



PRISONERS ^{OF} GEOGRAPHY OUR WORLD EXPLAINED IN 12 SIMPLE MAPS

TEACHERS NOTES



A Note from the Author

- What does 'Prisoners of Geography' mean?
- '*...nations are the prisoners of their geography, bound by the location of mountain ranges or their access to rivers for trade.*' Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons to justify your answer.
- How is the climate and natural resources important to a country?
- What developments have helped us to overcome physical barriers of geography?

Exploring the Book

- **Discussions:** Have regular group and class discussions – taking account of different views, listening to others, supporting opinions and modifying views accordingly.
- **Asking/Answering Questions:** Ask questions and explore the answers through further reading, research and discussion. Why is it important to celebrate differences and to share in accomplishments?
- **Language:** Collect and explore the meaning of unfamiliar words through the use of a dictionary and other resources. Explore descriptive language to describe the physical features of a country.

General Ideas (could be used for each map)

- Why is the natural environment important? Collect evidence from the text to support your answer.
- Before reading each map, find the country on a map, globe, atlas or digital/computer mapping. Where in the world is _____?
- Which countries can be found on the border of _____?
- Locate and label on a map the seven continents of the world.
Locate and label on a map the five oceans of the world.
Locate and name the seas of the world.
Which continent is _____ in?
Which ocean(s) and sea(s) surround _____?
- What are the natural defences of _____?
- Identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circle, the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones.
- Look at the illustrated maps. Why has the author chosen these particular pictures? What is the significance of each? Which illustrations would you choose to represent the different countries? Explain the reason for your choices. Create your own illustrations to represent the culture, physical/human geography, landmarks, animals, plants associated to your chosen country.
- Pick 2 countries or continents. Compare and contrast the physical/human geography, culture, buildings, landmarks, food, clothes, art, music, significant individuals, language spoken etc.
- Write a tourist guide/brochure for one of the countries studied.

- Describe and understand key aspects of physical geography around the world including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes.
- Mark on a map the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.
- Write a newspaper report about a global issue.
 - Research an event in history or a current issue which has had a significant impact on the world.
 - Complete your own research on environmental issues such as rising temperatures and sea levels, rubbish burning, deforestation, destruction of the oceans and the coral reefs and climate change. Present your findings in a poster or make a group presentation to share with peers.
 - What can we do at school and in our local community to help with these environmental issues?
- Research and explore what needs to be done to ensure there is a clean environment for future generations?
- Explore and research information about 'Natural Disasters' around the world.
- Complete a project exploring the importance of water:
 - Explore the water cycle and write an explanation of what happens at each stage on a diagram.
 - Why is water important?
 - How can we look after water in our environment?
 - What causes a drought or flood? How does this impact on communities/the environment?
 - What is the environmental impact of using more water than we need to?
 - What is the consequence of having unclean water to drink?
 - What is the consequence of pollution in the rivers from industry?
 - Can you recycle water?
- Investigate the types of animals and plants which can be found in different habitats around the world. Describe the conditions in the different habitats; discuss and explore the different features of animals and plants which help them to adapt to their surroundings; compare animals and plants which live in two contrasting habitats; construct a simple food chain/food web for a chosen habitat.
- Investigate about endangered species in the world and write a persuasive argument explaining how animals in danger can be protected.
- Explore a selection of stories from different cultures.
- Create a story bag full of interesting objects from a different country which could inspire a story. Children to then create a story using the object(s) from the bag.
- Explore the work of famous artists from around the world/from your chosen country.
 - Create your own artwork in a similar style.
 - Compare and contrast the work of two artists from the same country/different countries/same time in history.
 - Use the techniques used by an author studied to create artwork based on the physical/human geography of the country you have chosen e.g. rivers, mountain ranges, landscapes, architecture, landmarks.
- Make a model of physical features of the land such as mountain ranges, volcanoes, rivers.
- Make a structure of one of the landmarks and/or iconic landmarks of your chosen country.
- Listen to music from different traditions and from great composers and musicians across the world.

- Make a sweet or savoury dish from one of the countries studied.
- Learn some words and phrases of a different language from a country of your choice.

RUSSIA

Question(s)

- What is the largest country?
- What is the longest river in Europe?
- How long does it take to travel from Vladivostok to Moscow?
- What is the main railway line called?
- Which mountain range marks the boundary between Europe and Asia?
- Why is farming difficult in large parts of the country?
- What is the name of the world's deepest lake?
- What happens to the ports during the winter in the Arctic Circle?
- What can be found in Siberia?
- How did Russia become the largest country in the world?
- Name the countries which have tried to invade Russia. Why did they not succeed?
- The Soviet Union was one of the most powerful countries in the world. Why was this?
- Why has Russia always wanted a port somewhere in the south?
- What is the name of Russia's only warm-water port?
- What are the barriers of Russia's geography?
- What benefits does Russia's geography bring to the country?
- How has technology helped overcome the problems of geography when transporting gas?
- Which countries rely on gas from Russia?
- How does Russia influence its neighbours?
- Where does Russia's wealth and power come from?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Why is the River Volga important to Russia?

- Study the four main mountain ranges in Russia (Caucasus Mountains, Ural Mountains, Altai Mountains and Varkhogansk Mountains).
- How are they similar/different? How are they important to Russia?
- Investigate what it is like in the Tanga forest. How does the Tanga forest benefit Russia?
- Compare and contrast two contrasting areas of Russia.
- Russia is split between two continents. Is there a difference between the two regions?
- What was the Cold War?
Who was involved?
What impact did it have on the world?

CHINA

Question(s)

- How are China's borders well protected?
- Why was the Great Wall of China built?
- What is the longest man-made structure on earth?
- What helped to unite the north and south of China?
- Why was the ancient Silk Road important to China?
- The Himalayan Mountains separate China from which country?
- How long does it take to travel by train from Lhasa to Beijing?
- Which part of China has an ideal climate for growing crops, such as wheat, rice and soy beans?
- Name two of the most heavily populated cities in China.
- What is one of the challenges of having the largest population in the world?
- Why is the Yellow River important?
- Why has the Yellow River become polluted?
- What is the name of the Chinese heartland?
- Why have a number of countries tried to invade China?
- Why is Tibet important to China?
- Why does China need global shipping lanes?
- Why will China continue to build up its navy to rival the USA?

- How does China's physical geography help/hinder the nation?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Compare and contrast two contrasting areas of China – mountains/Gobi Desert/Jungle/Heartland
- Like Russia, the Chinese used attack as a means of defence to expand and secure natural barriers, such as the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas.
 - Study the invasion of the Chinese army into Tibet and the effect this had on everyday life.
 - Debate the pros and cons of the Chinese invasion from both perspectives.
 - Discuss the effect of political conflict on the people in Tibet
How did the Chinese change the life of the Tibetans?
 - Why did many Tibetans decide to become refugees in India, Nepal and elsewhere? Why did many Tibetans want to resist the Chinese occupation?
- Investigate explorers of the Himalayas throughout history.
- Study the Shang Dynasty
 - What was the Shang Dynasty?
 - What is the Shang Dynasty known for?
 - What was it like in the settlements around the Yellow River Plain?
 - How did the Shang farmers provide food for their society?
 - What were the religious beliefs of the Shang Dynasty?
 - What was the Shang system of writing like?
 - What do archaeological findings tell us about the Shang Dynasty?
 - Compare the Shang Dynasty to other ancient civilisations of the time.
 - Why did the Shang Dynasty fall in 1046BC?

USA

Question(s)

- Why is America the most powerful country in the world?
- What natural resources can be found in the USA?
- Which state lies on the narrow coastal plain to the west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains?
- What is the name of the longest mountain range in North America?
- What opened in 1869 to make it easier to travel across America?
- What helps to protect America's southern border?
- Which part of America is ideal land for farming and cattle ranching? Why?
- What is the name of the biggest of the Great lakes?
- What is the Canadian Shield?
- Why is the USA hard to invade?

- What is so great about the USA?
- Why is Cuba too close for comfort?
- How many states are there in America?
- Why is the Mississippi important to the USA?
- Why was the river network of the Mississippi important to trade?
- What does it mean to be a 'Global Superpower'?
- How does a country become a 'Superpower'?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- What are the key physical and human features of North America?
- Compare and contrast London with a major city in North America.
- Compare and contrast two major cities in North America.
- Explore similarities and differences between two contrasting states of North America.
- Split the class into groups to investigate a different state of North America and report findings back to the class as a digital presentation.
- Compare and contrast geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom and a region within North America.
- Investigate the early exploration and colonisation of America.
- How did the colonisation of America by European countries affect the Native Americans?
- What was the American Revolution?
- How was the USA formed?
- Study a major event in American history.
- Rosa Parks has been described as 'The Mother of the Freedom Movement'. Do you agree? Use evidence from your research to support your judgement.
- Who would you choose as a significant individual who has impacted on American history?

Question(s)

- What is one of the key physical features of Canada?
- Why is it difficult to grow crops or feed livestock on the Canadian Shield?

CANADA

- Why are there small towns across the region of the Canadian Shield?
- Why does Canada have a small population relative to its size?
- What are winters like in Canada?
- Why would it be tricky to invade Canada?
- How many different types of maple tree are in Canada?
- Why are Canada and the USA close allies?
- Why is both the English and French language spoken in Canada?
- Why do the majority of people in Canada live near the border with the USA?
- How does the physical geography and climate help/hinder the country?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- What are the key physical and human features of Canada?
- Compare and contrast London with a major city in Canada.
- Compare and contrast two major cities in Canada.
- Who discovered Canada?
- During the 16th and 17th Centuries France and Britain colonised and fought over the lands of modern-day Canada.
- Where did they settle? What was life like during this time? What battles were fought? Who won? How did they win?

EUROPE

Question(s)

- Why is Europe fortunate in its geography?
- Why were North West European countries able to develop into wealthy and successful nations?
- What countries make up Europe? Locate them on a map.
How have they been shaped by the continent's natural barriers?
- What is the GIUK gap and why is it important?
- How wide is the English Channel?
- How is the UK protected by its geography?

- What is the Gulf Stream and how does it affect Northern Europe?
- What are ideal spots to build large ports for trade?
- What is the name of the highest and longest mountain range in Europe?
- Which country has the largest area of fertile land in Western Europe?
- Where can you find coal and iron?
- Why are the rivers important in Europe?
- When was the Industrial Revolution?
- What was the Industrial Revolution?
- Why is there a North and South divide in Europe?
- Why are some areas of Southern and Eastern Europe not lucky with their geography?
- Why does Europe have a violent history?
- Why is Poland vulnerable to invasion from other countries?
- What is the role of the European Union?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Compare and contrast two European countries exploring what is similar and different about the key physical and human characteristics of the country.
- Compare and contrast two European cities.
- How did the Industrial Revolution shape the modern world?
- First World War
 - When and why did the First World War start?
 - Create a timeline of the significant events.
 - Why did the First World War end? How did the Allied forces defeat Germany?
 - Where were the main battles of the First World War? Locate on a map.
 - Explore the impact of war on the towns, cities, people and soldiers.
 - Why were women important in the First World War?
 - Why was trench warfare introduced during the First World War? What was life like in the trenches?
Look at examples of Trench Art – soldiers made items from things they found in the trenches. Design and make your own art to show life in the trenches.
 - What was food like for the soldiers in the First World War? What was in a soldier's kit?
 - What weapons were used during the First World War?
 - How do we remember the First World War?
 - How did the war redefine Europe?
- Second World War
 - When was the Second World War and why did it happen?

- When and why did the Second World War end?
- Create a timeline of the significant events
- Who were the significant individuals during the Second World War?
- How did Britain and other European countries prepare for war?
- Discuss the role of war propaganda to boost morale.
- What was life like in the Blitz?
Why did the Germans choose to bomb Britain?
Did the Germans attack any other country from the air?
- Why was the Battle of Britain a turning point in the Second World War?
- How much of Europe did Hitler invade? Name and locate the countries on a map.

AFRICA

Question(s)

- Why is Africa both cursed and blessed by its geography?
- Why is Africa hindered by its geography?
- Why was it hard for large boats to trade on the African coastline?
- What did ships have to do before the Suez Canal was opened in 1869?
- Why do Africa's coastal countries tend to be wealthier than the landlocked nations?
- What factors allow South Africa to be more developed than many other African nations?
- Which country sends half of its oil to China?
- Which country is Africa's largest producer of oil? How many barrels are produced each day?
- Why is farming hard in many parts of Africa? Which part of Africa has the most fertile land for farming?
- What are Africa's rivers used for? Why are they not used for transporting goods across the continent?
- Debate the pros and cons of Ethiopia building a hydroelectric dam on the River Nile.
- What is the Sahel?
- What is the name of the world's largest dry desert?
- Why did many European powers want to make a colony in Africa?
- How did colonisation shape Africa?
- How is Africa different today?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Name and locate the different countries which make up the continent Africa.
Study a country of Africa (e.g. Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Morocco)

- Compare and contrast the human and physical geography of different African countries.
- Compare and contrast different regions of Africa – rainforest, desert, savannah.
- Compare life in rural Africa with the towns and cities.
- Explore African patterns – design and make own traditional African fabrics.
Adinkra printing – stamped traditional cloth made by the Ashanti people in Ghana.
- Study a non-European society that provides contrasts with British History (The Kingdom of Benin)
 - Where was the Kingdom of Benin?
 - What was life like?
 - How was society organized?
 - How did they trade?
 - Explore the Golden Age of The Kingdom of Benin
 - What do archaeological findings tell us about Benin?
 - Explore the decline of the Kingdom of Benin.
- Study Ancient Egypt
 - How can we discover what Ancient Egypt was like?
 - What impact did the Ancient Egyptian civilization have on the world?
 - Who were the Pharaohs of Egypt?
 - What can we learn about the Ancient Egyptians from the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb?
 - Why was the River Nile important to the Ancient Egyptians?
 - What were the greatest achievements of the Ancient Egyptians?

THE MIDDLE EAST

Question(s)

- Why is the Bosphorus Strait important to the Middle East?
- Why is the Strait of Hormuz important?
- Which country is described as the bridge between Europe and the Middle East?
- Why is the city of Jerusalem an important site?
- When and why was Israel created?
- The Arabian Desert stretches into which 8 countries?
- Why was Baghdad famous between the 8th and 14th centuries?
- Why did many scientific and cultural ideas spread from the Middle East to Europe and around the world?
- How is Iran protected by its geography?
- What is the main religion in the Middle East?
- Why is there a fierce rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran?

- What is special about the land between the Euphrates and Tigris?
- What was the Sykes-Picot agreement? How did this impact on the local communities?
- Why is it possible that the borders of the Middle East could be re-shaped in the future?
- What natural resources can be found in the Middle East?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of these natural resources on the countries in the Middle East?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Explore what life is like to live on the edge of a desert. Present findings to the rest of the class. This could be as a poster, artwork, information page or digital presentation.
- Study the 'Golden Age of Islam'
 - How do the achievements of early Islam contribute to our lives today?
 - Why were so many discoveries made in the Islamic world during this time?
 - What impact did the early Islamic civilisation have on the world?
 - How far did their influence spread across the world?
 - Baghdad was for a time the intellectual capital of the world. Discuss. Why did the 'House of Wisdom' attract scholars from around the world?
 - What was special about Baghdad in its Golden Age?
 - How did Baghdad become part of a flourishing trade network?
 - Why was the River Tigris important to Baghdad during the Islamic Golden Age?
 - What was daily life like for the rich in Islamic cities such as Baghdad?
 - Compare and contrast the Golden Age of Islam with life at the same time in Britain e.g. clothes, food, architecture, inventions, discoveries.
- Explore Islamic geometric patterns. Create and design your own geometric patterned ceramic tile.
- Learn about the beliefs of Islam
 - The 'Five Pillars of Islam'
 - Religious festivals
 - Holy Book – Qu'ran
 - Place of Worship – Mosque
 - Prayer mats

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Question(s)

- In which continent can you find India and Pakistan?
- When did the region divide into India and Pakistan?
- Why was the region divided? What benefits and problems has this caused for both India and Pakistan?
- How are India and Pakistan locked together by geography?
- Why is it important for Pakistan and India to be at peace?

- Why is the border between these two countries heavily fortified and guarded?
- Why is the area of Kashmir important to both Pakistan and India?
- What is special about the Ganges River in India?
- Why has China helped Pakistan build a deep-water port at Gwadar?
- When was India's railway system built? Why is the railway in India important?
- Why is Bangalore important to the Indian economy?
- Where would you find Mount Everest?
- How have the Himalayas helped to stop conflict between China and India?
- What is the concern about the land in Bangladesh?
- What are India's natural riches?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Why is the Indus River important to both India and Pakistan? How could the river cause conflict between the two countries?
- Study the journey of a river and explore why rivers are important to a settlement.
- Compare Pakistan and India – what is similar and different about the two countries in terms of geography, cities, buildings, culture, food, religion, art etc.
- Why is 'Indian Independence Day' celebrated on 15th August?
- What was India like during the British Raj ?
(period of time when India was ruled by Britain)
- India has a variety of terrain – compare and contrast the jungles, coastal plains and the Thar Desert in India.
- Why is Diwali celebrated?
Explore and design own Diwali Rangoli Patterns
- Study the Indus Valley Civilisation
 - Who were the Indus people?
 - What was everyday life like in the Indus Valley?
 - Why was the Indus River important to the settlement of the Indus civilisation?
 - What can we learn from the artefacts found in the Indus Valley?
 - Find out about the features and facilities found in Indus settlements. Compare the city to cities today
 - Why was trade important to the Indus Valley people? Compare trade during this time with today
 - Compare an Indus settlement with the Bronze Age settlements in Britain.
 - What happened to the Indus civilisation?

KOREA AND JAPAN

Question(s)

- How are Japan and South Korea different from North Korea?
- Why is this area a source of international tension?
- What is the dividing line between North and South Korea called?
- Why has South Korea developed a modern navy?
- Why does Korea have a history of being invaded?
- Why did Japan invade Korea in 1910?
- Why are the islands known as Dokdo Islands to the Koreans and as Takeshima Islands to the Japanese important to both countries?
- Why does Japan need the Ryukyu Islands and the Kuril Islands
- Why did Japan become a seafaring nation?
- Why is Japan known as an island nation?
- Why has Japan one of the largest economies in the world?
- Why do the majority of people live along the coastal plains of Japan?
- Tokyo is the biggest mega-city in the world. How many people live there?
- Why are Japan and South Korea willing to have a USA military presence in their country?
- How does the physical geography benefit and hinder these nations?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- What is the difference between a democracy and a dictatorship?
- Debate the advantages and disadvantages of each. Would you prefer to live in a democratic country or a dictatorship? Give reasons to justify your answers.
- Compare Tokyo with other major cities across the world.
- The Second World War
 - When and where did the Pacific War take place?
 - How did the Pacific War start?
 - Why did Japan get involved in the Second World War?
 - Why did the USA get involved in the Second World War?
 - How was the Pacific War similar/different to the war taking place in Europe?
 - Debate the pros and cons of America dropping an atomic bomb on Japan. Should bombs be used during war? Discuss.

- Why did Japan surrender?

LATIN AMERICA

Question(s)

- Why are parts of South America isolated from the rest of the world?
- What natural obstacles affect trade and farming?
- What is the 'populated rim'?
- Why are many settlements near the coast?
- What physical geographical features limit Mexico's trade with other countries?
- Why do many Latin Americans attempt to cross the harsh Mexican border?
- Why was the Panama Canal opened in 1914? Who built the Panama Canal?
- How long does it take to navigate the Panama Canal?
- Why is the sailing route around the southern tip of South America dangerous?
- Why is the Amazon Rainforest important to the environment?
- What is the name of the longest river in Brazil?
- Why is Brazil hampered by its geography?
- Why does the Rio de la Plata give Argentina an advantage?
- What is The Vaca Muerta?
- What is the longest mountain chain in the world? Where can it be found? Why is it described as impassable?
- Why are the Falkland Islands a subject of conflict?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Under the Canopy – Explore what it is like in the rainforest. What animals live there? How have the plants adapted to the surroundings?
- Why is the Amazon Rainforest important?
- What is deforestation? What are the main causes of deforestation? What is the impact of deforestation? Split the class in two and research the reasons for and against deforestation. What is your personal opinion? Justify your thoughts with evidence gathered during the class debate.
- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between two or more South American countries including the human/physical features and major cities.

- Look at page 70-71 Brazil: Battling Geography
Create a similar page for one of the other South American countries.
- Study the Mayan Civilisation
 - Why did the Mayan civilisation grow?
 - What was life like for the Ancient Mayas?
 - Why was farming so important to the Mayas?
 - What did the Ancient Maya believe in?
 - What remains of the Ancient Mayan civilisation?
 - What happened to the Mayas?
 - What is modern Maya life like?

AUSTRALIA

Question(s)

- What covers the majority of the Australian interior?
- Why do the majority of people live along the eastern coast and in the south-eastern corner of the country?
- Why would an attacking country find it hard to invade Australia?
- What is the Australian Outback? What can be found here?
- Australia's geography is diverse. What physical features can be found in Australia?
- Why does Australia have a strong navy?
- What is the Great Barrier Reef? Why is it under threat? What can we do to protect the Great Barrier Reef?
- What natural resources are exported from Australia?
- Where is the majority of Australia's food grown?
- What was the name of one of the first European explorers to reach Australia in 1770?
- Why has Australia built strong alliances with countries with a powerful navy, such as the USA?
- Why is Australia's alliance with China equally important?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- Name and locate the states and territories of Australia.
- Who were the Aborigines?
Explore Aboriginal Art – make your own aboriginal art using the signs and symbols of the Aborigines.
- Investigate the Great Barrier Reef – where is it? What can be found in the Great Barrier Reef?
- Compare and contrast Britain with Australia – culture, language, cities, weather, physical and human geography, Christmas.

- Investigate animals native to Australia – create a fact file describing their distinguishing features, habitat, life span, interesting facts. Use this information to create riddles about the Australian animals.
- Study Australia's geographical features – Uluru, Great Dividing Range
- Make Anzac biscuits or Lamingtons

THE ARCTIC

Question(s)

- Why do many adventurers travel to the Arctic?
- Why do many expeditions end in failure?
- Why is the Northwest Passage important for trade?
- What is the northernmost point on earth?
- Why do ships need an icebreaker ship to travel alongside them when sailing in the Arctic sea?
- Why is the Arctic a land of extremes?
- Why is the ice in the Arctic shrinking?
- How is climate change affecting the wildlife in the Arctic?
- How could climate change affect our world's geography in the future?
- Why is Russia developing an Arctic army?
- Which countries are part of the Arctic Council?
- Why has tension been growing between these Arctic countries?
- Why is it in the interest of the Arctic countries to work together?

Beyond the Map: *Links across the Curriculum*

- A journey to the Arctic – write a diary entry from the perspective of an explorer.
- Explore the role of UK scientists in the Arctic.
- What is the Arctic like?
- Who lives in the Arctic? How do they survive in this land of extremes?
- How is the Arctic similar/different to the Antarctica?
- What are the Northern Lights? Create your own art of the Northern Lights using oil pastels