

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 30 MINS

Geographic Groceries

Students explore the regions of a grocery store to see which foods are grouped together and why.

GRADES

3 - 5

SUBJECTS

Geography, Human Geography, Social Studies, Economics

CONTENTS

2 PDFs

OVERVIEW

Students explore the regions of a grocery store to see which foods are grouped together and why.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/geographic-groceries/>

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students think about a grocery store.

Ask students to imagine a typical large-chain grocery store. Ask: *What different sections are in the store? What types of things are shelved together?* Tell students to think of each of the parts of the store that have fruit products as a region. Explain that geographers define the word *region* as an area as "having one or more common characteristics that are found throughout." Ask: *How many regions would you guess your store has?*

2. Distribute the worksheet.

Divide students into pairs. Have pairs use mental maps to identify the approximate regions in a local grocery store using the worksheet *Regions in My Grocery Store*. Ask pairs to think about the location of each item and write its name in its approximate location.

3. Have students identify patterns.

Ask: *Can you find any patterns? Why do some foods appear together?* Give students examples of grouped foods, such as refried beans and tortillas, or tomato sauce with canned tomatoes. Ask: *Would you change your guess about how many regions your store has? Why?*

4. Ask students to name the regions.

Ask pairs to brainstorm names a geographer might give each region and write them on the worksheet. Provide two examples to get them started: the frozen foods region could be Antarctica; the bread aisle could be the Wheat Belt. Encourage students to have fun with this step and to create more than one region name per aisle, when needed. Remind them of the other "regions" of a grocery store, such as where the carts are, and the check-out section.

5. Have a whole-class discussion.

Ask:

- *Are some regions harder to define than others? Why or why not?*
- *Is each region the same size? Are some more noticeable than others? Explain.*
- *What items might belong in more than one region?*
- *Are the regions placed in some sort of order? What is it?*
- *Would you have organized the store differently? Why?*

Modification

Modern grocery stores are sometimes arranged in a more free-form layout than the worksheet suggests. During Step 2, encourage students to adapt the shapes on the worksheet, if needed, or to create their own layout drawing on a separate sheet of paper.

Extending the Learning

Bring six or more common grocery-store items to class. Have students write down where each item was produced and mark those places on a blank world map. When the map is done, ask them to identify any patterns.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- Human Geography

Social Studies

- Economics

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify the regions of a grocery store
- identify patterns in the organization

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Discussions
- Hands-on learning

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills

- Analyzing
- Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Analyzing Geographic Information
 - Organizing Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- Theme 7:

Production, Distribution, and Consumption

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 5:

That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Colored pencils
- Markers

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Small-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Geography is everywhere—even in the grocery store. Not only does your food come from all over the globe, it’s also arranged in patterns in the store like those that geographers study.

Prior Knowledge

☐ Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
region	noun	any area on Earth with one or more common characteristics. Regions are the basic units of geography.

For Further Exploration

Websites

- [Fresh From the World: Where Your Food Comes From](#)
- [The Landmark Project: Global Grocery List Project](#)

