

**RESOURCE LIBRARY**  
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

## Locate Yourself on a Map of the Americas

Students locate themselves on a map. They explore spatial relationships among geographic features that are nested inside one another, such as countries within continents, states within countries, and cities within states.

**GRADES**

K, 1, 2

**SUBJECTS**

*Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography*

**CONTENTS**

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## OVERVIEW

Students locate themselves on a map. They explore spatial relationships among geographic features that are nested inside one another, such as countries within continents, states within countries, and cities within states.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/locate-yourself-map-americas/>

## Program



## DIRECTIONS

### **1. Have students identify the continent and country in which they live.**

Have students identify the two continents, North and South America, on one of the large maps of the Americas from the Americas MapMaker Kit. Ask: *On which continent do you live? How many countries are within that continent? In which country do you live?*

### **2. Ask students to locate the United States state or district in which they live.**

Explain that there are many states and one district within the United States. Ask: *Which one is the biggest? Which one is very small?* Help students locate their own state or district.

### **3. Have students locate their school within their state or district.**

Explain to students that their city or town is inside their state or district. Ask: *What is the name of your state? What is the name of your city or town?* Tape an index card with a picture of your school on its location.

### **4. Illustrate for students how each of these geographic features are related.**

Draw a simple flow chart diagram on the board to remind students that they just learned that countries are within continents, states or districts are within countries, and cities and towns are within states or districts. Then reverse the relationships. Point out to students how their town or city is located inside a state, which is inside the United States, which is inside North America.

## Modification

For students who live outside of the United States, follow the same steps using the appropriate districts, provinces, or territories.

## Modification

If you and your students live on another continent, use a different MapMaker Kit. MapMaker Kits of Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia & Oceania are available from the [Nat Geo MapMaker Kits program page](#).

## Informal Assessment

Check students' understanding. Ask students to explain these nested relationships in their own words.

## Extending the Learning

As a class, read fiction or nonfiction picture books that take place somewhere in the Americas and feature a child, an animal, or a habitat. When you finish, display the books or copies of the book covers next to the large map of the Americas and string a piece of yarn from each book to the country or state where it is set. Choose books showing the diversity of cultures, habitats, and animal life within the Americas.

## OBJECTIVES

# Subjects & Disciplines

### Geography

- Human Geography
- Physical Geography

## Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify the continents of North and South America on a map
- locate countries within the two continents
- locate their own state, district, territory, or province
- describe the relationships between these geographic features in their own words

## Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

## Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Visual instruction

## Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Themes
  - Global Awareness
- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Remembering
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information
  - Organizing Geographic Information

# National Standards, Principles, and Practices

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 1:

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

### Preparation

### What You'll Need

## MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Index cards
- Markers
- Photo of your school
- Transparent tape

## REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom

## PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

# SETUP

open space the size of the desired map

# GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

# OTHER NOTES

Before starting this activity, assemble the Americas Mega Map.

# BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

## Background Information

The land masses on the Earth are identified as seven named continents. Each continent is then subdivided into countries, which are further subdivided into political units such as provinces, states or territories. Understanding the spatial relationships among nested geographic features helps you to place yourself in the world.

## Prior Knowledge

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## Recommended Prior Activities

- None

## Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
city	noun	large settlement with a high population density.
continent	noun	one of the seven main land masses on Earth.
country	noun	geographic territory with a distinct name, flag, population, boundaries, and government.
district	noun	region or area, sometimes a unit of government smaller than a state or province.

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
province	<i>noun</i>	division of a country larger than a town or county.
state	<i>noun</i>	political unit in a nation, such as the United States, Mexico, or Australia.
town	<i>noun</i>	human settlement larger than a village and smaller than a city.



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