

Lesson 1: The Location of California

Focus Question: Where in the world is California?

California History-Social Science Standard 4.1

Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.

- Explain and use the coordinate grid system of latitude and longitude to determine the absolute locations of places in California and on Earth.
- Distinguish between the North and South Poles; the equator and the prime meridian; the tropics; and the hemispheres, using coordinates to plot locations.
- Identify the locations of the Pacific Ocean, rivers, valleys, and mountains

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: Chronological and Spatial Thinking

- Students use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations of places and interpret information available through a map's or globe's legend, scale, and symbolic representations.

Activity #1 Preview the Organization of the Textbook

Text structure has a direct impact on reading comprehension. The structure of a text includes two components: text organization and text presentation. If this is the first time your students have used the textbook, take a few moments for students to *preview the organization of the textbook* before reading. Note the engaging aspects of the text, including the vivid photos and images, bold headings and subheadings, bullet points, and the effective use of color. Preview the table of contents, the text, and the reference section to help students get “the big picture.”

Materials needed for each student: Copy of the social studies textbook

(Optional) For each student/group of students, a copy of ***Preview the Textbook*** (Handout #1.1)

TIP: It is best to discuss the following questions orally, but use Handout #1.1 if you wish to have your students complete it as they preview the textbook. Or, you might have students work in groups to complete the handout and then discuss it as a total class.

Model for students how to preview the textbook lesson using the following steps:

- Use the Table of Contents to locate the page number for the lesson.
- Read the title of the lesson.
- Review the information on the left banner of the first page.
- Identify the headings for each part of the lesson and read the first sentence.
- Look at and discuss all pictures, maps and charts.
- Read the lesson summary.
- Look over the review section of the lesson.
- Ask students, “Based on the information in our Lesson Preview, what will the lesson be about?”

Activity # 2 The World on a Plate

Materials needed for each student:

- a copy of both pages of **Handout #1.2 The World on a Plate**, 2 paper plates, crayons or colored pencils, glue, scissors, a straw, and their textbook or an atlas

Note: The following textbook pages are useful for this activity:

Harcourt: Reflections: Geography Review: Looking at Earth PE I-16 and I-17, World Atlas
Houghton Mifflin California: Atlas R24 to R27

Procedure:

Provide students with a copy of each page of **Handout #1.2**. Using their textbook or an atlas, have students:

- Label the seven continents.
- Label the equator on both pages.
- Label the North Pole and the South Pole on both pages.
- Label the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere on page 1.
- Draw and label the prime meridian on page 2.
- Color each continent a different color.
- Color the oceans blue.
- Cut out each piece of the globe and glue on to two paper plates.
- Staple the two plates together and put a straw through the middle to represent the earth's axis.

Demonstrate the tilt of the axis for your students.

(Based on an activity by Pam West and Erika Weiss, San Diego Unified School District)

Activity #3 Where in the World Am I?

Materials needed for each group of students:

- Map of your local community
- State of California map, United States map, World map (Refer to the atlas in your textbook)

Procedure:

Using the maps listed above, have students work in groups to locate:

- their home and school neighborhood on a local map
- their city on a California map
- their county on a California map
- California on a United States map. Note California's location in relation to the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the surrounding states.
- the United States in relation to the world, including the continent of North America, the northern hemisphere and the western hemisphere



Activity # 4 Making a Mini Flip Book

Materials needed for the teacher:

- Make a set of vocabulary cards with the following terms: city (or town), county, state, nation, continent, hemisphere and planet

Materials for each student:

- 1 sheet of 8 ½" X 11" white or colored paper, scissors and a stapler, crayons or colored pencils
- Copy of *Handout #1.3 Mini Flip Book, Where in the World Am I?*



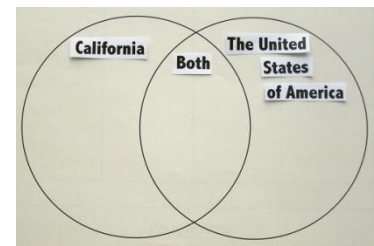
Procedure:

Distribute vocabulary cards for city, county, state, nation, continent, hemisphere and planet to different students. Holding his/her vocabulary card, each student gets in order from the smallest region to the largest region. As each student reads his/her card, i.e. saying, "city", he/she tells the name of the city where he/she lives. Continue with the rest of the cards. Let students refer to a globe or an atlas if they need help. Then shuffle the cards and ask different students to put the cards in order again.

To answer the question, "Where in the World am I?" students construct a Mini Flip Book that includes the categories found on *Handout # 1.3, Mini Flip Book – Where in the World Am I?* Directions are included on the handout.

Activity # 5 Build Fluency using a Venn Diagram

On the chalkboard or whiteboard, draw a Venn Diagram. Label the left side *California*, label the right side *The United States of America*, and label the intersecting area as *Both*.



Point out the space for *California*. Tell students you will read some sentences that are true only for California. They should use their thumb to point to the left side for these sentences. Point out the space for the *United States*. Tell students they will use their thumb to point to the right side for sentences that are only true for the United States. Point out the overlap space in the middle of the diagram labeled *Both*. Tell students they should point their thumb straight up for sentences that are true for both California and the United States. **To provide time for thinking, ask students to wait to show their thumb until you finish the sentence, pause, and then say, "Show Me."**

- It is a state on the west coast of the United States of America.
- It is a country in the Northern hemisphere, the half of the earth that is north of the equator.
- It is found in the Western Hemisphere, the half of Earth that is west of the Prime Meridian.
- It is located north of the equator, the line that lies halfway between the North and South Poles.
- It is south of Oregon.
- It is a country in North America.
- It borders the country of Mexico.

- It borders the country of Canada.

Activity # 6 Map of Political and Physical Features of California

Note: To pre-access the students' knowledge of California geography, first have students do the following activity without the aid of any maps or other resources. Save these pre-assessment maps and do the activity again as a post-assessment at the end of the unit or at the end of the school year.

Materials needed for the teacher:

- Document camera or transparency of **Handout #1.5 Blank Outline Map of California**,

Materials needed for each student:

- **Handout #1.4 Map of Political and Physical Features of California**
- **Handout # 1.5 Blank Outline Map of California**, a California atlas, pencil.

Prompt: Given a blank outline map of California, include the following:

1. Title of the map and a compass rose
2. Label 8 political features, including:
 - the neighboring states of Oregon, Nevada and Arizona
 - neighboring country of Mexico
 - major cities of California, including Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco.
3. Label 8 physical features, including:
 - Pacific Ocean
 - Coastal Range Mountains
 - Sierra Nevada Mountains
 - Sacramento River
 - San Joaquin River
 - Central Valley
 - Mojave Desert
 - Salton Sea
4. Draw a map legend. Include symbols for rivers, mountains, major cities, capital city and a color code for each of the 4 natural regions of California.



5. Lightly shade the four natural regions of California.

In drawing their map, students may refer to a map of California. Locations should be labeled in pen or pencil and the regions shaded lightly using colored pencils or crayons.

Activity #7 Coordinate Grid System of Latitude and Longitude

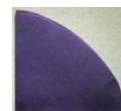
Materials needed for each group: globe (Hint: Borrow globes from other classrooms.)

Materials for each student: 1 sheet of 8 ½" X 11" white or colored paper, scissors, pencil, atlas

Procedure:

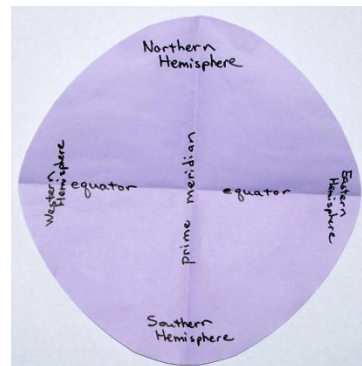
To each student, distribute a sheet of 8 ½" X 11" sheet of paper. Instruct students to:

- Fold the sheet of paper once "hot dog style" and once again "hamburger style".



- Hold the bottom corner of the fold in your left hand. With your right hand, use a pair of scissors to cut an arc from the lower right corner to the top left corner.
- Unfold your paper. It should be in the shape of a circle.
- Label one fold the “equator” and the other fold the “prime meridian”
- Locate and label the Northern Hemisphere, the Southern Hemisphere, the Western Hemisphere and the Eastern Hemisphere.

Using this model, explain to students that the earth has been divided into imaginary lines. To describe the absolute location of a place, you can use lines of latitude and longitude.



Lines of Longitude Maps and globes have a set of lines that run north and south, from the North Pole to the South Pole. These lines are called lines of longitude. They are measured in degrees east and west from the prime meridian. They go from 0 degrees at the prime meridian to 180 degrees. West of the prime meridian, lines of longitude are marked W for west. East of the prime meridian, the lines are marked E for east.

Using a world map or a globe, have students locate the lines of longitude. Practice identifying locations by orally saying their degrees east or west of the prime meridian. (See note below.)

Lines of Latitude Maps and globes also have a set of lines that run east and west. They are measured in degrees north and south of the equator and are parallel to the equator. They go from 0 degrees at the equator to 90 degrees at each of the poles. North of the equator, lines of latitude are marked N for north. South of the equator, the lines are marked S for south.

Using a world map or globe, have students locate the lines of latitude and practice identifying locations north and south of the equator. Point out the Tropic of Cancer, a latitude line in the Northern Hemisphere and the Tropic of Capricorn in the Southern Hemisphere.

Practice using the coordinate grid system of latitude and longitude lines to identify absolute locations. Check your social studies textbook for related map and globe skill lessons.

Note: If your classroom is set up in rows, run a piece of masking tape on the floor to represent the prime meridian. Give each “meridian row of desks” an address depending on their distance east or west of the prime meridian. Next run a piece of tape on the floor to represent the equator. Give each “latitude row of desks” an address depending on their distance north or south of the equator. Have each student say his/her “address” and use this for different activities in the classroom.

Preview the Textbook

1. **Table of Contents: Unit Titles, Lesson Titles and Subtitles in each lesson:**
What do these tell you about the organization of the text?

2. **Look for markers or clues:** Where can you find the ideas that are important to remember?

3. **Look for what you will have to do for each lesson:** Where will you find out what things you will do to complete a lesson?

4. **Look at the images and visuals:** How do the pictures and maps help you understand the concepts and ideas in the text?

5. **Find the Reference section:** How might these references be useful?

6. **After looking at all these things, what do you think this lesson is going to be about?**

The World on a Plate

Directions: On both pages of the Handout, use a pen or pencil to:

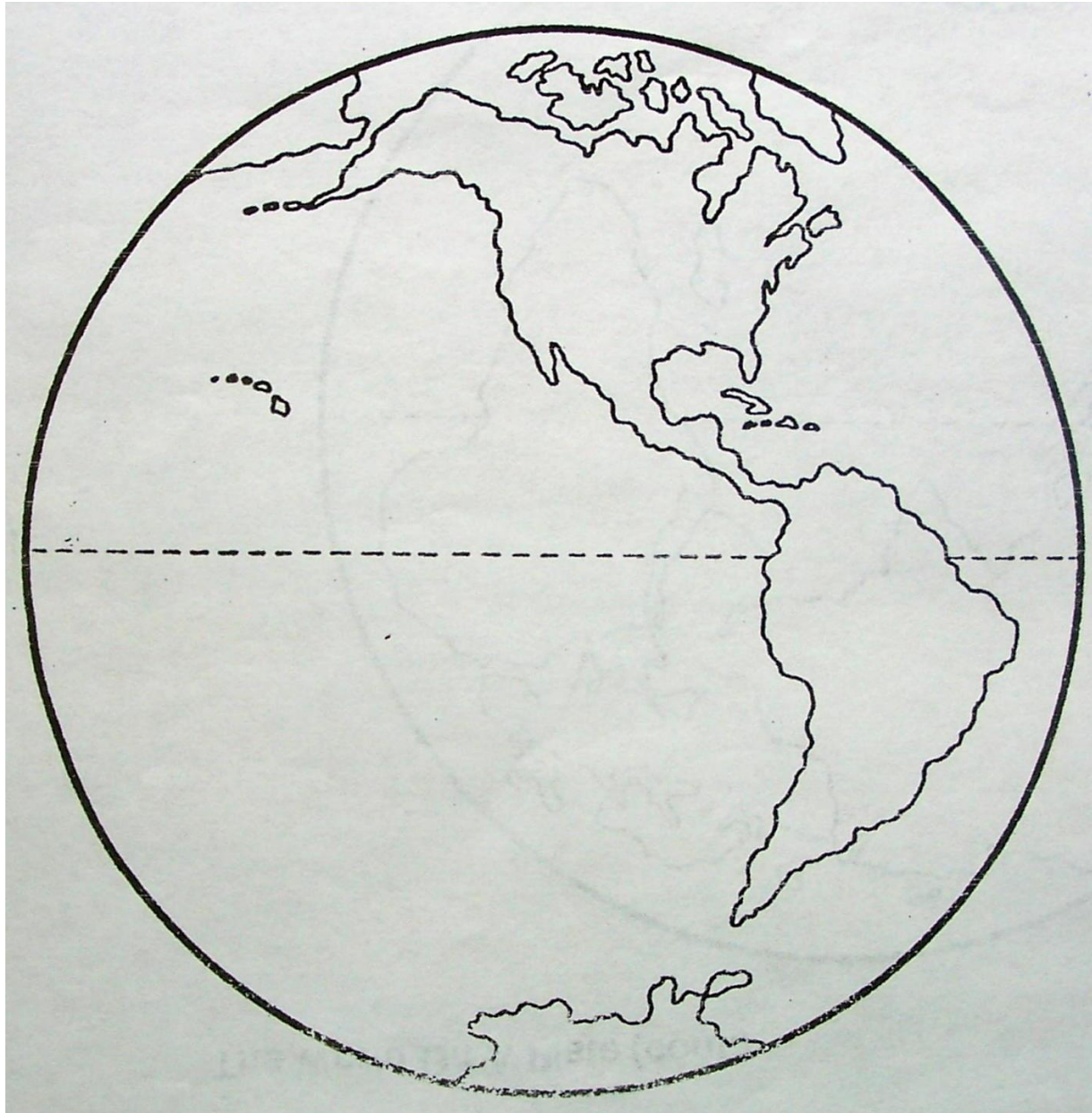
-Label the seven continents.

-Label the equator.

-Label the North Pole and the South Pole.

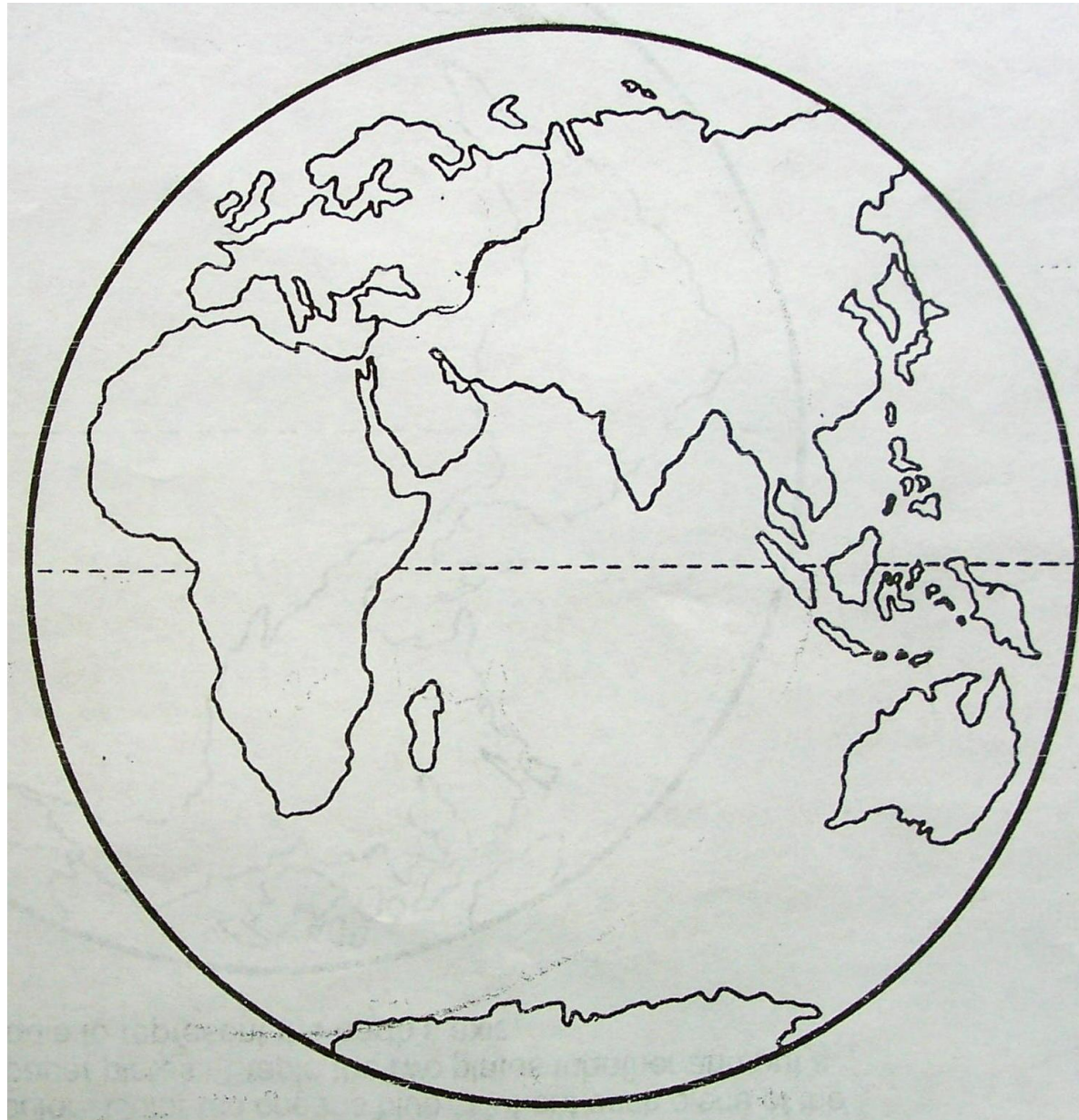
-On this piece of the globe, label the Northern Hemisphere

-On this piece of the globe, label the Southern Hemisphere



The World on a Plate

- On this piece of the globe, draw and label the prime meridian.
- On each piece of the globe, color each continent a different color.
- On each piece of the globe, color the oceans blue.
- Cut out both pages of the globe handout
- Glue each page of the globe onto a paper plate
- Staple the two plates together and put a straw through the middle to represent the earth's axis.



Mini Flip Book Where in the World Am I?

You will “flip” over this great way to show your location in the world.

- First, get 1 sheet of 8 ½” x 11” paper – white or a light color. Fold it once “hot dog style” and once again “hamburger style”. Cut the paper on each fold to make 4 sheets.
- From the bottom of sheet #1, measure up 1/2 inch and draw a line. Bring the top down to the line and fold.
- From the bottom of sheet #2, measure up 1 inch and draw a line. Bring the top down to the line and fold. Place sheet #1 inside of sheet #2.
- From the bottom of sheet #3, measure up 1 1/2 inches and draw a line. Bring the top down to the line and fold. Place sheets #1 and #2 inside of sheet #3.
- From the bottom of sheet #4, measure up 2 inches and draw a line. Bring the top down to the line and fold. Place sheets #1, #2 and #3 inside of sheet #4.

You have now assembled your 8 page Flip Book. Staple it at the fold. Lightly number the pages. Begin with page 1 on top. Get ready to write in your book.

- Write a title of your book on page 1, *Where in the World Am I?* Add your name.
- On the bottom tab of page 2, write, “City”. Inside, write in the name of your town or city, your address, and draw a picture to show where you live.
- On the bottom tab of page 3 write, “County” and inside write in the name of your county.
- On the bottom tab of page 4 write, “State” and inside write the name of your state.
- On the bottom tab of page 5 write, “Country” and inside write the name of your country.
- On the bottom tab of page 6 write, “Continent” and inside write the name of your continent.
- On the bottom tab of page 7 write, “Hemisphere” and inside write the names of your hemispheres.
- On the bottom tab of page 8 write, “Planet” and on the inside write the name of your planet.

Illustrate each page to show “Where in the World” you live.

Assessment

Map of the Political and Physical Features of California

Prompt: Given a blank outline map of California, include the following:

1. Title of the map and a compass rose to show cardinal directions
2. Label 8 political features, including:
 - the neighboring states of Oregon, Nevada and Arizona
 - neighboring country of Mexico
 - major cities of California, including Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco.
3. Label 8 physical features, including:
 - Pacific Ocean
 - Coastal Range Mountains
 - Sierra Nevada Mountains
 - Sacramento River
 - San Joaquin River
 - Central Valley
 - Mojave Desert
 - Salton Sea
4. Draw a map legend. Include symbols for rivers, mountains, major cities, capital city and a color code for each of the 4 natural regions of California.
5. Lightly shade the four natural regions of California.

In drawing their map, students may refer to a map of California. Locations should be labeled in pen or pencil and the regions shaded lightly using colored pencils or crayons.

Rubric:

Indicator: Knowledge of Geographic Content and Spatial Thinking

INDICATORS	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	BASIC	BELOW BASIC
KNOWLEDGE OF GEOGRAPHIC CONTENT and SPATIAL THINKING	Student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the geographic content and spatial thinking.	Student demonstrates a clear understanding of the geographic content and spatial thinking.	Student demonstrates a limited understanding of the geographic content and spatial thinking.	Student demonstrates little understanding of the geographic content and spatial thinking.

Outline Map of California

