

GEOGRAPHY



THE ADVENTURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Explore it!



Geography
Awareness Week

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

education



Dear Explorer,

We are delighted that you have made it this far. As you will see, this is no ordinary booklet. Do not go any further if you are afraid of going on adventures or trying new things. There is a severe risk that you will never see your community or the world in the same way again.

Over the following pages you will discover a series of missions. Your challenge is to complete and record each of them as best you can. By the time you have completed your unique copy of this booklet you will be an extreme adventurer and have a new-found expertise in adventure geography.

Before you accept any missions in this booklet make sure you have permission for your plans and that they are reasonably safe.

It's time to explore,

The Geography Collective
and
National Geographic Education



WARNING!

This booklet can be dangerous.

Do not:

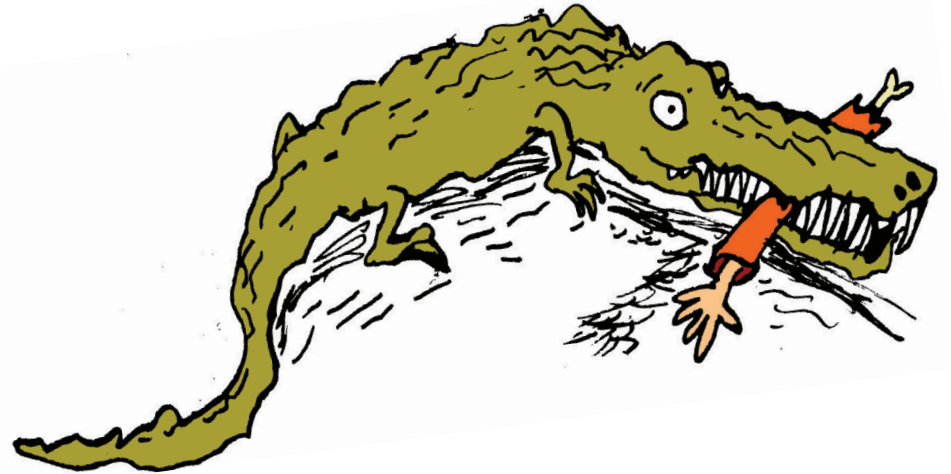
1. attempt to eat it
2. throw it at people
3. do anything that may harm people, wildlife, or the environment.

WARNING!

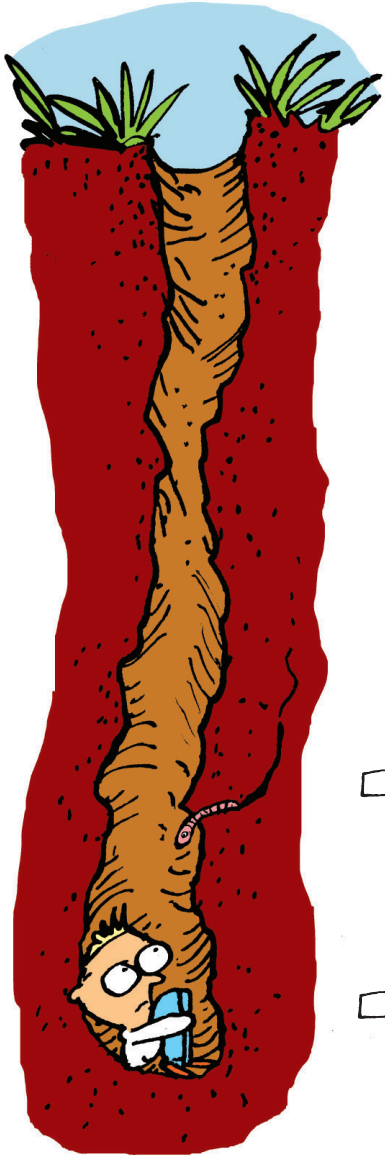
Attempting to complete the missions in this booklet will result in exciting explorations and brushes with danger. The authors take no responsibility for your safety when attempting missions—that's your job.

Before attempting any mission in this booklet, if there is a risk of something or someone getting damaged, try and remove the danger. Only attempt the mission if you can do it reasonably safely.

For example, cars kill a lot more people than alligators. Reduce the risk of a car damaging you by using a crosswalk.



Explorer basic training



Even the best explorers get into trouble sometimes. To make sure that they can get help if they're attacked by an alligator or get stuck down a hole, they follow this advice, and you should do the same. That way you can still be exploring for many years to come. You'll also avoid getting into unnecessary trouble.

Before starting



- ☐ Get permission to do the mission and make sure the weather is not going to turn dangerous.
- ☐ Make sure you let someone know where you are going and what time you'll be back.

- ☐ Always pack some basic tools: a watch, a fully-charged cell phone or some change for a payphone, and a basic survival pack (including any medication you take, some bandages, a snack, and a drink). Pack a map and compass too for navigating and marking discoveries.
- ☐ Do the missions as a team. Three is a magic number. If one of you gets hurt, one person can stay with them while the other goes for help. Agree on a secret call (hoooo!) and a place where you can meet if you get split up.
- ☐ Hatch a plan in case it all goes wrong. Where could you go to get help? Who would you call?



Basic training: be mission safe

Emergency contacts

Make sure you know who to contact in an emergency. Write their numbers here:

Emergency contact 1:

Emergency contact 2:

Emergency contact 3:

Emergency Services
(Ambulance, Fire, Police):

Emergencies

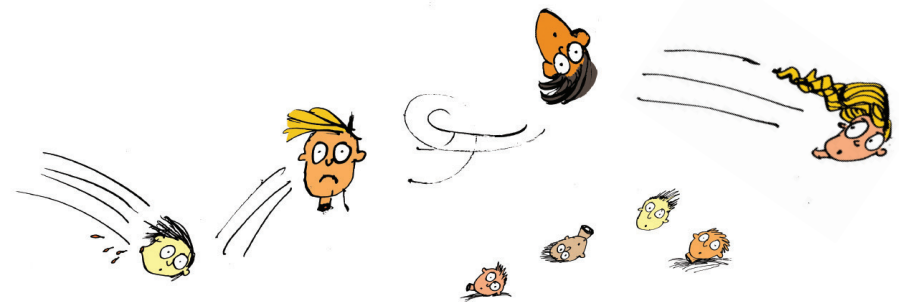
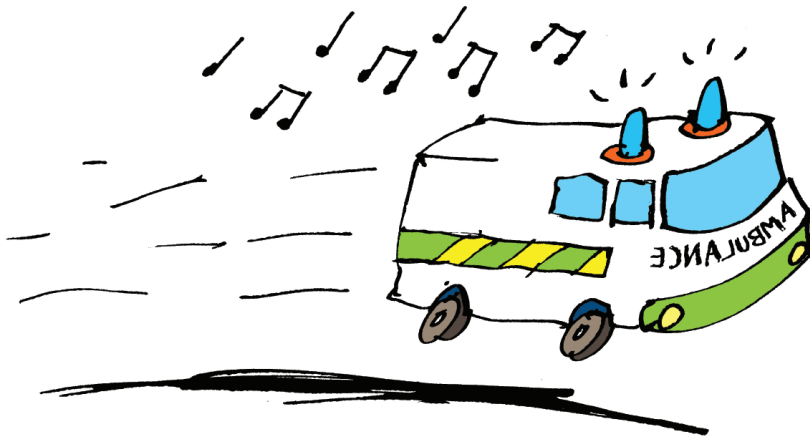
If the mission goes wrong follow these three steps:

1. Don't panic!

2. Call your emergency contact and tell them what has happened and where you are.

3. Stay where you are and wait for them to arrive.

Use this space to write down what has happened and where.



You and your team

All the best explorers have rules that they never break. Here are some to help you keep your head together:

- ☐ Follow what warning signs say and follow any rules that you know of.
- ☐ Always let an adult know where you're going and what time you'll get back.
- ☐ Make sure that you look after your friends and don't be persuaded to take silly risks.
- ☐ If you get injured make sure you tell someone who knows what to do.
- ☐ Never use tools that you need training for e.g., climbing ropes; they won't keep you safe if you don't know how to use them.
- ☐ Never go into a stranger's car or house.

☐ Always take the right supplies: juice, fruit, snacks, chocolate, and most importantly... water!

☐ Don't stick anything in your mouth if you don't know what it is. You don't want to be poisoned and start puking on everything.



People, wildlife, and places

- ☐ Protect and care for all people, animals, plants, and places you visit.
- ☐ Whenever possible, leave no trace that you have been to a place or completed the mission. Leave anything, from gates and hedges to ruins and parrots, as you find them. Dispose of garbage appropriately or take it home with you.
- ☐ If you're taking a dog, cat, pigeon, or other animal with you make sure it's under your control.
- ☐ Say hello to the people you meet. They'll like that and you'll like it when they say hello back.
- ☐ Be honest and take responsibility if things go wrong. You'll get far more respect.

Geography

Geography is about curiosity, exploration, and discovery. It gives you the power to see places in new ways, even imaginary ones. Geography also helps you to understand and make sense of the world.

To be a successful geographer you should:

- think of your own questions
- search for your own answers
- talk, watch, and listen to people, animals, plants, and places
- think about who you are and the effects of your actions on the rest of the world.

Geographers use many different 'ings' to research, share, and act on discoveries. Practice your 'ings' to improve your ability to do missions including: observing, reading, drawing, rubbing, digging, mapping, climbing, ducking, conversing, comparing, photographing, testing, seeking, peeking, clucking, barking, graphing, and searching.



Guerrilla Geography

You can do the missions in this booklet just for fun. You can also do them to become a Guerrilla (not gorilla) Geographer.

As a Guerrilla Geographer you will ask questions about places and encourage other people to ask questions too. Guerrilla Geographers believe in the importance of justice and things being fair and friendly for people, wildlife, and places.

Some of the missions you do will challenge you to think about things that are important to you. Other missions will get you or other people thinking geographically at what may seem unusual or unexpected times. Of course, it's also about having loads of fun having adventures and discovering new things.

Advanced training

If you want to take your missions to the next level join a club! There are loads out there that can offer you more advanced training. They have the right professionals with the best tools. If you join, you'll be set up for even bigger explorations in no time.

Completing a mission

This booklet is for drawing, scrawling, rubbing, scenting, scribbling, illustrating, printing, writing, scraping, dribbling, and sticking in.

Make sure you remember pencils and other tools to record your efforts and findings.

Reporting a mission

The best way to report on a mission is by letting your friends and family know about what you found out on your explorations. You can also take your success global by setting up a blog or, if you are old enough, using sites like Facebook and Twitter.

You can also report your missions to us. From the Mission:Explore website, tell us about it on Facebook or at NatGeoEducation.

Soon you will even be able to interact with other adventures and geographers just like you. Go to geographyawarenessweek.org to find out more!



1. Photographer Badge

must earn 1000 points

An important part of geography is looking at people and places in different ways. This allows geographers to study the world in new ways and make connections that they may not have seen before. Familiarity with a place can often cause us to overlook important details, but looking at something from a different angle often changes our perspective. In this way, photography is a medium that allows geographers to explore the world around them. Photographs can change how people see, think about, feel, and experience places, and geographers can use photographs to learn and teach people about the different people and places on Earth.

To earn the Photography Badge, explorers are challenged to see their communities in whole new ways: as if they'd just moved in, or from a bug's-eye or bird's-eye point of view. By looking at their neighborhoods through a new lens, explorers learn about scale, invasive species, and community cohesiveness.



1.1 See your neighborhood as if you just moved in 367 points

Can you notice three things that you've **never** observed before within a 5-minute walk of your home? Take some photos and show them to a friendly neighbor. Ask them if they can identify where the photos were taken and if they have ever noticed these things.

Tips

It's useful to have a camera for this mission. If you don't have one, make your fingers into a square, frame your shot, and then capture the view in your own memory. You can also sketch the scene on a notepad.

Geography

Familiarity with a place can lead to us missing out on the details of our neighborhoods, especially if we tend to drive through them rather than walk. Geography is about **observing** and **understanding** why places are the way they are and how they change over time. Are the things you noticed man-made or natural features? Is there evidence of human-environment interaction, weathering of man-made materials, or non-native vegetation, for instance? Look up and down and all around as you go, and make sure to also listen and smell.

Warning

Remember to keep to the sidewalk, and don't point your camera in people's faces. Always get permission from an adult before speaking to anyone you don't know yet. Also, remember to get permission from the property owner if you are taking photos on someone else's property.



1.2 Snap your community's image

1000 points

Photograph the things that you think hold your community together and create its identity. These could be things like community centers, roads, schools, parks, or neighborhoods. Produce a photo collage to represent the best things about the place where you live. Persuade your local or school newspaper to include the photos in one of their next editions.

Tips

You are going to need a camera for this mission. You could use a digital camera, or try to get your hands on an instant-film camera so that you can make an instant collage.

Geography

Photographs can change how people see, think about, feel, and experience places. News photographers tend to take photos of things that are going bad while travel magazine photographers look for the very best in places. By choosing your photos carefully you could influence how people feel about your local area.

When you explore and take your photos ask and try to answer lots of different questions. Can you think of things that make your community distinctive? What evidence is there of different cultures (if any) in the types of restaurants, grocery stores, architecture, religious buildings, or languages on signs? How do people move around your community? What transportation routes connect your community with other communities?

Warning

If you are going to photograph a person remember to ask their permission and explain what you are doing. They might be able to suggest some other people and places to help you complete this mission, but remember you should always get permission from the person responsible for you before speaking to someone you don't know.



1.3 Macro photograph a micro world

325 points

Explore from a bug's-eye view. Take photos of a place close-up to make a tiny place look like a whole new world or ecosystem. Can you find the hidden jungle in your backyard or playground?

After taking your photos from a bug's-eye view, explore different viewpoints in your backyard or playground. Take a series of large steps backwards (of course checking to make sure you don't crash into anything!) and, with each step, take a photo. How do these different photos change your view of your backyard or playground?

Tips

Some cameras have what are called 'macro' lenses. These lenses let you take pictures of things really close up without losing focus. If you can, play around with different cameras to find out which one is best for this mission.

Geography

Geographers explore the world on a scale from very small to very large. Scale can provide us with perspective, but sometimes we can play tricks on how big things really are! An ecosystem doesn't have to be an entire forest; for some bugs, a patch of grass is their whole world.

Warning

Watch out where you're lying down to take the photos to avoid squashing any of your photo subjects.

1.4 Become a remote sensor

609 points

Turn a digital camera into a satellite. Hover it above the ground and take a picture of the view below. Do this again from the same place each day for a week, or even each month for a year, if you can. How does the place change? How might it change in the future? Take more photos in different places (of different plants or along your sidewalk, for example).

Tips

You are going to need a camera for this mission. Try your best to take the image looking straight down and not at an angle. You could try marking the ground in some way to remind you where you took the image from last time. If you have one, your cell phone might have a camera that you could use.

Geography

Think of creative ways to place your camera high up and look carefully at the pictures that you take for subtle changes and patterns. What points, lines, and areas can you make out? What unexpected or unusual things come into view? How does the area change in different weather conditions, times of day, or through the seasons?

Warnings

This is a remote sensing mission, not a close-up and painful one. Be careful if you are climbing somewhere high not to drop yourself or your camera.



1.5 Alien invasion

444 points

Photograph evidence of where a non-native plant or animal has invaded a local ecosystem. Produce a 'spotter's guide' to these invasive species. Do some research to learn about how these species got into your community, how they are affecting your community's ecosystem, and if anything is being done to try to remove them. Include all this information in your guide.

Tips

Use a camera or make sketches for this mission. To help you identify invasive species are in your area, visit your local agricultural extension website (list found here: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html>) or state department of natural resources (list found here: <http://www.fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html>).

Geography

Each environment has its native species of flora and fauna, but sometimes plants or animals from different places are released into it, escape into it, or invade it. These plants and animals can create problems because they are not subject to natural controls (like predators) and they may need managing.

Warnings

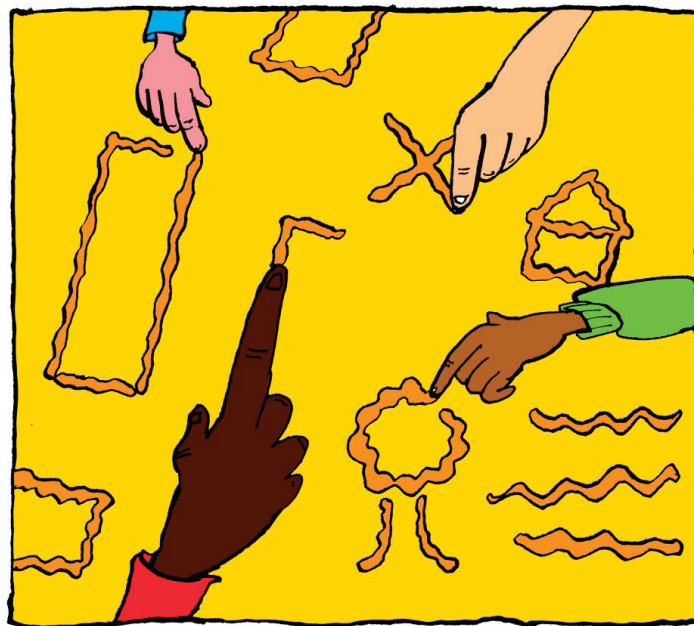
Some of these plants and animals might be poisonous and you must avoid touching them. Look at them from a distance or your hand might explode or be bitten off. If you see a giant grey robot, remember to say "klaatu barada nikto."

2. Mapping Badge

must earn 1000 points

Maps and mapmaking—or cartography—are an integral part of geography. A map is a symbolic representation of selected characteristics of a place. Maps present information about the world in a simple, visual way. They teach about the world by showing sizes and shapes of countries, locations of features, and distances between places. Maps can show distributions of things over Earth, such as settlement patterns or kinds of population across a given place. They can also show exact locations of houses and streets in a city neighborhood. Geographers use maps as a way to organize their data, and the graphic representation often allows them to make connections between people, places, and things.

To earn the Mapping Badge, explorers must investigate their communities by creating a variety of different maps—invisible mazes, maps based on smells, and others! These missions show explorers the many different ways maps are useful geographic tools used to capture all kinds of data.



2.1 Ghost wood

251 points

They say that the suburbs are areas where "they chop down trees and then name streets after them." Can you find the **hidden** trees in your own suburban or inner-city area? They might be street names or clues might be elsewhere. Create a map of this 'lost wood' and then populate it with 'lost' local wildlife. If you live in the countryside, what kind of "nature ghosts" can you find evidence of?

Tips

Take a look at old maps of where you live while doing this mission. You will find lots of clues. Make sure your own map includes these important elements: a title, a legend or key, a scale bar, and a compass rose. You can do this mission in some detail. You could do some research to find out if the trees you found were local species or see if they were used just because the trees have pretty sounding names.

Geography

Urban sprawl has removed large areas of natural vegetation across the United States. Subdivisions are sometimes named after natural features that were once present and can give clues to the past. Geographers are often involved in decisions about locating, planning and naming new urban developments. Place names are often derived from local landscape features.

Warnings

Get permission, take care, and do this mission in a team (3 is a magic number). If you find yourself on 'Lion Street' watch out for the big cats.

2.2 Invisible maze

337 points

Create a maze that **can't be seen** because it winds through your neighborhood. Create a map for your friends to use to find their way through the maze, and if someone manages to complete it without too many mistakes, give them a sweet prize.

Tips

You can draw your map in sand, in a book, or on a smart phone. You could go to the extreme and draw an invisible maze by using invisible ink. Mazes need to have a few dead ends where people have to turn around, but don't make it too tricky or your explorer may give up! Think about including challenges like a scavenger hunt or imaginary dangers along the wrong paths to make your maze more interesting.

Geography

Mazes are designed to confuse. Some cities can also seem confusing to new visitors, especially when maps and signs look different. How many different routes through your maze are there?

Warnings

Make sure that people following your map don't have to put themselves in danger to complete the maze. Think of a suitable place to put the finish. Steep cliff edges, open sewage holes, crocodile nests, and other deadly places should be nowhere near your maze!

2.3 Don't walk

377 points

Explore a place and discover something new without walking. How is exploring using various methods of transportation different for each? Think about the different advantages and disadvantages. Try exploring the same area both by walking and on wheels—what differences did you notice? Make a map that shows the different routes you took.

Tips

Choose from a variety of wheeled vehicles or design and make your own one. Of course, you could also find something or somewhere that can be explored without moving an inch.

Geography

Transportation is available, in different forms, to most of the world's population but for many people walking is the only option. For some not even walking is an option. In the U.S. it is estimated that around 2 million people are wheelchair users.

Warnings

Some means of transportation can be dangerous; putting up a huge zip line or building a giant roller coaster in your backyard might endanger lives. If you are using public transportation, check the timetable, get permission from an adult, and always let people know where you're heading.

2.4 Walk your footprint

1000 points

Estimate the size of your ecological footprint. How long does it take you to walk from its center to its edge? What is the total ecological footprint of your household? School? Community? Create a piece of art to demonstrate what you discover by doing this mission.

Tips

Use this <http://www.myfootprint.org/> calculator to estimate the size of your ecological footprint.

Geography

An ecological footprint is an estimation of how much land and resources are needed to sustain your lifestyle. It is used by geographers to show how much demand people are putting on the planet. In 2006 the average biologically productive area per person worldwide was approximately 4.5 'global acres'. The average for U.S. citizens is around 22.25 global acres.

Warnings

Make sure you get permission before you set out on your walk. You could perhaps do the walk on Earth Overshoot Day (http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/earth_overshoot_day/).



2.5 Welcome Map

704 points

Make a map that can be given to kids who are new to your area. Work in a team to think about what things new people would need to know about your local area and then start mapping them out on paper. Try to include some local secrets, interesting stories, and great places to discover. Once completed, find clever ways to distribute the map to newcomers.

Tips

You may need to do a few drafts before you have a map which is good enough to share. Be sure your map includes these important elements: a title, a legend or key, a scale bar, and a compass rose. Remember to create your map in a way that can be easily copied. Have an adult check over your map once you think you are done, but before you get it copied.

Geography

Maps are more than just cool-looking images; they are excellent graphic organizers, packing a lot of information into a smaller space. Your map can tell a newcomer where things are, but also where to find the best places to eat, hang out, watch a movie, or catch a butterfly. See how much information you can put into your map without making it confusing.

Warnings

Always get permission from an adult you know before speaking to people you don't know yet. Look at other maps to see how they work, but don't be afraid to make yours different.



2.6 Smelly-vision

259 points

Make a map of smells instead of sights in your neighborhood and think of a key to describe them: nice smells, sweet smells, smelly smells, etc. Where are there most smells? Where do these smells come from? How might these smells be different during different times of day or during different seasons?

Tips

Try closing your eyes and blocking your ears to do this mission. But be warned you will need help from a friend so that you don't walk in front of a car or fall down a well.

Geography

Maps can represent any kind of data spatially, not just buildings or things. See if you can notice maps in your local newspaper or around town that show information other than how to get from one place to another. With help from an adult, explore maps on the Internet. Different people and animals use some senses more than others. Can you think of any animals that depend on their sense of smell more than any other sense? Some people rely on their sense of smell for their living. Can you think of who?

Warnings

Avoid getting too near to the smellier smells and remember to wash your nose when you've finished making the map. If you are blindfolded make sure you have a friendly friend with you to avoid unnecessary pain and who can make notes about what you smelled and where.

3. Story-telling badge

must earn 1000 points

"Geography" literally translates from Greek into "writing the Earth." Storytelling is a way that geographers help to create and make sense of the links that connect us with different places around the globe. Cultural geographers, for instance, talk to migrants to learn their stories—why they move, how they have traveled, their fears, hopes, dreams, and desires. Other geographers may tell the story of Earth's physical features to better understand Earth's changing surface. By crafting their studies into compelling narratives, geographers are able to relay their stories to the public.

To earn the Storytelling Badge, explorers must create their own stories about their communities. They can create a museum showcasing something that comes from somewhere else, or write and perform a play about a place. They are even challenged to write a story using only billboards and signs they find in their neighborhood! These stories help explorers learn about the culture in their very own backyards.



3.1 Tell an object's story

351 points

'Interview' something that you've bought that was made in or comes from another country. What story does it tell you? How is the place it came from different than the place it traveled to? Share the story in an interesting way by setting up your own museum. Be sure to include a map that traces the item's travels.

Tips

You could do this as a role play, asking a friend to 'become' the thing that you have bought and replying as if they were the object. Think about how you could record your conversation with them.

To find a map, visit <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/multimedia/united-states-mapmaker-kit/>.

Geography

The links that connect us with distant places when we buy things are invisible, but geographers help to create and make sense of them. It's important to 'hear' and 'see' the story of where your t-shirt, gym shoe, or music player came from. It's also important to think about the resources and transportation patterns that were needed for it to come into existence. By understanding these links, you can better understand your role in today's globalized world.

Warnings

This is pretty safe, unless you are interviewing a pet alligator...



3.2 Cross the border

303 points

Walk (or drive or bike) between one neighborhood and the next. When do you know that you've definitely moved from one to the other? How do you know? Produce a guide for people who are unfamiliar with the local area that will help them to identify the local neighborhoods.

Geography

All places are divided by borders or boundaries, but these are not always visible. Sometimes people are uncomfortable when they visit somewhere unfamiliar; explorers need to overcome those fears. Geographers are interested in the relationships, differences, and similarities between boundaries and places.

Tips

Sometimes boundaries are obvious and marked by something hard like a wall; other times they are 'soft'. Listen for changes in accent, look out for changes in shop type, feel for waves of emotion, and sniff for shifts in smell. Remember that the boundary might be quite wide and it could take you some time to realize that you are somewhere 'new'.

Warnings

Move carefully and take note of local rules. Remember that visitors to a place should be respectful and observant. Get permission from an adult and do this mission in a team (3 is a magic number).

3.3 Map stories

378 points

Print out the biggest map you can, using National Geographic's mapmaker kit. Ask people who have moved to your local area the story of **why** they moved there. Write these stories onto the map as different colored lines connecting their place of departure to their place of arrival. Be sure to create a key identifying the different people you interviewed and the color of their line. Did you choose the right map to use? Do you notice any patterns? Does your community have a large representation of people from a particular part of the world? Why?

Tips

You will discover the mapmaker kits at <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/multimedia/united-states-mapmaker-kit/>.

Geography

Cultural geographers talk to migrants (people who move to live somewhere else in the world) all the time. They speak to them to learn their stories, why they move, how they have travelled, their fears, hopes, dreams, and desires. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you choose? Why would you want to live there? What are the "pull" factors of that place (the reasons you want to go there)?

Warnings

This mission involves talking to strangers. That's not always a bad thing, but get permission from the person who looks after you before you start, and work in a team. Have an adult with you while you conduct your interviews.

3.4 Site a play

1000 points

Write a play that can only be performed in a specific place. Place is often a very important part of stories. Think about *Harry Potter* without Hogwarts, *Lord of the Rings* without Middle Earth or *The Wizard of Oz* without Oz. . . . They just wouldn't be the same! Here are some questions you might use to help develop your story: How is the place unique? How do people feel about this place? What are the physical attributes of this place? Does this place have a special history? Has this place changed over time? What would you change about this place, if anything? What are people like in this place? Choose your words carefully so that your audience thinks about this place in a new way. Send in your script or share your play as a video to collect your 1,000 points.

Tips

Think about where you choose to perform your play very carefully. How many people do you want to perform for? Is the place sheltered if it rains? Are there features in the place that you can make good use of?

Geography

Geography literally means "writing the earth," so writing your script means that you are telling one of the many stories that make up the Earth. Look around you for inspiration. You could ask people who have lived in the place for longer than you to suggest things that you should be mentioning, or you could make up your very own history for the place. Literature is full of imaginary worlds, from *Alice in Wonderland* to *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Warnings

This might involve talking to people you don't know, wearing strange clothes, and doing funny things. Always get permission before you film someone or they might shout at you or worse!

3.5 Sign story

250 points

Using only words you can find on signs in your community, tell a story about it. Include yourself in the story.

Tips

You might find a pencil and notebook helpful for this mission. Think about how many signs you need to tell a story, and look out for useful words that could be used in different ways.

Geography

Geographers often think of maps and symbols as ways of providing information, but sometimes signs can give you a clue about a community's culture (Different languages? Different houses of worship? Ethnic restaurants?). Other signs are about the rules that keep your community safe. Combine the signs you see in fun ways... "Don't Walk," "End School Zone," and "No Standing any time" can be combined to make "Don't end school any time."

Some people say there are too many signs. Do you agree?

Warnings

Watch out for danger signs and remember to do what they say. Can you find the craziest sign in your neighborhood?



4. Take action! Badge

must earn 1000 points

A geographer's work illustrates the wide-ranging connections between people and places around the world. These connections mean the decisions of a single person or community can impact people and places around the world. Many geographers hope to inspire people to take action by exposing human or environmental tragedies. These tragedies can range from issues of sustainability to issues of historical significance. Many of these issues, though global in scale, can be tackled locally. By getting involved in their local community, everyone can make a difference!

From volunteering in their community, to starting a garden, to creating trash art, explorers have lots of ways of earning the Take Action! Badge. The badge inspires explorers to identify issues in their community and then come up with strategies to work towards a solution that is better for all involved.



4.1 Trash art

449 points

Go out with a trash bag and collect trash. Turn the items into a piece of art and try to get it featured in your local newspaper as a way of demonstrating any problems of consumption and waste disposal in your area.

Tips

You'll need to wear gloves, and ideally use a grabber, to pick up the trash. Avoid any risk of putting your hand somewhere spiky or smelly. Dispose of the trash safely once you've finished, and recycle what you can.

Geography

Sustainability is a key idea in geography, and our modern lifestyles are often less than sustainable. Humans often use resources more quickly than they can reproduce, re-grow, or recycle them. This mission will open your eyes to the things that people throw away. Remember, however, that nothing truly goes 'away'—trash is often transported to giant landfills or dumped in our oceans, which presents problems of its own, while recycled materials may be recycled into new products. Do some research to learn about where your trash goes.

How does this trash affect your community's environment? Does it affect your local watershed? Parks? Neighborhood?

Warnings

Make sure you get permission from an adult and some help to do this mission. Be sensible and don't go picking up anything that is too dirty, smelly, sharp, or dangerous. We don't want your arm turning green, falling off, and being chucked out with the trash!

4.2 Protect your heritage

367 points

Try to identify the oldest thing (it could be a person!) in your neighborhood. Start a campaign to have it protected forever.

Tips

What are clues to its age? Can you verify its age with the historical society in your town? What was going on in American history when it was created? Is it connected to population movement, the building of the railroad, or new industry in your town? Is it the only remaining thing of many that were made? Did someone famous live, or work with, beside, or in it? What value does it give your community? How is it different from other features in the local area?

You may find some clues in your local library or historical society.

Geography

All geographers are interested in history and all historians are interested in geography. They help to explain each other.

When answering questions about our heritage it's important to consider place, space, and time. What buildings should we not preserve for future generations? How can the culture or mood of a society influence the design of its buildings and cities? What innovations in construction can be seen in the buildings around you? How do the creators of buildings and cities change lives?

Warnings

This is fairly safe, unless your oldest building is a bit of a ruin. Follow any signs and don't go taking dangerous risks.



4.3 Flower power

432 points

Plant some beautiful flowers or start a community garden to make a neglected place more beautiful. Make sure the plants you plant are native species (or they may do more harm than good!). While you are at it, create a habitat for a local critter.

Tips

Check out <http://www.garden.org/zipzone/> to figure out what plants grow in your area.

Geography

Geographers are often involved with not only trying to learn more about the Earth and their communities, but trying to improve them as well. There are many organizations around the world that take neglected spaces and make them into gardens again. To find a community garden project in your local area, visit <http://www.communitygarden.org/>.

Warnings

Make sure you get permission from the land owner before you start digging up their land. Although gardeners should have 'green fingers', don't forget to wash them before you eat. Remember that some plants might make you itch (or worse) if you touch them.



4.4 Award sustainable businesses

675 points

Explore your local stores and coffee shops. Which ones have the most sustainable products? Reward those that are good with a certificate and ask your local paper to list them.

Tips

Decide on your criteria for what makes a store or coffee shop 'sustainable' before you start. Are the big chains 'better' than the small independent stores?

Geography

Geographers are interested in the idea that we should live in a way that doesn't reduce the chances of future generations living in the same way—that's what sustainability is all about. Many people talk about sustainability but this mission will reveal which businesses actually 'live sustainably.' One chain coffee store recently declared that "geography is a flavor."

Warnings

Try not to get in the way of shoppers who are often in a hurry. Always work in a team and get permission before setting out on an exploration.



4.5 ID a problem

1000 points

Identify a problem that faces young people in your area: homelessness, kids without school supplies, or a lack of playgrounds perhaps. Research the problem you are interested in and write up and submit a plan for how you would go about fixing the problem.

See if there is a related organization you can volunteer with. If not, organize a campaign to try to change things and raise awareness of the problem. Write to us with your plan to win your 1000 points.

Tips

Local government reports and newspapers can be great ways to identify problems. An even better way can be to go out and talk to people. Think about doing interviews or a survey to find out the issue that you think needs addressing the most.

Geography

Geographers are interested in the relationships between people, particularly when there are some that have power over others, or an unequal share of resources. It often takes someone to stand up and open people's eyes to a problem if things are to get better. Once a problem is identified and data is gathered, steps can be taken to solve it.

Warnings

Don't try to do this yourself. Gather a team around you with different skills and think of lots of ideas before you begin. Everyone has the power to change the world. Good luck!





The Adventure In Your Community
November 13 - 19, 2011

Launched in 1987 by presidential proclamation, Geography Awareness Week is an annual opportunity for families and schools to celebrate learning about the world. The week draws attention to the importance of geo-literacy, ensuring that people make well-reasoned decisions about our nation's economic competitiveness, national security, environmental sustainability, and the livability of our communities in the 21st century. This year's program website, poster, and booklet are the result of collaboration between National Geographic Education and the UK-based group The Geography Collective. Funding for the program was generously provided by the Founding Council of the Geo-Literacy Coalition.



National Geographic Education is the non-commercial, educational outreach arm of the National Geographic Society. National Geographic Education creates compelling educational materials for young people and the adults who teach them, provides unique learning experiences to educators, and advocates for improved education in geography, the environmental sciences, and other disciplines that are critical to geo-literacy. Learn more at NatGeoEd.org.



Mission:Explore is all about exploring and seeing the world in new ways. Created by The Geography Collective, Mission:Explore includes books, websites, mobile apps, and in person workshops. The Geography Collective is a UK-based group of geography activists, teachers, academics, artists, and guerrillas who have come together to encourage young people to see the world in new ways. Learn more at <http://thegeographycollective.wordpress.com/missionexplore/>.



The Geo-Literacy Coalition is an alliance of organizations that are working to improve the preparation of Americans for 21st century decision-making. The members of the Founding Council of the Geo-Literacy Coalition are CH2M Hill, Esri, the United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation, and the National Geographic Society.

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