

# United States Geography

Unit 1



**I WANT YOU TO  
STUDY YOUR  
GEORGAPHY**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Period:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# **Geography**

## Key Terms

Absolute Location:

Relative Location:

Demographic Map:

Population Density:

Sun-Belt:

Archipelago:

New England:

Northeast:

Northwest:

Southwest:

Midwest:

Southeast:

Mid-Atlantic Region:

# Principles of U.S. Geography

From <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/GEO/homepage.htm>

A few general cultural patterns cut across regional and political boundaries and, in many cases, ignore major differences in the physical environment. These themes characterize the ways Americans have organized their country.

**Urbanization:** Millions of Americans, most of them urbanites, prefer to consider their country as a basically rural place, and they seem to believe that this rurality provides the country with a basic national vigor.

There is no longer much justification for this view of rural dominance. About 70 percent of Americans live in urban areas, and more than 40 percent are in areas of 1 million people or more. In 1990, the U.S. farm population numbered about 5 million (2 percent of the population), a figure that has declined steadily since the first national census in 1790, when over 90 percent of all Americans were farmers.



Several elements of urbanization are emphasized in our discussion. Cities have a particular form, a particular layout. Most American cities have a rectangular-grid pattern, partly a result of cultural attitudes, partly a result of a desire for efficient transport before the automobile, and partly because that pattern is an easy way to survey the land. Within cities, there is a collection of industrial and commercial centers, residential areas, warehouses, and so on.

Cities exist for many different reasons. They may have an important transportation role. Or they may provide an important administrative function. Perhaps they are a center of recreation or manufacturing. Most cities, certainly all large ones, contain many different urban functions. Nevertheless, many are characterized by certain dominant functions that were the reason for their development and much of their early growth, and that today continue to give them their special character.

The pattern of continuing and often rapid urban growth in the United States during the last 100 years, coupled with the increasing mobility of the urban population, has stimulated a great sprawling pattern of urbanization. In some areas, the result of urban spread is urban coalescence, with the edges of different urban areas meeting and blending.

**Industrialization:** A substantial part of U.S. employment is related to manufacturing, either directly or indirectly. Most cities were founded and experienced their major periods of growth when manufacturing was the primary factor in urban growth.

Today, there is substantial regional specialization in manufacturing, partly as the result of variations in the availability of industrial raw materials and partly as the result of industrial linkages; manufacturing concerns that produce component parts of some final product are located near each other as well as near the final assembly site to minimize total movement costs.



Other important sources of variation include differences in labor availability or labor skills, in the quality of transportation facilities, and in local political attitudes. Regions tend to specialize in the production of whatever it is that they can best produce. And with this regional specialization has come regional interdependence; few

sections of America are truly self-sufficient in manufacturing, in spite of what local pride might lead us to believe.

**High Mobility:** America's extensive transportation network is an important element in its high level of economic interaction. Goods and people move freely within and between regions of the country. Regional interdependence is great; it is made possible by these interregional flows. Relative isolation is uncommon, but it does exist.

Nearly 20 percent of all Americans change their residence in any one year. Although much of this residential migration is local in nature, it does result in substantial interregional population movement.

Until the last decade of the 19th century, there was a strong westward population shift toward frontier agricultural lands. The focus of opportunity then changed and migration shifted to urban areas. More recently, the U.S. economy has entered what some call a post-industrial phase; employment growth is primarily in professions and services rather than primary (extractive) or secondary (manufacturing) sectors. Such employment is much more flexible in its location, and there has been a more rapid growth in such employment in areas that appear to contain greater amenities.



**Resources:** About 25 percent of the land in row crops in the United States produces exports. Also, the country is able to satisfy much of its gigantic demand for industrial raw materials domestically. The United States has the potential to be a major supplier for a few nonagricultural raw materials internationally and is the world's leading exporter of coal.

Although the U.S. population is predominantly urban, the extraction of natural resources from its abundant base requires a large nonurban labor force. Furthermore, particularly for agriculture, the development of these resources often involves a substantial land area. As a result, the relationship between the physical

environment and human adaptations to that environment are clearly visible.

Government plays an important role in this relationship by establishing controls on land use and agricultural production and by regulating the development of many resources. It is partly because processes inherent in urbanization and industrialization lead to high demand for raw materials that the United States has become dependent on imported raw materials in spite of great natural resource abundance.



**High Income and High Consumption:** The high U.S. national income is achieved through high worker productivity, which requires a significant use of machines. And modern machines are fueled by inanimate energy sources. Mobility also implies heavy use of energy resources. High income spread somewhat evenly among a large share of the population will generate high product demand. All this increases energy consumption.

Americans consume about 25 percent of the world's total energy production. The United States imports half the petroleum it consumes, an increasing share of the iron ore and natural gas used, nearly all of its tin and aluminum, and large quantities of many other mineral ores.

High income also affects diet. Americans eat far more meat products and have a substantially more varied diet than most of the world's population. Beef and dairy production are, therefore, especially important in the agricultural economy.



**Environmental Impact:** One consequence of high consumption combined with resource abundance and dependence is a strong disruption of the physical environment. Resources seldom can be removed from the natural landscape without some impact, and the manufacture and use of these resources often harm the air and water. The increased severity of such environmental impacts has enlivened the argument between development and conservation--an argument that has stimulated greater governmental intervention in both processes in an attempt to establish a middle ground. As domestic resources become increasingly scarce and their costs of extraction and production increase, the importance of this conflict will grow.

**Political Complexity:** The United States has a complex political structure, with jurisdiction over an activity or state divided among many different decision-making bodies, some elected and some appointed.

Below the state level, the complexity of the political structure can present a major problem in the effective and efficient distribution of governmental services. Counties, townships, cities, and towns are all governed by their own elected officials. Many special administrative units oversee the provision of specific services, such as education, public transportation, and water supply. The resulting administrative pattern is often nearly impossible to comprehend, because many overlapping jurisdictions may provide one service or another in a given area.



**Cultural Origins:** The United States has grown from a diverse cultural background. African Americans have made important contributions to the national culture. A distinctive cultural region has developed in the Southwest, with an admixture [mingling] of Hispanic Americans, American Indians, and European Americans. The Chinese contributed to the life of such cities as San Francisco and New York. This cultural diversity is an important element in the distinctive character of the country.

# Principles of U.S. Geography

Directions: Compose each answer in a complete sentence based on the principles of US geography reading.

## **Urbanization**

What percentage of Americans live in urban and rural areas of the United States?

---

---

---

What do many cities have in common? Why?

---

---

---

Why do cities exist?

---

---

---

## **Industrialization**

How is manufacturing related to employment?

---

---

---

Can you think of an example of regional specialization in manufacturing? Provide an example.

---

---

---

How has regional specialization increased interdependence?

---

---

---

## **High Mobility**

Why is regional isolation uncommon in the United States?

---

---

---

How have economic changes over the past 100 years affected where people go to live in the United States?

---

---

---

**Resources**

What label would you use to describe the natural resources of the United States? Explain.

---

---

---

Why has the United States become dependent upon imported raw materials?

---

---

---

**High Income and High Consumption**

How are high income and high consumption interrelated?

---

---

---

**Environmental Impact**

How has high consumption impacted the environment?

---

---

---

**Political Complexity**

How have complex and overlapping political jurisdictions been problematic for the United States?

---

---

---

**Cultural Origins**

Would you describe the United States as diverse or homogenous? How has this affected the character of the nation?

---

---

---

Directions: Read pages 1-22 in the textbook and answer the following questions:

1. In what ways does the US benefit from its great size?

---

---

---

2. What are the 3 most important metals mined in the US? How are they used in our modern economy?

---

---

---

3. Describe the energy resources of the US, make a distinction between renewable and non-renewable.

---

---

---

4. Where would you likely find the following:

Uranium mines - \_\_\_\_\_

Center of the US auto industry - \_\_\_\_\_

Pineapple plantations - \_\_\_\_\_

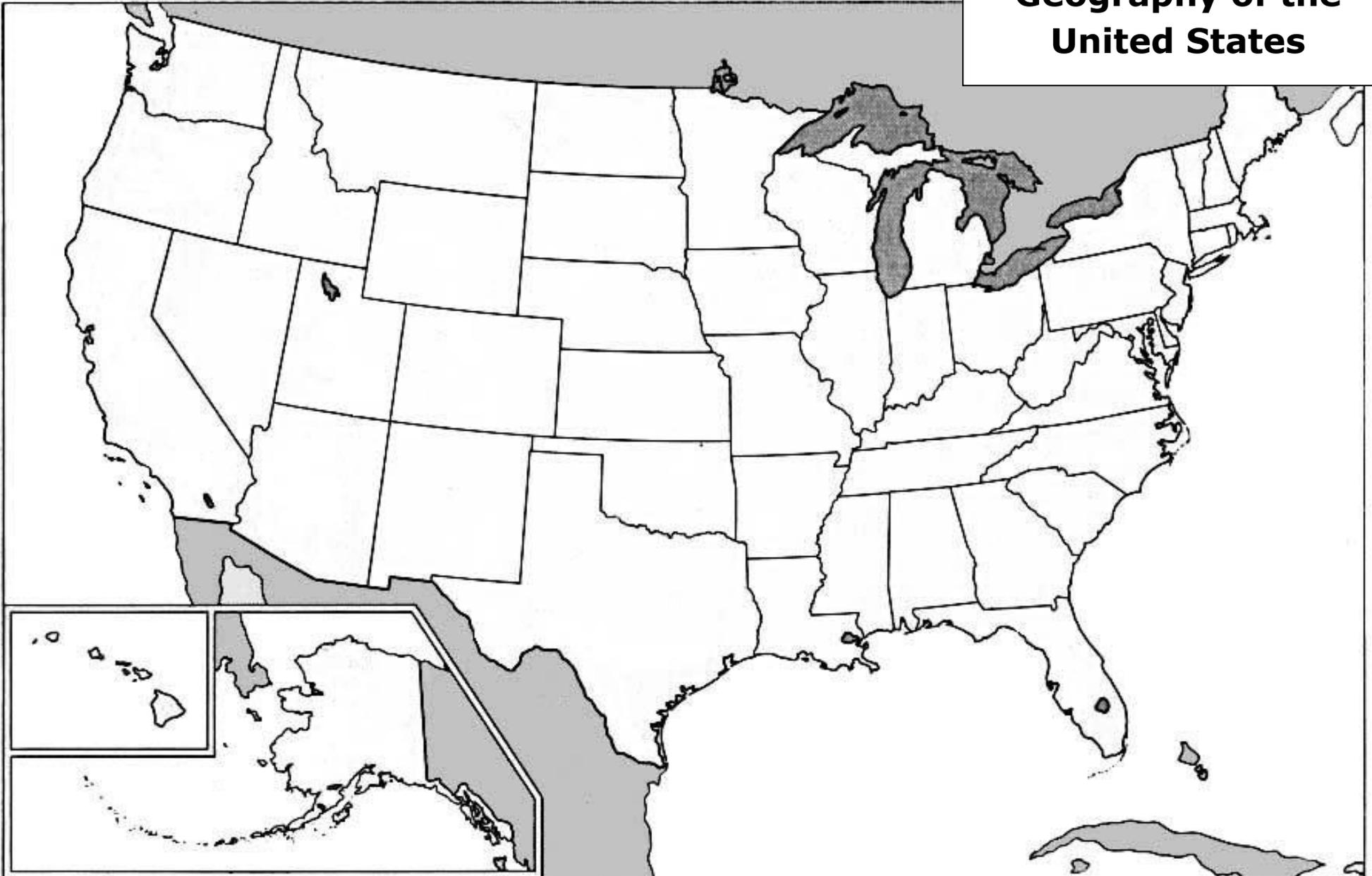
Sugarcane - \_\_\_\_\_

“corn belt” - \_\_\_\_\_

Heavy need for irrigation - \_\_\_\_\_

“dairy belt” - \_\_\_\_\_

## Geography of the United States



Label the following geographic features on the map above: Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, Adirondack Mountains, Sierra Nevada Mountains, Great Plains, Chesapeake Bay, Rio Grande River, Mississippi River, Lake Huron, Lake Superior, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean, and Atlantic Ocean

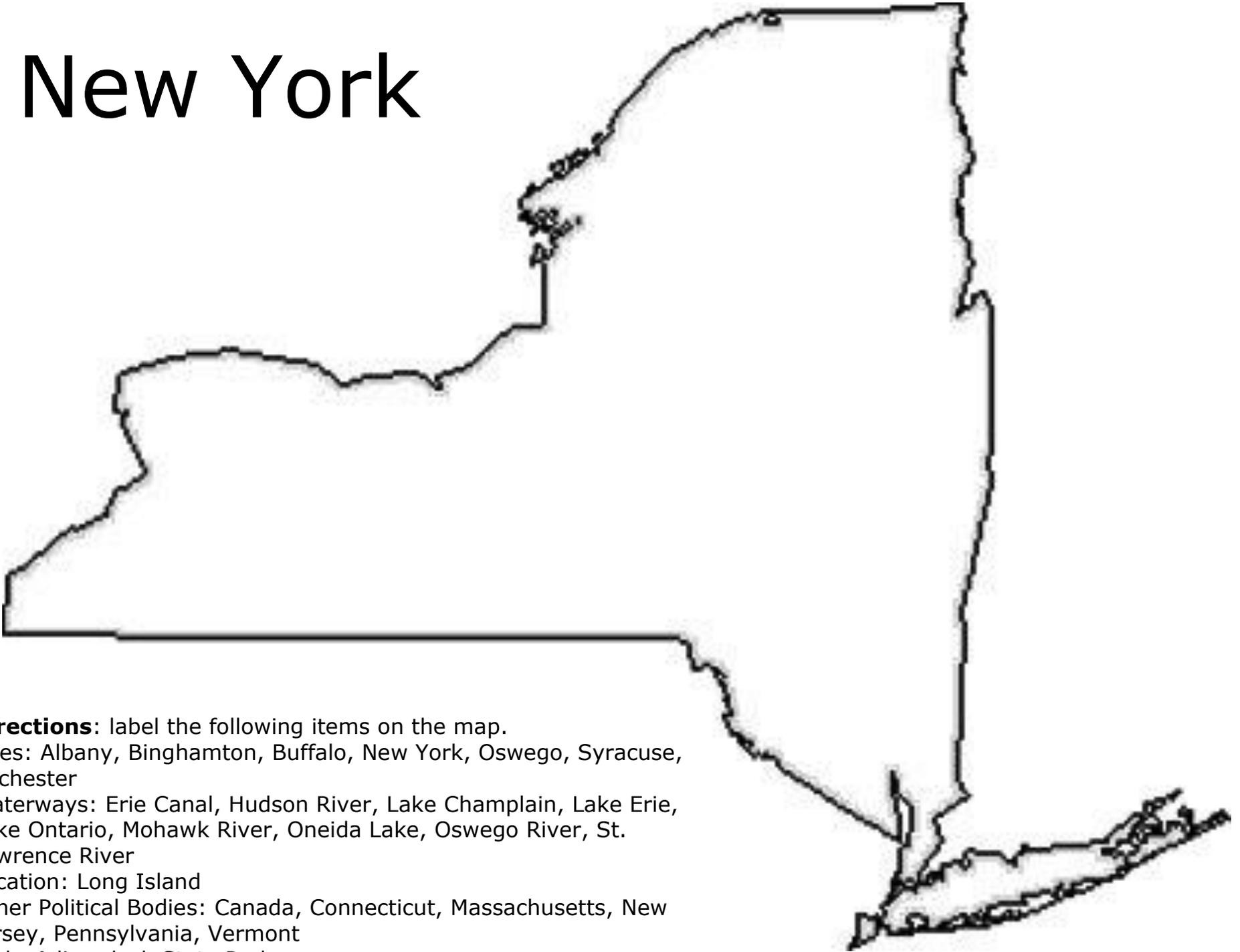
## The 50 States



Label the following states on the map and on the next page list the capitals and the state abbreviations: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

| <b>State</b>  | <b>Capital</b> | <b>Abbreviation</b> | <b>State</b>   | <b>Capital</b> | <b>Abbreviation</b> |
|---------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Alabama       |                |                     | North Carolina |                |                     |
| Alaska        |                |                     | North Dakota   |                |                     |
| Arizona       |                |                     | Ohio           |                |                     |
| Arkansas      |                |                     | Oklahoma       |                |                     |
| California    |                |                     | Oregon         |                |                     |
| Colorado      |                |                     | Pennsylvania   |                |                     |
| Connecticut   |                |                     | Rhode Island   |                |                     |
| Delaware      |                |                     | South Carolina |                |                     |
| Florida       |                |                     | South Dakota   |                |                     |
| Georgia       |                |                     | Tennessee      |                |                     |
| Hawaii        |                |                     | Texas          |                |                     |
| Idaho         |                |                     | Utah           |                |                     |
| Illinois      |                |                     | Vermont        |                |                     |
| Indiana       |                |                     | Virginia       |                |                     |
| Iowa          |                |                     | Washington     |                |                     |
| Kansas        |                |                     | West Virginia  |                |                     |
| Kentucky      |                |                     | Wisconsin      |                |                     |
| Louisiana     |                |                     | Wyoming        |                |                     |
| Maine         |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Maryland      |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Massachusetts |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Michigan      |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Minnesota     |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Mississippi   |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Missouri      |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Montana       |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Nebraska      |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| Nevada        |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| New Hampshire |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| New Jersey    |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| New Mexico    |                |                     |                |                |                     |
| New York      |                |                     |                |                |                     |

# New York



**Directions:** label the following items on the map.

Cities: Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, New York, Oswego, Syracuse, Rochester

Waterways: Erie Canal, Hudson River, Lake Champlain, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Mohawk River, Oneida Lake, Oswego River, St. Lawrence River

Location: Long Island

Other Political Bodies: Canada, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont

Park: Adirondack State Park

# Geography Game

1. With your group, take out an atlas or a textbook.
2. Pick a location on the map (important country or major body of water)
3. Write **FOUR** clues that will help lead people to your spot.

- The first clue will be very general. The next two will narrow it down. The fourth clue will give it away. Try to use relative location to give hints to your location.

Example:

Clue #1 is general. (Example: USA East Coast)  
Clue #2 narrows it down. (a town in the Mid-Atlantic region)  
Clue #3 narrows it again. (home of the Naval Academy)  
Clue #4 gives it away. (capital of Maryland)  
The correct answer, of course, is Annapolis

Clue #1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Clue #2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Clue #3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Clue #4: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Scoring is based on a 4-3-2-1 scale. If you guess the answer from the first clue, your team receives 4 points. The second clue delivers 3 points. The third clue delivers 2 points. Your team will receive 1 point if you guess it correctly on the 4th clue. If you do not guess the answer after hearing the 4th clue, your opponents (the team asking the questions) lose a point. Right points earned by each group in the chart below.

| Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 | Group 6 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|         |         |         |         |         |         |