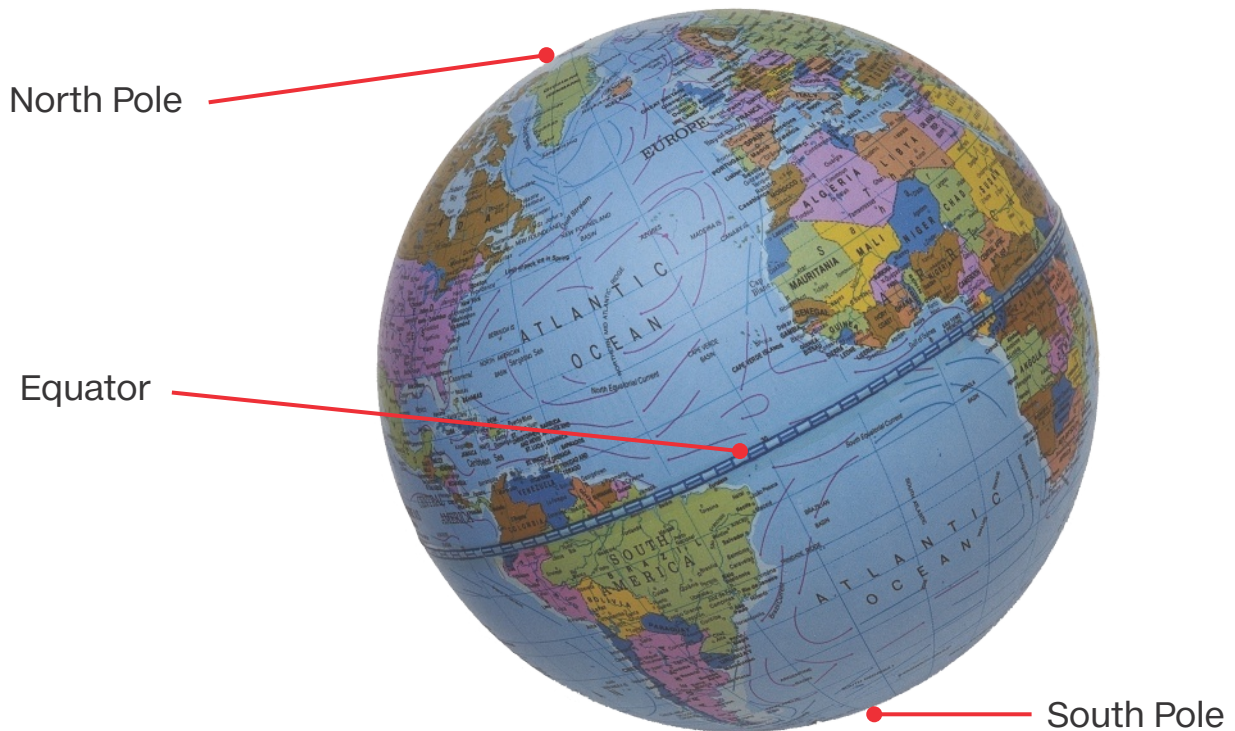
2. **✓ Reading Check** Analyze the map and answer these questions.

Locate and circle the title on the map. Circle the symbol that is used for the state capital. Find the scale on the map. About how far is Atlanta, Georgia, from the Atlantic Ocean?

Using Globes

A **globe** is a model of Earth, so it is in the shape of a sphere. You can find the equator on the globe. The **equator** is an imaginary line that extends around the center of Earth. Lines of **latitude** measure distances north and south of the equator. The lines are numbered in units called degrees. The equator is located at 0 degrees (0°).

Another set of lines runs from the North Pole to the South Pole. These are lines of **longitude**. Lines of longitude measure distances east and west of the prime meridian. The **prime meridian** is the line of longitude marked as 0°.

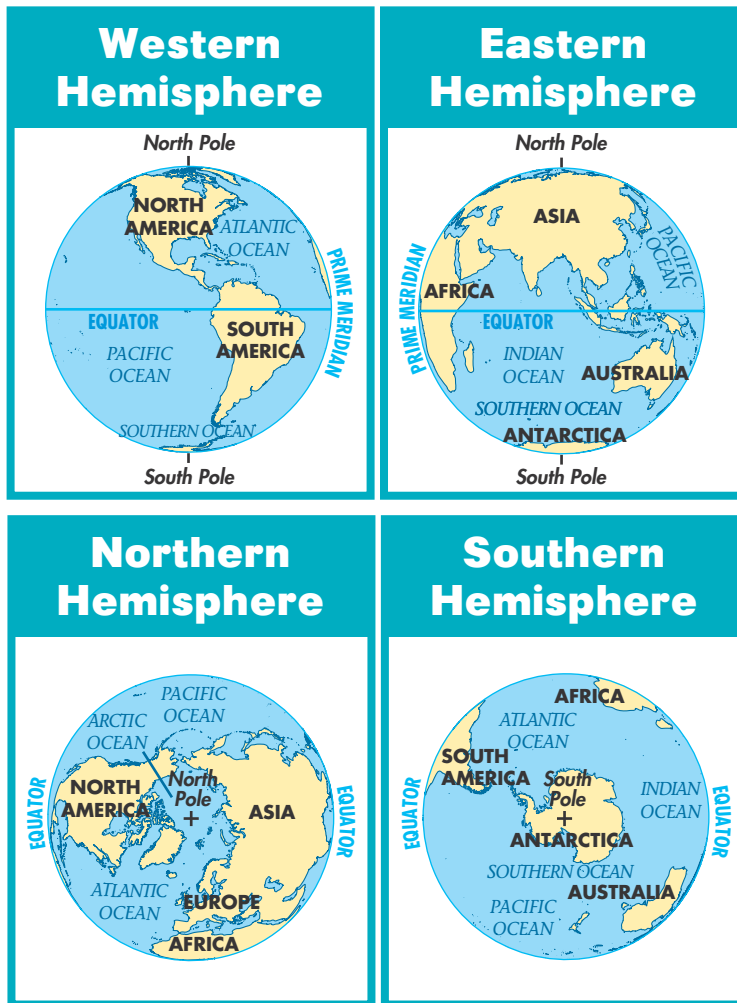


3. **✓ Reading Check** **Identify** and trace the equator on the globe.
4. **✓ Reading Check** **Locate** and circle the North Pole on the globe.

The equator and the prime meridian divide Earth into hemispheres, or parts. Each **hemisphere** is half of Earth. The equator divides Earth into the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere. The prime meridian and the line opposite it on the other side of Earth form the Western Hemisphere and the Eastern Hemisphere. The United States is in the Northern Hemisphere and the Western Hemisphere.

Vocabulary

globe
equator
latitude
longitude
prime meridian
hemisphere



5. **✓ Reading Check** Identify the hemisphere that all of South America is located in.

6. **✓ Reading Check** Identify the line that separates the Northern Hemisphere from the Southern Hemisphere.

Absolute Location

Absolute location tells the exact location of a place on Earth. A place's absolute location does not change. You can find the absolute location of a place on a map or globe by finding its latitude and longitude. For example, the absolute location of San Francisco is 38° N, 122° W.



7. **✓ Reading Check** Determine the absolute location of New Orleans.
-

Relative Location

Relative location describes where a place is in relation to another place. You might say that your school is across the street from the park. You can also use the directions in the compass rose to explain the relative location of a place. Look at the map titled “Western United States.” San Francisco is south of Seattle. St. Louis is east of Denver. San Antonio is southwest of Austin. Tucson is southeast of Phoenix.

Vocabulary

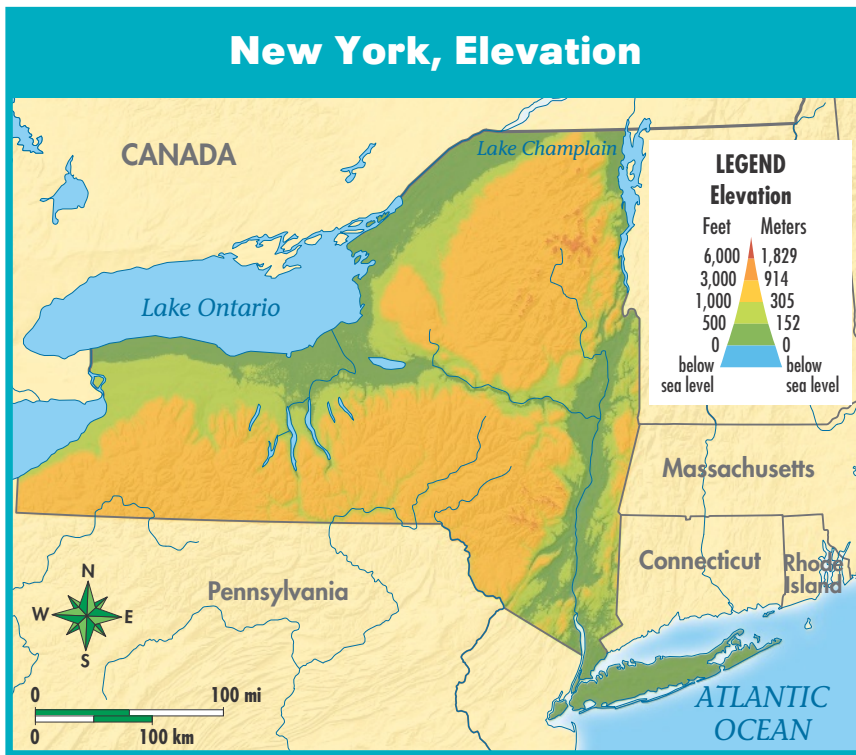
absolute location
relative location

8. **✓ Reading Check** Use the map titled “Southeast United States” to **describe** the relative location of Alabama.

9. **✓ Reading Check** How is relative location useful?

Physical Geography

The natural features of a place are its **physical geography**. Natural features include landforms, such as mountains, deserts, valleys, and plains. They also include bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, and oceans. A **physical map** shows the landforms and bodies of water found in a place.



A physical map may also show elevation. **Elevation** is the height of land above sea level. For example, valleys have lower elevations than mountains. The legend helps you understand what the colors on the map mean. Different colors show lower and higher elevations.

10. ☒ **Reading Check** Choose one physical feature shown on the map. **Describe** how people might use it.

11. ☒ **Reading Check** What does an elevation map show?

This table also gives information about elevation, as well as other facts about features in the Northeastern United States.

Vocabulary

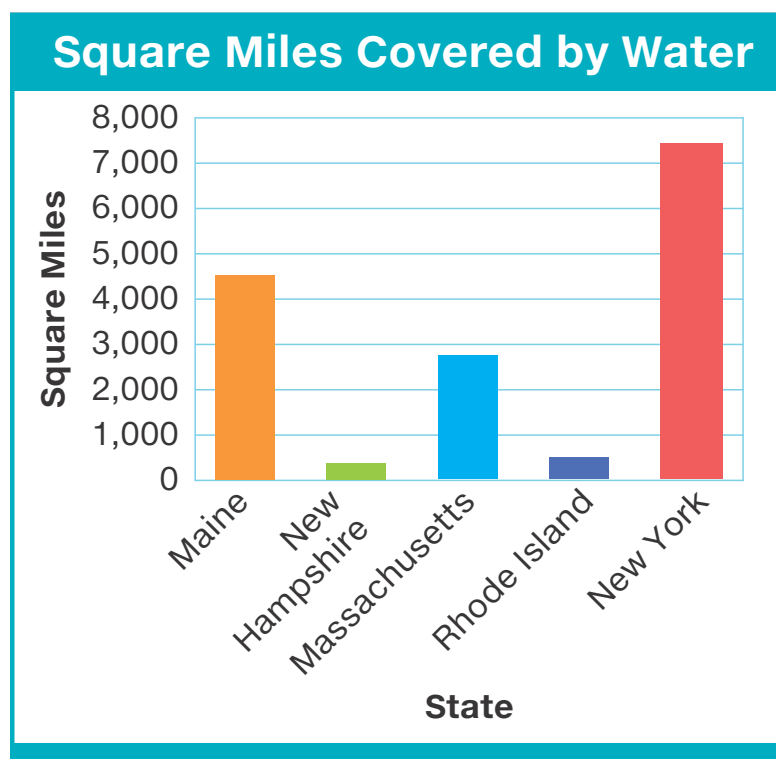
physical geography
physical map
elevation

The Northeast's Amazing Features	
Highest elevation	Mt. Washington (New Hampshire): 6,288 feet
Longest river	Saint Lawrence River: 744 miles long
Largest lake	Lake Ontario: 7,340 square miles
Coastline	about 700 miles long (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York)

Source (for length of shoreline): *Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service*

Graphs can also help you learn about physical geography. This graph shows how much land is covered by water in the Northeastern United States.

12. **✓ Reading Check** About how many more square miles are covered by water in Maine than in Massachusetts?



Source: <https://water.usgs.gov/edu/wetstates.html>

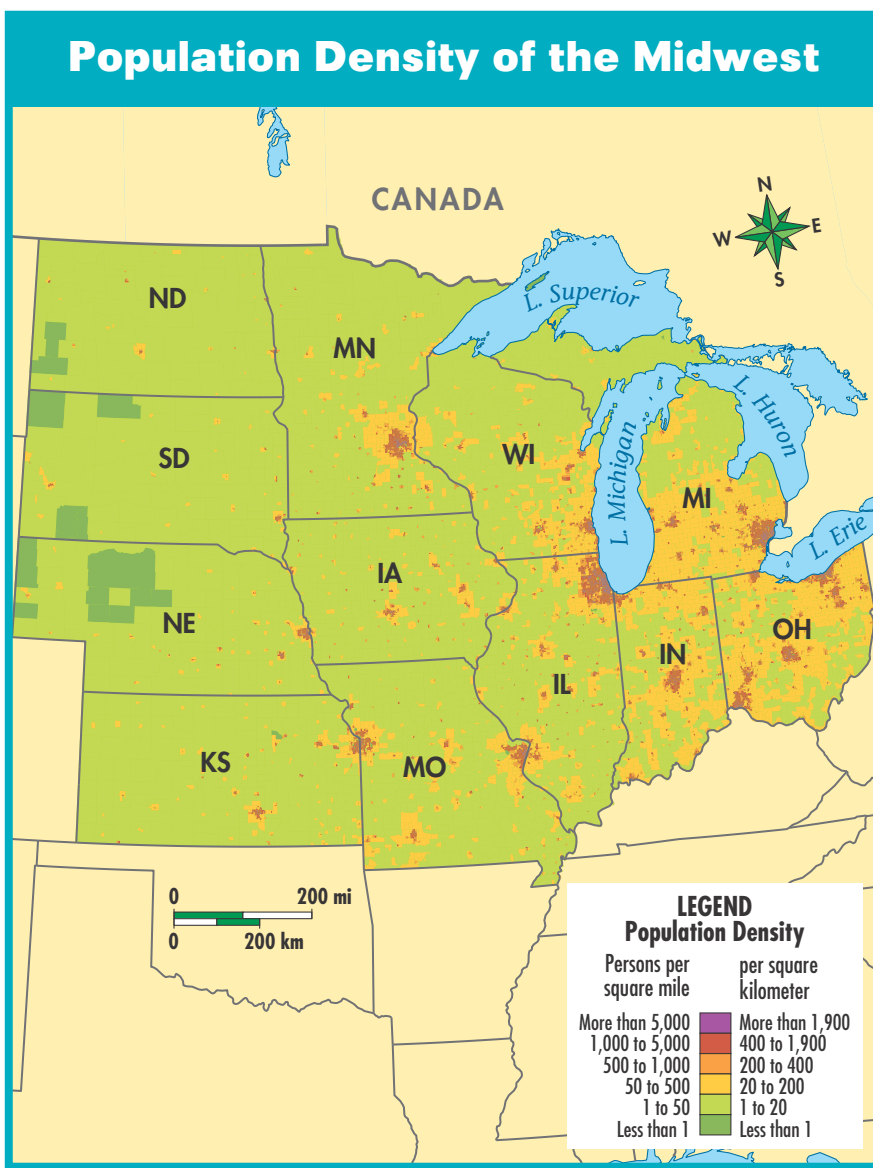
Human Geography

Human geography explains how people affect Earth's surface. For example, people may build a tunnel through a mountain or build a dam on a river. These actions change the land. When people build roads or towns, they also change the land. Often when people change the land, those changes can make a place unique. For example, the Golden Gate Bridge is a unique human characteristic of San Francisco.

Some maps show the human geography of a place. A **population map** shows where people live. Cities are centers of business and government. Many people live and work near them. Other parts of a region have fewer cities and jobs. Fewer people live there.

13. ☒ Reading Check

Look at the population map. **Identify** which state looks to have a higher population, Iowa or Ohio.



Charts can also show the human geography of a place. The chart shows the ten cities in the Midwest where the most people live.

Vocabulary

human geography
population map

Largest Cities in the Midwest, 2016	
Name	Population
Chicago, Illinois	2,704,958
Columbus, Ohio	860,090
Indianapolis, Indiana	855,164
Detroit, Michigan	672,795
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	595,047
Kansas City, Missouri	481,420
Omaha, Nebraska	446,970
Minneapolis, Minnesota	413,651
Wichita, Kansas	389,902
Cleveland, Ohio	385,809

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

14. **✓ Reading Check** Use the chart and population map to **determine** which area of the Midwest has the most populous cities. Why do you think this is so?



Writing Workshop

Keys to Good Writing

Good writers follow five steps when they write.

Plan ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm to choose a topic.• Find details about the topic.• Take notes from sources.• Write down your sources.• Plan how to use the details.
Draft ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write down all of your ideas.• Think about which ideas go together.• Put ideas that go together in groups.• Write a sentence for the introduction and write a sentence for the conclusion.
Revise ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review what you wrote.• Check that your ideas and organization make sense.• Add time-order words and transitions (words and phrases such as <i>because</i> or <i>for example</i>).• List any more sources that you used.
Edit ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. If using a word processor, use spell-check.• Make a final copy.
Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use technology to print or publish your work.• Make sure that you list all of your sources.

1. **✓ Reading Check** Explain Why is it important to edit?

The three main writing genres are opinion, informative, and narrative. 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 viewpoint clear. You also need to support your point of view with evidence. Read the steps and sample sentences to see how to write effective opinion pieces.



Homesteaders sometimes used a spinning wheel, like the one shown, to make yarn from wool.

1	Introduce the topic. <i>The number of settlers moving west grew after 1862. Many moved west to set up a homestead.</i>
2	State your opinion. <i>People who moved west after 1862 were smart because they could buy 160 acres of land for little money.</i>
3	Support your opinion with reasons and evidence. <i>To be a homesteader, a person had to build a house and live there for five years. Then, the person owned the land.</i>
4	Make sure that your ideas are clear and organized to support your purpose.
5	Support your opinion statement with a conclusion. <i>I think that the settlers who moved west to start homesteads were smart because they had an opportunity to own land and support their families for little money.</i>

2.  **Reading Check** **Analyze** How might using technology make your writing more effective?




American Indians relied on the natural resources available to them.

Informative Writing

Informative writing is also called explanatory writing. When writing an informative piece, your purpose is to inform, or tell. 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. Read the steps and sample sentences.

1	Introduce the topic. <i>Many different groups of American Indians lived off the land before settlers came.</i>
2	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and concrete details. <i>The Indians of North America used the natural resources in their environment to live. Natural resources are things in nature that people use, such as water, soil, plants, and trees. Some groups that lived on the coast used shells for jewelry and for money to trade. Another natural resource that they used for money was beads.</i>
3	Use precise language and content words. <i>The Chumash made bead money from Olivella shells, which came from sea snails. Some shells were rare, so they were very valuable.</i>
4	Write a conclusion that supports your introduction. <i>American Indians lived off the land by using the natural resources available to them.</i>

3.  **Reading Check** **Infer** Discuss with a partner the following question: What could be added to the conclusion?

Narrative Writing

Writing a narrative is 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. The events in your narrative should be clear, in order, and connect to each other. Read the steps and sample sentences.

4. **✓ Reading Check** Based on the description in the story, **underline** the setting, or place where an event takes place.

1	Introduce the story and characters. <i>Lin was getting ready for the Chinese New Year.</i>
2	Use dialogue and sensory words. <i>"Mrs. Chen, would you like some oranges? We just unloaded them from the farmer's truck. They're sweet and juicy." Mrs. Chen bit into an orange slice and it squirted Lin in the face. Lin wiped the sticky juice away from her cheek.</i>
3	Use details to develop your writing. <i>Lin dashed to the front of the store to help her mother at the cash register. A long line twisted around the shelves of fresh fruit she had stocked early that morning.</i>
4	To connect the events in your writing, use words that express sequence. <i>Finally, it was 1:00 and time to close the store to get ready for the parade.</i>
5	Make sure that the order of events in your story is organized.
6	Write a strong conclusion to close the narrative. <i>As Lin grabbed her sweater, someone in a colorful dragon costume passed by the shop. Lin called out to her parents, "Let's follow that dragon!"</i>

Researching on the Internet

Look at sites before you use information from them. Web sites with .org, .edu, or .gov are good choices. You cannot always rely on facts and details from sites that end in .com. If you do use them, check one or two other sources from a .org, .edu, or .gov site.

5. Reading Check

Infer Discuss the following question with a partner. How might you use your Library Media Center to find information on American Indian groups who lived where you live today?

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 both print and electronic sources and also make sure the sources are reliable to use.
- use more than one source and check the information in the sources to see if it matches.
- take short notes from your sources.
- ask a librarian for help if you are unsure which sources to use for your topic.

Follow these steps to write a research paper:

1. Write down two or three questions to help you with your research.
2. Use reliable sources to answer the questions you wrote. Change your 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 sentence about your topic based on your research. This will become your introduction.
5. Use details, examples, and quotes to support your statement.
6. Use transitions and clauses to connect ideas and events.
7. Write a strong conclusion that goes back to what you stated in the introduction.
8. Make a list of your sources.





Using Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary and Secondary Sources

A **primary source** is a source made or written by a person at an event. A primary source can be a historical document, such as the U.S. Constitution. Other examples of primary sources are letters, diaries or journals, and photographs. Maps and artwork are also primary sources. Even **architecture**, which is how buildings are designed, can be a primary source. It helps us understand the people who designed the buildings.

A **secondary source** is material that was written or made by someone who did not witness an event. This textbook is a secondary source. Encyclopedias, online or in print, are also secondary sources. Secondary sources may include primary sources. For example, textbooks include photographs and often journal entries that are primary sources. Encyclopedias include information about people, places, and events from other sources.

Artifacts like this basket made by the Pomo Indians are considered to be primary sources. An **artifact** is an object that was made and used by people.

A **biography** is a story about a person's life that was written by someone else. Because the author did not see or live through the events he or she describes, a biography is a secondary source.

Vocabulary

primary source
architecture
secondary source
artifact
biography
oral
eyewitness

Pomo Indian
basket



1. **✓ Reading Check** **Underline** in the text one example of a primary source and **circle** one of a secondary source. **Explain** your answers to a friend.



Miners panning
for gold

Primary sources can also be oral or spoken. Family stories that are told to children and grandchildren are **oral**, or spoken, histories. Oral histories can tell us how individual people contributed to the history of a place. Songs can also be oral histories. Read the words from a song written by a miner who did not have the money to go home after he came to California to find gold. Note that *lousy* means “of poor quality.” As you read, think about who wrote the song and why. Also think about what it tells you about the past.

Primary Source

It's four long years since I reached this land,
In search of gold among the rocks and sand;
And yet I'm poor when the truth is told,
I'm a lousy miner,
I'm a lousy miner in search of shining gold. . . .
Oh, land of gold, you did me deceive [trick],
And I intend in thee my bones to leave;
So farewell, home, now my friends grow cold,
I'm a lousy miner,
I'm a lousy miner in search of shining gold.

—“The Lousy Miner,” from *Put's Original California Songster*,
edited by John A. Stone, 1854

2. **✓ Reading Check** **Draw Conclusions** What does the song tell you about why the writer came to California? How do you know that it is a primary source?

Distinguishing Between Primary and Secondary Sources

To distinguish between primary and secondary sources, think about who created the source and when. If a person at an event creates the source, it is a primary source.

An **eyewitness** is a person who sees or experiences an event. Eyewitness accounts are primary sources. A journal entry about witnessing the horse and buggy being replaced by the first car would be a primary source. If you wrote a report about the different kinds of transportation people have used over the past 100 years, the report is a secondary source. Your report is a secondhand account because you were not there 100 years ago.

A film can be a primary or secondary source. If you make a video of your family or friends at the beach, that video is a primary source. You are creating a film or video while you are experiencing the event. A film is a secondary source if it is made about a time in the past, such as a movie about people who settled in the west in the 1800s. The film might include primary sources like historical documents or photographs, but the film itself is a secondary source. The people who made the film were not alive when the events in the film took place.



Making videos of the sunset

3. **✓ Reading Check** Analyze and describe how a film can be either a primary source or a secondary source.

How to Interpret a Primary Source


We can learn who, what, where, and when from primary sources. Read part of a speech by Chief Sitting Bull. Under his leadership, the Sioux worked together to preserve their way of life. After gold was discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota, which was sacred land to the Sioux, conflicts with U.S. authorities grew. Sitting Bull is most famous for defeating U.S. General George Armstrong Custer and his troops at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876.

Primary Source

They claim this mother of ours, the earth, for their own, and fence their neighbors away; they deface her with their buildings and their refuse. They threaten to take [the land] away from us.

—Sitting Bull's Speech at the Powder River Council, 1877

Asking questions about sources helps us identify what type of source we are using. Questions also help us understand what the source can teach us.

4.  **Reading Check** Answer these questions based on the primary source.

Who delivered this speech? _____

What does the speech tell you about how Sitting Bull felt about settlers from the east? _____

When was the speech delivered? _____

How to Interpret a Secondary Source

Your textbook has information about American Indians, but the information was not written by someone who was there, like Sitting Bull. The authors did not see or live through the events that are described. They got their information by reading other people's writing or looking at other primary sources, like photographs, diaries, and artifacts. We can ask the same questions to interpret secondary sources that we used to interpret primary sources. Read this passage from your textbook that talks about American Indians.

The Cherokee first settled in North America more than 1,000 years ago. They were hunters and farmers. They ate meat, fruit, and vegetables.

The textbook is different from Sitting Bull's speech because the writers of the textbook were not there 1,000 years ago. They did not meet the Cherokee in person. Notice that the writers do not use *I* or *we*. They did not interact face to face with the Cherokee.

5. **✓ Reading Check** Compare the speech and the textbook excerpt. **Write** how they are different.
