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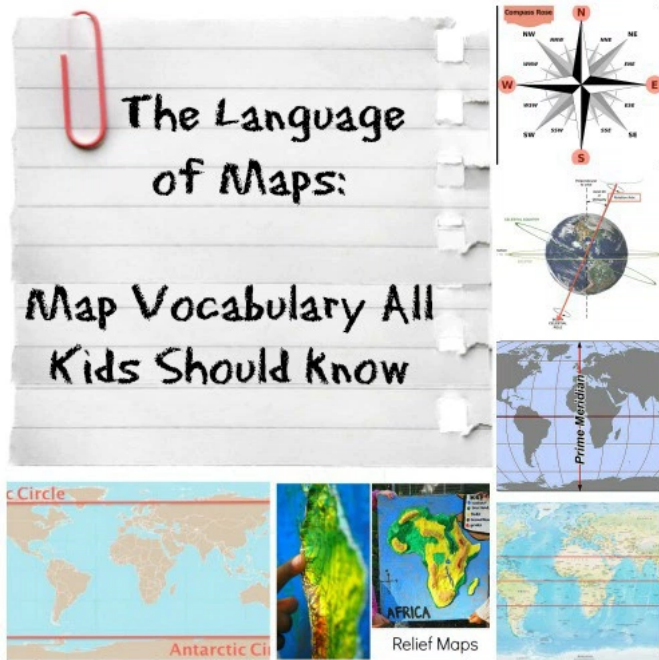
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THE LANGUAGE OF MAPS KIDS SHOULD KNOW

June 2, 2013 by kidworldcitizen — 102 Comments

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Teacher, mom of 5 bilingual & multicultural kids, sharing ideas to teach kids about the world. [click here](#)



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NEWSLETTER

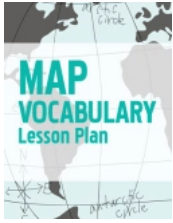
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POPULAR GLOBAL PICKS



Though in the age of iPhones and GPSs we seem to be losing paper maps, I still **love exploring maps**, and believe kids need to learn map skills, and develop their geography awareness. Because of this I have [many activities on Kid World Citizen](#) to help parents and teachers teach children about maps. Kids not only can learn to read them, but to recognize their components and build their own maps. I was recently asked for a list of vocabulary or concepts of maps kids should learn. Here are the geographic terms- and their definitions- that I think are important for kids to be able to identify. *Thank you creative commons for the images I was able to adapt!*



WANT THE MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON?

Buy a full lesson plan about Map Vocabulary at the [Kid World Citizen store](#) at Teachers Pay Teachers!

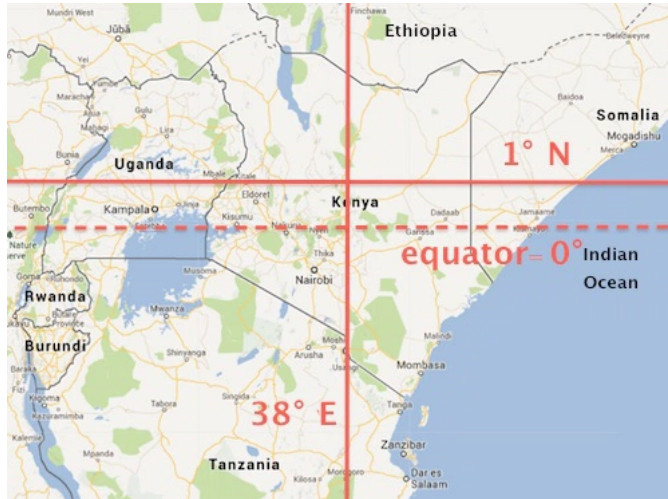
The [Map Vocabulary Lesson Plan](#) features three activities that help students develop a strong foundation in the geographic terminology associated with maps.

[Go now](#) >

ABSOLUTE LOCATION VS RELATIVE LOCATION:

Absolute Location: describes the exact position of a point, often using latitude and longitude

"Kenya's latitude and longitude is 1° 00' N and 38° 00' E; that is 1° north of the equator, and 38° east of the prime meridian."

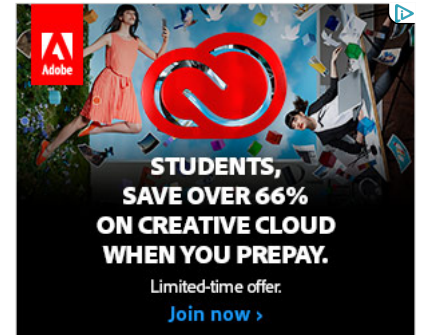
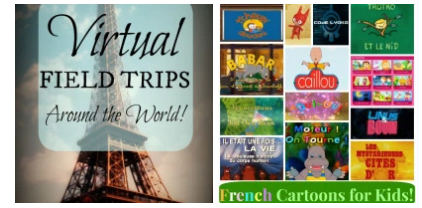
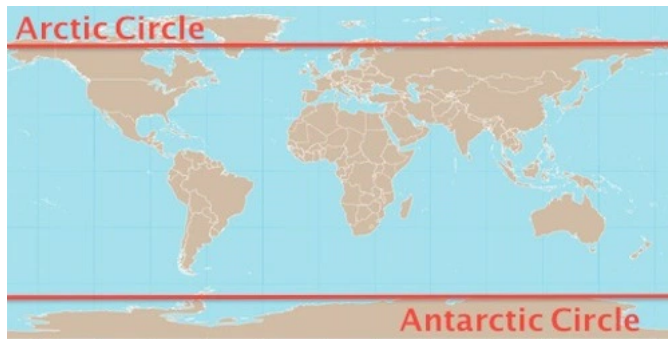


Relative Location: finds the location of a place using other surrounding places, or by using cardinal directions

"Kenya is south of Ethiopia, north of Tanzania, east of Uganda, and west of Somalia and the Indian Ocean."

ARCTIC CIRCLE, ANTARCTIC CIRCLE:

Circles of latitude at 66°33 north (Arctic Circle) and 66°33 south (Antarctica Circle)

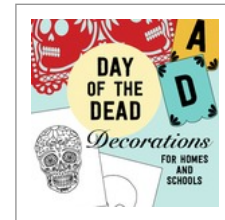


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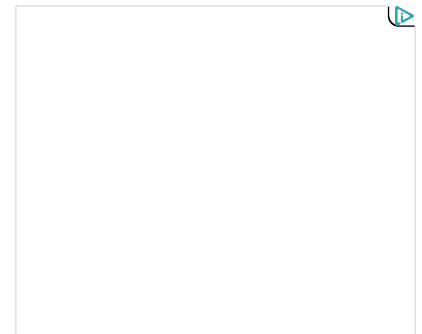
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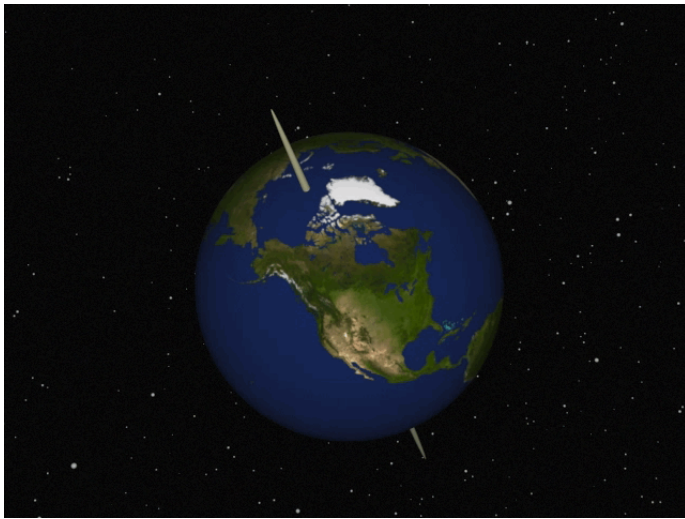
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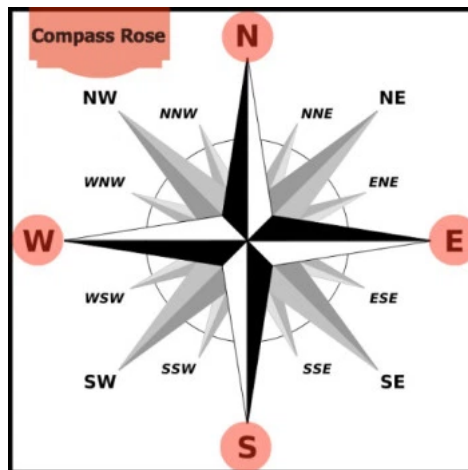


AXIS

The imaginary line between the north and south poles, about which the Earth rotates

CARDINAL DIRECTIONS

The four cardinal points are north, south, east, and west



COMPASS ROSE

A figure on maps to display the orientation of the cardinal directions

COORDINATES

A set of values that show an exact position, for example how many degrees east of west of the prime meridian, and north or south of the equator; [see the coordinates of famous world cities here](#) or [enter a worldwide destination or famous worldwide attraction here](#), and the tool will give you the latitude and longitude coordinates!

EQUATOR

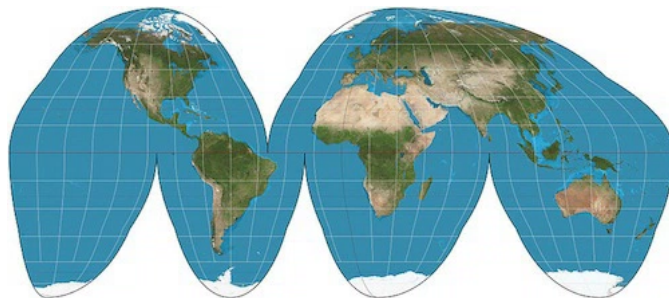
An imaginary line around the globe, equally dividing the earth into the northern and southern hemisphere

GLOBE

A spherical representation of the earth ([learn how globes are made here](#))

GOODE'S INTERRUPTED HOMOLOGINE

A type of map projection (above image) that tries to display the world with accurate sizes and locations of the continents (think of a flattened orange peel!); known as "Goode's"



HEMISPHERES

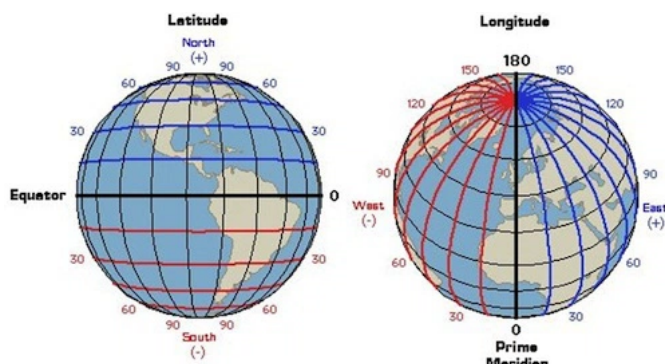
Half of the earth, either divided into northern and southern divided by the equator, or eastern and western divided by a meridian

INTERMEDIATE DIRECTIONS

The points that fall between the cardinal directions: Northeast (NE), southeast (SE), southwest (SW), and northwest (NW)

LATITUDE

The imaginary lines running parallel to the equator on the globe, showing the distance north or south of the equator; measured in degrees



LONGITUDE

The imaginary lines running "up-down" on the globe, showing the distance east or west of the prime meridian; measured in degrees

MAP KEY/ MAP LEGEND

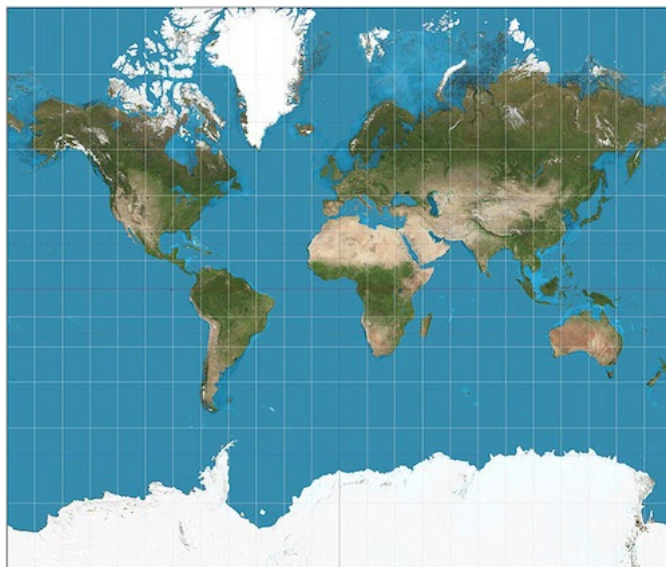
Usually in a corner of the map, the "key" or "legend" is a small table of symbols that is used on the map, with their explanations

MAP PROJECTIONS

The different systems of transforming the locations on a sphere into a flat surface (plane)

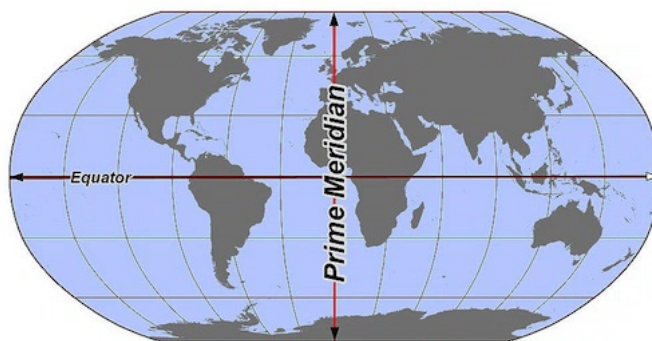
MERCATOR PROJECTION

A map projection (above image) that shows longitude and latitude at right angles; distorts the size and shape of large objects



MERIDIAN; PRIME MERIDIAN

An imaginary, longitude line running from the North Pole to the South Pole; the Prime Meridian runs through Greenwich, England. The Prime Meridian is set at 0° and divides the earth into the “Western Hemisphere” and the “Eastern Hemisphere”



NORTH POLE/SOUTH POLE

North Pole: the northernmost point on the Earth, at 90° north; where the Earth’s axis would meet the surface. The South Pole is found in the Arctic Ocean, 4,261 m (13,980 ft) below shifting sea ice.

South Pole: the southernmost point on Earth, at 90° south; where the Earth’s axis would be the surface. The South Pole is found on Antarctica, a continental land mass.

PHYSICAL MAPS

The purpose of physical maps is to show geography of land types, bodies of water, and landforms such as deserts, mountains, and arctic regions; see above left image



POLITICAL MAPS

The purpose of political maps is to show territorial borders, major cities, and capitals; see above right image

RELIEF MAP OR "RAISED RELIEF MAP"

A two dimensional map using contour lines or colors to represent terrain and different altitudes; in a "raised" relief map, terrain is represented in 3D



Relief Maps

[Make your own 3D Salt](#)

[Dough Map to learn about relief maps and geography \(above right image\)!](#)

TROPIC
OF
CANCER;
TROPIC
OF



CAPRICORN

Tropic of Cancer: the circle of latitude on the Earth that marks the most northerly position at which the Sun may appear directly overhead, at the June solstice. Slightly changing every year, in 2013 it lies around 23° 26' north of the Equator.

Tropic of Capricorn: is the circle of latitude on the Earth that marks the most southerly latitude at which the Sun can be directly overhead, at the December solstice. Also changing slightly every year, in 2013 it lies around 23° 26 south of the Equator.