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## UNIT NARRATIVE

## Driving Questions:

How does geography help us understand the world and the way people live in it?



**Unit Focus:** In this geography unit, students take on the role of explorers, mapmakers, and thinkers as they journey through the world of people and places. The unit begins with the foundational question—What is geography?—and builds curiosity by showing students that geography is not just about maps, but about how people interact with the land, how they move, live, and adapt. From

learning the basic parts of a map to understanding how climate and landforms shape communities, students start to view the world through the eyes of a geographer.

As the unit unfolds, students apply their knowledge in real-world ways. They learn to read and create maps using cardinal and intermediate directions, scales, and symbols. They explore natural resources, human adaptations, and how people modify the land to meet their needs. Through lessons on the 50 states, the geography of Texas, and mapping their own community, students begin to connect large-scale geographic concepts to their everyday surroundings. They also study how geography affects the economy—how location, land, and climate influence jobs, travel, and industries. Students engage in hands-on tasks and critical thinking activities, including making claims about geography using evidence they've gathered.

By the end of the unit, students will not only know how to use a map—they will understand the relationship between people and the environment. Through interactive lessons and reflection, they'll see how geography helps us make decisions, solve problems, and better understand the places we call home. The final lesson challenges them to become geographers themselves, confidently explaining how geography shapes our lives and our world. This unit lays the foundation for a lifelong awareness of how we fit into the map—locally, nationally, and globally.

## CONTENT STANDARDS

### Geography:

**3.3A:** Describe similarities and differences in the physical environment including climate, landforms, natural resources, and natural hazards

**3.3B:** Identify and compare how people in different communities adapt to or modify the physical environment in which they live such as deserts, mountains, wetlands, and plains.

**3.3C:** Describe the effects of human processes such as building new homes, conservation, and pollution in shaping the landscape.

**3.4A:** Use cardinal and intermediate directions to locate places on maps and globes in relation to the local community.

**3.4B:** Use a scale to determine the distance between places on maps and globes.

**3.4C:** Identify, create and interpret maps of places that contain map elements including a title, compass rose, legend, scale, and grid system.

### Economy:

**3.6A:** Explain how supply and demand affect the price of a good or service.

**3.6B:** Define and identify examples of scarcity.

### History:

**3.1A:** Describe how individuals, events, and ideas have changed communities, past and present.

### Social Studies Skills:

**3.14F:** Develop and communicate a claim and supporting evidence visually, orally, or in writing related to a social studies topic.

**3.15E:** Create written and visual material such as stories, pictures, maps, and graphic organizers to express ideas.

## ROADMAP

Suggested daily guide for instruction in this unit.

### Unit 2: Thinking like a Geographer

**Focus:** Understanding maps, geography's role in human activity, and interactions between people and the environment.

Lesson #	Content Focus	TEKS
1	What is Geography?	3.3(A), 3.3(B)

2	Understanding Maps	3.4(A), 3.4(C)
3	Cardinal and Intermediate Directions	3.4(A)
4	Scale and Distance	3.4(B)
5	Landforms and Climate	3.3(A)
6	Natural Resources and Conservation	3.3(C)
7	Human Adaptation and Modification	3.3(B)
8	Geographic Effects on Economy	3.6(A), 3.6(B)
9	Historical and Modern Maps	3.4(C), 3.1(A)
10	The 50 States	3.4(C), 3.1(A)
11	Texas Geography	3.4(C)
12	Mapping My Community	3.4(C)
13	Writing Day: Making a claim about Geography	3.14(F)
14 & 15	Becoming a Geographer: Final Project	3.15(E)

## VERTICAL STANDARDS

3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Social Studies	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies
Students will engage in a course about the change makers in US history and their impact on communities past and present.	Students will engage in a course about Texas history and how the communities have changed over the history of Texas.	Students will engage in a course about United States history and how our country was created and changed over time.

## VOCABULARY GLOSSARY

Key Content Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adaptation</b> – A change people make to live better in their environment.</li> <li>• <b>Claim</b> – An idea or statement someone believes is true.</li> <li>• <b>Climate</b> – The usual weather in a place over a long time.</li> </ul>

- **Community** – A group of people who live and work in the same place.
- **Compass Rose** – A symbol on a map that shows directions (north, south, east, west).
- **Evidence** – Information that helps prove or explain something.
- **Geographer** – A person who studies places and how people live in them.
- **Geography** – The study of Earth’s land, water, and people.
- **Globe** – A round model of Earth.
- **Grid System** – Lines on a map that help locate places.
- **Human-environment interaction** – How people change and are affected by the land around them.
- **Key (Legend)** – A part of a map that explains what the symbols mean.
- **Landform** – A natural shape on Earth, like mountains or rivers.
- **Legend (Key)** – A map part that tells what symbols and colors mean.
- **Location** – The place where something is.
- **Map** – A picture that shows where places are.
- **Modification** – A change people make to the land.
- **Physical feature** – A natural part of Earth’s surface, like lakes or hills.
- **Primary source** – A real piece of history, like a letter, photo, or tool.
- **Region** – A large area with things in common, like weather or land.
- **Natural Resources** – Things we use from the Earth, like water or trees.
- **Scale** – A tool on a map that shows distance.
- **State** – A part of a country with its own government.
- **Support** – To give help or reasons for an idea.
- **Symbol** – A small picture that stands for something on a map.
- **Tool** – Something used to help do a job.
- **Place**- A location where you can be
- **Movement**-The way people, goods, and ideas travel from one place to another
- **Map**- A picture that shows where things are located
- **Title**- A name given to something (a map)
- **Directions**- Knowing where something is or where to go
- **Locate**-To find where something is
- **Cardinal Directions**-These are the main directions: North, South, East, and West.
- **Intermediate Directions**- Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest
- **Distance**- How far apart two things are
- **Verbal Scale**- A way to tell someone about the map's scale using words
- **Ratio Scale**-A way to tell someone about the map's scale using numbers

- **Environment**- Everything around us, including living things and non-living things
- **Adapt**- To change or adjust something to make it suitable for a new situation
- **Mountain**- A large, raised area of land that is much higher than the surrounding area
- **Canyon**- A deep valley with steep sides, often carved out by a river over a long time
- **Lake**- A big pool of water that's surrounded by land
- **Tropical Climate**: A place that's always summer! It's hot and sunny, with a lot of rain
- **Polar Climate**: The really cold climate at the very top (Arctic) and bottom (Antarctic) of the Earth
- **Renewable**- A source of energy that is not depleted by use
- **Nonrenewable**- A resource that is not capable of being replenished
- **Conserve**-To protect something, especially an environmentally or culturally important place from harm or destruction
- **Preserve**- Maintain something in its original state
- **Economy**- The wealth and resources of a country or region
- **Money**- What people use to buy things they need or want
- **Jobs**- A task or piece of work, or a paid position
- **Historical map**- A representation of a geographical area from the past
- **Modern map**- A representation of a geographical area from the present
- **United States**- A federation of states formed in 1776; a country in North America
- **Texas**- A state in the U.S. founded in the 1800's
- **Desert**- A dry area of land
- **Grassland**- A large open area of country covered with grass
- **Travel**- To go from one place to another
- **Tourism**- When people travel to different places for fun, like for vacations or trips