

My American GeoJourney Teacher's Guide



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To Our Fellow Teachers:

My American GeoJourney is a thirty-two page geography journal designed to reinforce, enrich, and broaden your social studies text or curriculum. It can also be used as an independent geography study.

This book is unique in that it incorporates creative and factual writing opportunities along with map studies. By enabling students to compile their work in a personalized book, it also generates a sense of authorship and accomplishment. Moreover, My American GeoJourney becomes a personal resource that helps students learn and remember more information.

One of the highlights of My American GeoJourney is its flexibility. You can determine the pace and sequence of students' work in the book. It was designed to progress from west to east across the U.S., but you may want to integrate a particular region when it is featured in your social studies text—or when it correlates to other subjects, such as literature studies. For example, the north central region (pgs. 12-13) could be integrated into your curriculum when Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* is featured in your classroom.

My American GeoJourney provides the following benefits, which also serve as goals for student achievement:

- Learning and remembering more geographic information
- Developing and advancing as writers through cross-curricular writing
- Creating a personal resource of acquired facts and skills.

To help your students achieve these goals, My American GeoJourney provides a series of two-page units organized around a particular region or topic. Here's an overview of the book's sequence:

- A dedication page on the inside front cover
- An introductory unit on maps and map vocabulary
- Three units on the western states, plus a review unit
- Three units on the north central and eastern states, plus a review unit
- A review of all the states and their postal abbreviations
- A writing unit on historical facts and attractions
- A review of all the states and their capitals
- A unit on landforms
- A concluding page
- An "About the Author" page
- A GeoJourney word bank on the inside back cover.

Also included at the end of this Teacher's Guide are black-line masters of GeoJourney Tickets, a fun way to track students' progress from region to region. Each student may be issued a travel ticket when they first start working with the book. Upon completion of each tour, the ticket can be covered with a sticker, hole-punched, or stamped.

Planning Your Students' GeoJourney

In the book, a tour or travel format is used, with you acting as the tour guide for your students. The study pages are identified as tours of specific regions, to give students the sense of moving across the United States as they explore and learn about each region. Your role as tour guide includes integrating this learning adventure with the rest of your social studies curriculum, and then guiding your students through this book.

An initial planning process for your students' GeoJourney will probably require the following steps:

- Review your curriculum to determine where to integrate My American GeoJourney
- Brainstorm appropriate and interesting activities that will engage your students and make the content relevant to them
- Determine the availability of atlases and other resources to support your lessons and help your students do independent research
- Create a lesson plan for each tour
- Decide on the type(s) of writing activities that will culminate each tour, and make sure to provide time for teaching and reviewing any new writing skills.

Guiding Your Students' GeoJourney

When first reviewing the book with your students, make sure to discuss which writing and drawing tools to use. (Markers may soak through the page and affect writing on the other side, so you may want to make a rule that only pencils, colored pencils, and crayons can be used.) Also, make sure to point out the opportunities to personalize the book on the front cover, dedication page, and "About the Author" page, and discuss when this will be done.

Overall, the first phase of most of the tours will be locating places on the map. Students should identify and label specific localities with the aid of maps, atlases, textbooks, or other resources. The next step will be completing the corresponding page or pages, where students record pertinent facts and/or write journal entries or paragraphs. Your students can also use the GeoJourney Word Bank on the inside back cover to record vocabulary and spelling words they can use as references when they write.

Following are more detailed suggestions for the tours:

Tour 1 contains some important illustrations and vocabulary words for map use. Completing this unit first is likely to facilitate students' use of the rest of the book, as well as improve their map skills in general.

Tours 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 cover regions of the United States. In addition to map work, each unit includes lines for journal entries. These can be used in the same way during every tour or serve as a springboard for different types of creative writing. Some suggestions you may want to consider for student journal entries are:

- Create an imaginary diary entry
- List reasons to visit an area
- Write letters to inform people about the region or persuade them to visit
- Compile important or interesting facts
- Write a commercial promoting the area
- Write a poem about the region
- Use acrostic style writing
- Develop a newspaper interview with someone in the area or an article about the region
- Create a written timeline about a region
- Write a biography of someone from the area
- Describe landscapes using figurative writing (adjectives, similes, metaphors, etc.)
- Comment on how location affects the types of jobs available
- Develop a postcard from the region.

Tour 5 reviews previously studied regions of the western U.S., and **Tour 9** reviews the north central and eastern U.S. The map pages contain an inset map of the entire U.S., where students should locate and color the appropriate states featured in that review. The corresponding pages should be used for identifying and describing particular features found in that part of the U.S. Written responses about the land and water and about the crops and natural resources can include discussion of such topics as:

- mountains
- plains
- deserts
- oceans
- gulfs
- rivers
- lakes
- oil and gas
- mining
- logging
- farming
- production of other food sources.

At the bottom of each regional writing page, students are given the opportunity to express their personal thoughts about why they would want to visit a state within the region.

The writing pages of **Tour 10** provide four different writing opportunities. The first focuses on historical facts about the U.S. Possible topics include:

- explorations
- beginnings of our nation
- settling the land
- battles fought on U.S. soil.

The second writing response should be personalized for your students' particular state. This might be a good place to include information about the state bird, tree, song, etc.

Interesting natural attractions of the U.S. might include:

- caverns
- Everglades or Florida Keys
- Grand Canyon
- Great Lakes
- Great Salt Plains
- Mississippi River
- Mojave Desert
- mountain ranges
- Niagara Falls
- Redwood Forest
- volcanoes
- Yellowstone National Park.

Man-made U.S. attractions could include:

- Alamo
- birthplaces and homes of famous people
- Golden Gate Bridge

- Hoover Dam
- Mount Rushmore
- museums
- national monuments
- sports complexes
- Statue of Liberty
- theme parks
- zoos.

In **Tour 11**, students can write freely, using any information or interesting facts they discover about America’s capital cities. For instance, if Atlanta, Georgia, was one selection, some possible topics are:

- The capitol building, which is modeled after the national Capitol in Washington, D.C.
- Atlanta during the Civil War, when it was captured and almost burned completely.
- Coca-Cola, which was invented and first served in Atlanta.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., who was born and buried in Atlanta.

Next, students should write a personal response about traveling to any U.S. capital city. They should include reasons why they chose this particular city.

The final focus is on the capital city of the student’s home state. This begins with three basic facts: city name, state, and region of the country. Students can then compose a personal journal entry using information about their state’s capital city.

After completing the landforms map in **Tour 12**, students should be encouraged to choose ten of the landforms from the map and compose brief descriptions of those landforms. The following page has three writing segments related to landforms, natural resources, and climate in the area where your students live.

Concluding Your Students' GeoJourney

After completing all twelve tours, your students have a page to express final thoughts and feelings about their GeoJourney. You may want to give as much freedom or direction as you feel is appropriate for your students to complete this page.

Students should also have time to fill in the About the Author page, which can help to provide a greater sense of accomplishment and “ownership” of the book they have completed.

Assessing Your Students' GeoJourney

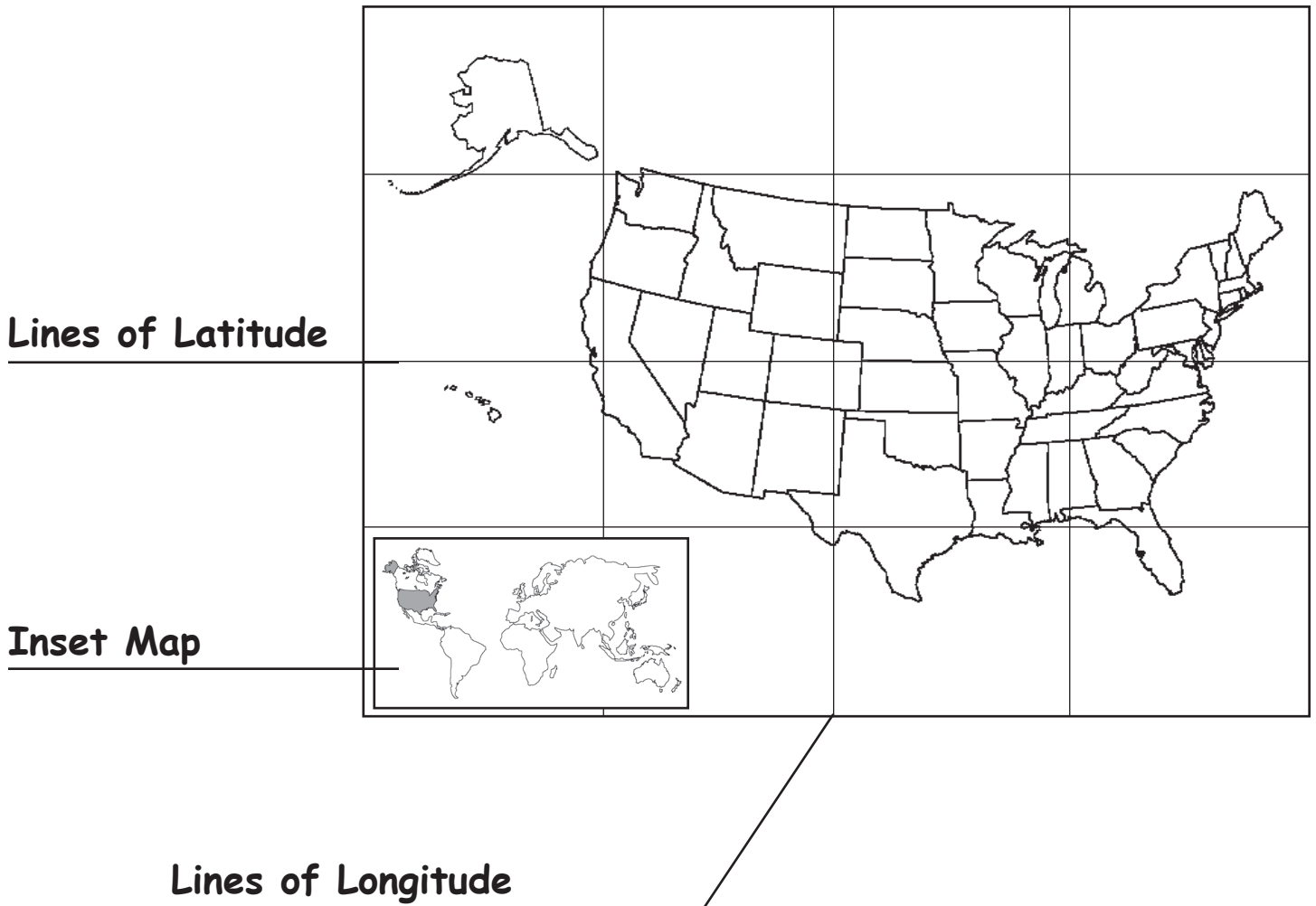
Answer keys for the tours are included in this guide. You may also want to photocopy pages from your copy of My American GeoJourney and have students complete them as assessments.

Progress in the development of students’ writing is likely to be evident if they have done the pages in order, and this can be worth pointing out to the students and their parents. We hope you will also find evidence of the growth of your students as thinkers, as well as authors.

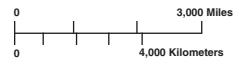
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Tour 1 Map Vocabulary

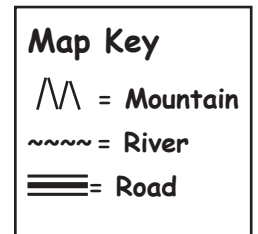
Label each item with its name.



Distance Scale



Map Key



Compass Rose



Compass Rose
 Distance Scale
 Inset Map
 Lines of Latitude
 Lines of Longitude
 Map Key



Tour 2 Pacific Region

	Postal Abbr.	State Capital	State Nickname
Alaska	AK	Juneau	Land of the Midnight Sun
California	CA	Sacramento	Golden State
Hawaii	HI	Honolulu	Aloha State
Oregon	OR	Salem	Beaver State
Washington	WA	Olympia	Evergreen State



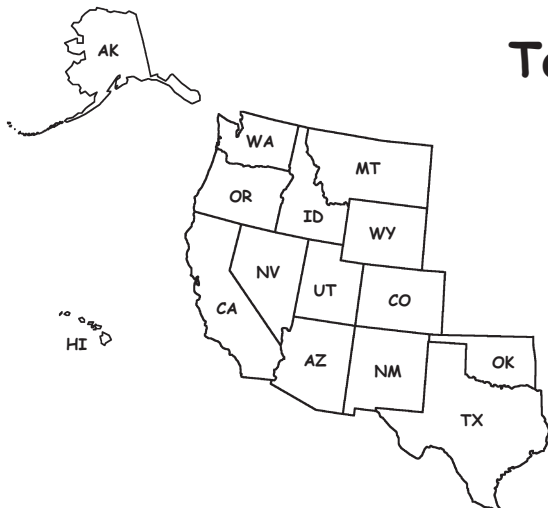
Tour 3 Southwest Region

	Postal Abbr.	State Capital	State Nickname
Arizona	AZ	Phoenix	Grand Canyon State
New Mexico	NM	Santa Fe	Land of Enchantment
Oklahoma	OK	Oklahoma City	Sooner State
Texas	TX	Austin	Lone Star State



Tour 4 Mountain Region

	Postal Abbr.	State Capital	State Nickname
Colorado	CO	Denver	Centennial State
Idaho	ID	Boise	Gem State
Montana	MT	Helena	Big Sky Country
Nevada	NV	Carson City	Sagebrush State
Utah	UT	Salt Lake City	Beehive State
Wyoming	WY	Cheyenne	Equality State



Tour 5 Western U.S. Review



Tour 6

North Central Region



	Postal Abbr.	State Capital	State Nickname
Illinois	IL	Springfield	Land of Lincoln
Indiana	IN	Indianapolis	Hoosier State
Iowa	IA	Des Moines	Hawkeye State
Kansas	KS	Topeka	Sunflower State
Michigan	MI	Lansing	Wolverine State
Minnesota	MN	St. Paul	Land of Ten Thousand Lakes
Missouri	MO	Jefferson City	Show Me State
Nebraska	NE	Lincoln	Cornhusker State
North Dakota	ND	Bismarck	Peace Garden State
Ohio	OH	Columbus	Buckeye State
South Dakota	SD	Pierre	Mount Rushmore State
Wisconsin	WI	Madison	Badger State

Tour 7

Southeast Region



	Postal Abbr.	State Capital	State Nickname
Alabama	AL	Montgomery	Heart of Dixie
Arkansas	AR	Little Rock	Natural State
Florida	FL	Tallahassee	Sunshine State
Georgia	GA	Atlanta	Peach State
Kentucky	KY	Frankfort	Bluegrass State
Louisiana	LA	Baton Rouge	Pelican State
Mississippi	MS	Jackson	Magnolia State
North Carolina	NC	Raleigh	Tarheel State
South Carolina	SC	Columbia	Palmetto State
Tennessee	TN	Nashville	Volunteer State
Virginia	VA	Richmond	Old Dominion
West Virginia	WV	Charleston	Mountain State

Tour 8

Middle Atlantic & New England Regions



	Postal Abbr.	State Capital	State Nickname
Connecticut	CT	Hartford	Constitution State
Delaware	DE	Dover	First State
Maine	ME	Augusta	Pine Tree State
Maryland	MD	Annapolis	Old Line State
Massachusetts	MA	Boston	Bay State
New Hampshire	NH	Concord	Granite State
New Jersey	NJ	Trenton	Garden State
New York	NY	Albany	Empire State
Pennsylvania	PA	Harrisburg	Keystone State
Rhode Island	RI	Providence	Little Rhody
Vermont	VT	Montpelier	Green Mountain State

Tour 9

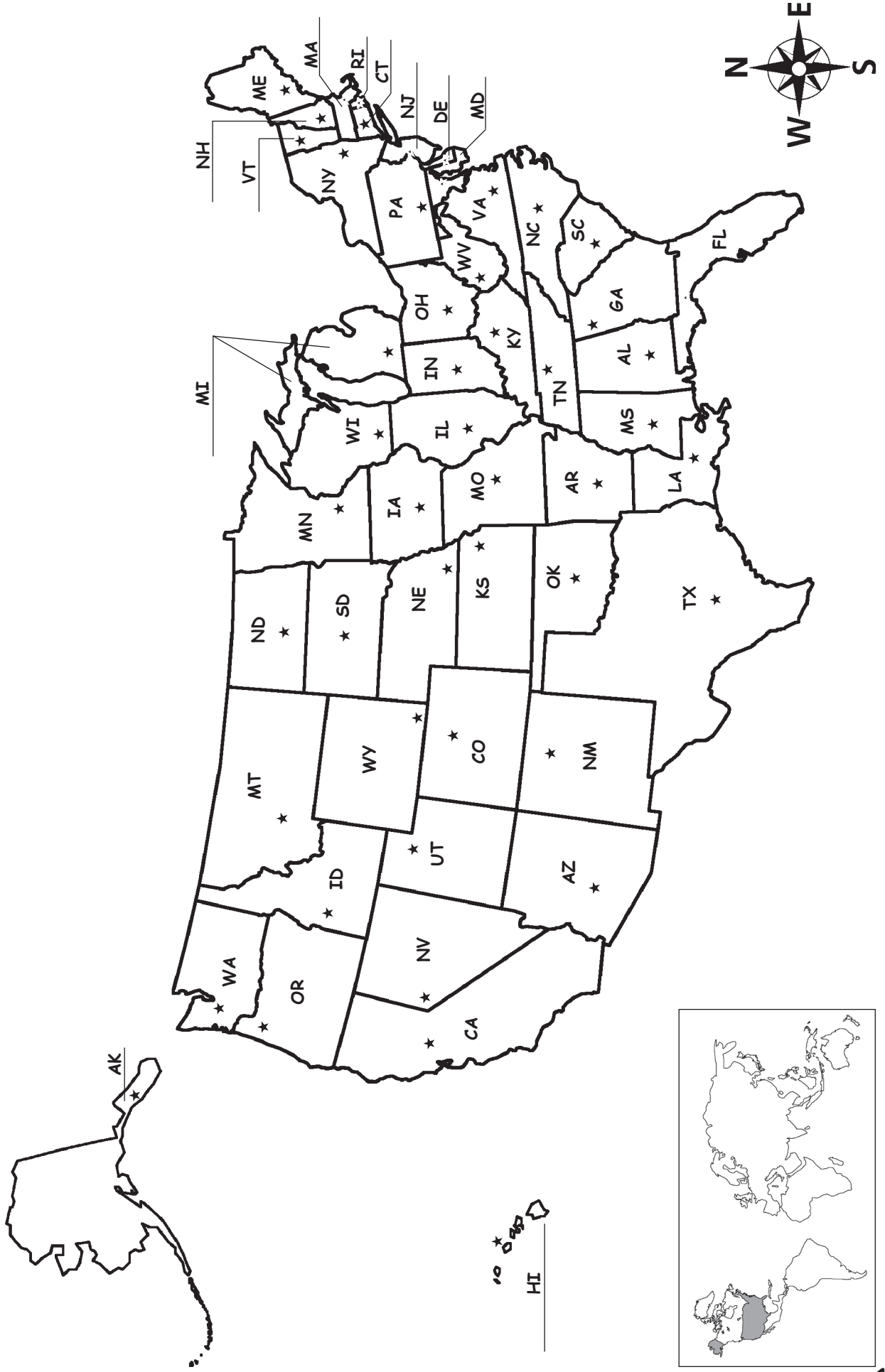
North Central and Eastern U.S. Review



Tour 10

United States

Label each state with its correct postal abbreviation, which is found on the previous page.



¹²Tour 11

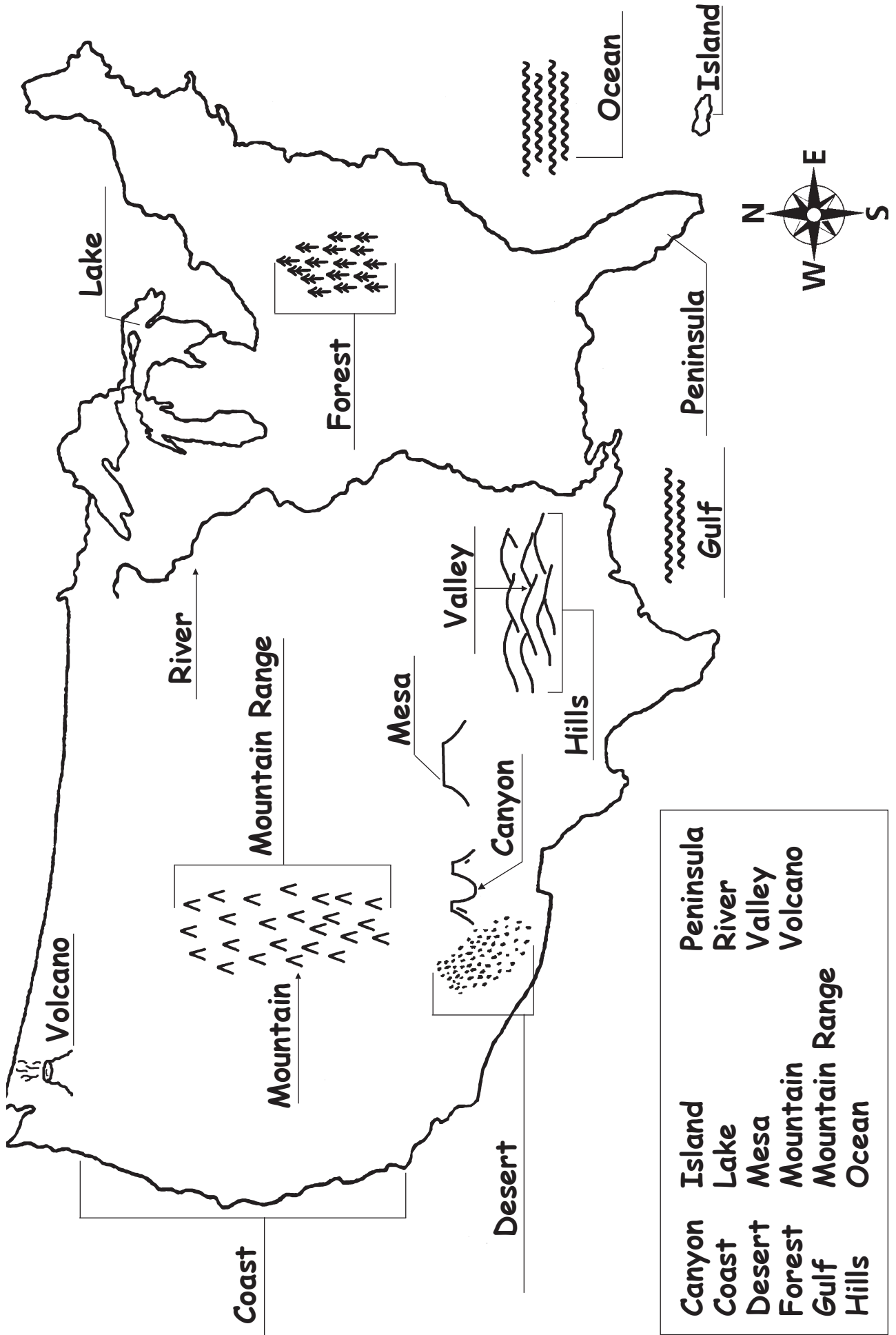
U.S. Capitals

<u>NY</u> Albany	<u>DE</u> Dover	<u>OK</u> Oklahoma City
<u>MD</u> Annapolis	<u>KY</u> Frankfort	<u>WA</u> Olympia
<u>GA</u> Atlanta	<u>PA</u> Harrisburg	<u>AZ</u> Phoenix
<u>ME</u> Augusta	<u>CT</u> Hartford	<u>SD</u> Pierre
<u>TX</u> Austin	<u>MT</u> Helena	<u>RI</u> Providence
<u>LA</u> Baton Rouge	<u>HI</u> Honolulu	<u>NC</u> Raleigh
<u>ND</u> Bismarck	<u>IN</u> Indianapolis	<u>VA</u> Richmond
<u>ID</u> Boise	<u>MS</u> Jackson	<u>CA</u> Sacramento
<u>MA</u> Boston	<u>MO</u> Jefferson City	<u>OR</u> Salem
<u>NV</u> Carson City	<u>AK</u> Juneau	<u>UT</u> Salt Lake City
<u>WV</u> Charleston	<u>MI</u> Lansing	<u>NM</u> Santa Fe
<u>WY</u> Cheyenne	<u>NE</u> Lincoln	<u>IL</u> Springfield
<u>SC</u> Columbia	<u>AR</u> Little Rock	<u>MN</u> St. Paul
<u>OH</u> Columbus	<u>WI</u> Madison	<u>FL</u> Tallahassee
<u>NH</u> Concord	<u>AL</u> Montgomery	<u>KS</u> Topeka
<u>CO</u> Denver	<u>VT</u> Montpelier	<u>NJ</u> Trenton
<u>IA</u> Des Moines	<u>TN</u> Nashville	

Tour 12

Label each item with its name.

Landforms



- | | | |
|--------|----------------|-----------|
| Canyon | Island | Peninsula |
| Coast | Lake | River |
| Desert | Mesa | Valley |
| Forest | Mountain | Volcano |
| Gulf | Mountain Range | |
| Hills | Ocean | |

GeoJourney Incentive Tickets

Tour 1 Map Vocabulary	Tour 2 Pacific Region	Tour 3 Southwest Region	Tour 4 Mountain Region	Tour 5 Western U.S. Review	Tour 6 North Central Region
My American GeoJourney Ticket					
Southeast Region	Middle Atlantic & New England Regions	North Central & Eastern U.S. Review	United States	U.S. Capitals	Landforms
Tour 7	Tour 8	Tour 9	Tour 10	Tour 11	Tour 12

Tour 1 Map Vocabulary	Tour 2 Pacific Region	Tour 3 Southwest Region	Tour 4 Mountain Region	Tour 5 Western U.S. Review	Tour 6 North Central Region
My American GeoJourney Ticket					
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Notes: