

# UNIT 1

# Introduction to Our World









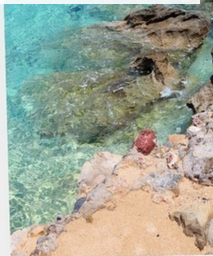
# Chapter 1

## The Social Sciences and Decision Making

### Chapter Preview


#### Terms

history, philosopher, geography, environment, absolute location, latitude, longitude, relative location, human geography, physical geography, political science, civic life, personal life, politics, government, economics, scarcity, trade, specialization, domestic, globalization, decision, issue, options, consequences, values



**Background:** Locations from Asia and Africa are the focus of this book.





In each school year you probably had a class called Social Studies. The class may have taught you about historical figures such as Paul Revere, Frederick Douglass, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and Cesar Chavez. You may have studied important places like Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the Grand Canyon, or New York City and events like the Pilgrims' first Thanksgiving, the American Revolution, World War II, and the civil rights movement. All of these and much more were part of this class called Social Studies.

Have you ever really asked yourself: What is social studies? Social studies is the integration of the social sciences, which include history, geography, political science, and economics. The purpose of social studies is to prepare people like yourself to be good citizens. Being a good citizen means having the knowledge and skills to make informed and reasoned decisions. Social studies encourages you to think about how people made decisions, why they made those decisions, and what resulted from those decisions. To understand events and problems in today's world, and to find solutions to these problems, citizens like you need information. Citizens also need to learn how to use information to make the best possible decisions. To be the best citizen, you will benefit from understanding more about the diverse world in which you live.

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*If we are to prosper together in our increasingly small world, we must listen to, and learn from, each other's stories.*

-Queen Noor of Jordan



## Section 1

## What Is History?

Setting a Purpose

## As you read, look for

- ▶ why people study the past;
- ▶ the role of decision making in determining history;
- ▶ terms: **history, philosopher.**

*History is who we are and why we are the way we are.*

- David McCullough,  
American historian

**History** is the story of the successes and failures from the past that shaped our world today. We study history to learn about the decisions people have made across time that shaped who we are today. If we understand our past, we can make better decisions today, and that will move us into the future in a positive way.

Studying history means learning about decisions that people have made over time. The **philosopher** George Santayana wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” A part of history is learning about decisions people have made across time, and how those decisions have affected events, issues, and movements. That includes learning about decisions that failed (so we do not repeat those mistakes today) and decisions that made life better for their country and the world. In other words, we study history in the hope that we do not repeat the mistakes of our ancestors.

Many students have learned about the history of the United States in elementary school. This textbook has information about the history of other countries. Learning the history of other countries provides information for decision making. To be successful living among the different people of the world, people need good information so they can make good decisions.





In this textbook are short histories of some countries of Africa and Asia. There are countries on these continents that were ancient when the United States was founded! They have cultures reaching back thousands of years. How have these ancient cultures adapted to the modern world? How do people with such a long history interact with people of other cultures? What effects do the traditions and cultures of these people have on their modern way of life? In the first book of this series, you learned how English came to be spoken widely in the world in the 21st century. A common language affects the ability of people to live, work, and trade across long distances. What are the effects of having multiple languages in a region? Asia has over 2,000 known languages. How do people live, work, and trade in the presence of this kind of barrier? Language and culture affect how people live. These affect their histories as well. How have people with differing languages and cultures adapted to living together? What events have shaped their interactions? Why did these events happen? How can we know what happened and why? How have events shaped the modern cultures of Africa and Asia? Can these different people find ways to live and work peacefully together in the future? These are the types of questions a good student of history will explore.

As you study history, you will learn about institutions (like governments), values, and beliefs of people in the past. You will also learn skills that will help you understand the past and conduct historical inquiry or investigations. Finally, you will gain a better understanding of how important historical events have shaped the modern world in which you live.

## Reviewing the Section

1. Which of the social sciences focuses on the events and people from the past?
2. How can studying history help people make better decisions?
3. Describe a time when you learned something from another person's success or failure that helped you make a better decision.



**Above:** This merchant in Turkey lists product names in four languages. This practice may increase the number of customers for the business.



## Section 2

# What Is Geography?



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*What makes a nation in the beginning is a good piece of geography.*

- Robert Frost,  
American poet

## As you read, look for

- ▶ why people study geography;
- ▶ the five themes of geography;
- ▶ the difference between absolute and relative location;
- ▶ characteristics that are part of human geography;
- ▶ the relationship between people and their environment;
- ▶ terms: **geography, environment, absolute location, latitude, longitude, relative location, human geography, physical geography.**

## The Study of Geography

The study of **geography** is the study of our surroundings—the physical features that describe places on Earth, and the human geography that examines how people make decisions about how to adapt to their **environment** (surroundings). The study of geography may be described by five themes. These themes help us understand our world. The themes are location, place, human/environment interaction, movement, and regions.





## Theme 1 – Location: Position on Earth’s Surface

Location describes where a place is on Earth. It can be described in two different ways: absolute location and relative location. **Absolute location** uses latitude and longitude to find the exact location of a place on Earth. **Latitude** is an imaginary line that measures a location’s distance north or south of the Equator. **Longitude** is an imaginary line that measures a location’s distance east or west of the prime meridian. For example, the coordinates of Atlanta, Georgia, are latitude  $33.7490^{\circ}$  North, longitude  $84.3880^{\circ}$  West.

On the other hand, **relative location** is a location described by where it is in relation, or compared, to somewhere else. For example, Atlanta, Georgia, is roughly 100 miles north of Macon, Georgia. Another example could be that Georgia is north of Florida and east of Alabama.

## Theme 2 – Place: Physical and Human Characteristics

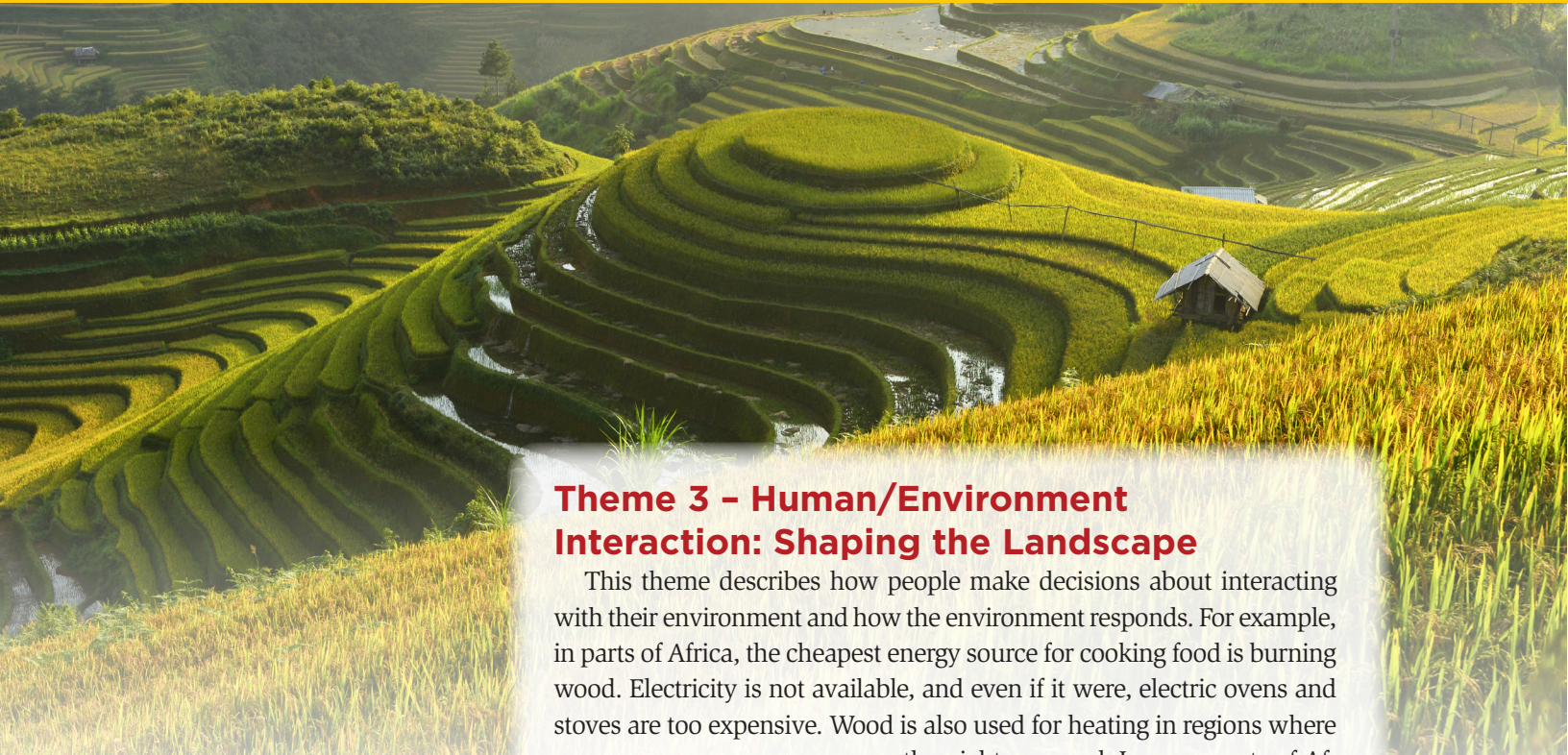
All places have physical and human characteristics that make them unique. Places can be defined by **human geography** characteristics that include languages spoken, customs practiced, and belief systems. For example, in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, and Syria, Arabic is the dominant language. Other languages are spoken, but Arabic is by far the most common. Even with the common language of Arabic, however, there is great diversity in the way people live in these countries. They each have their own customs, traditions, and even accents, which make their place in the Arabic-speaking world unique.

Places can also be described by **physical geography** characteristics that include landforms, climate, vegetation, and other natural characteristics. When learning about a place, it is important to understand the relationship between culture and location. The Himalayas, a mountain range in Asia, for instance, served as a barrier to block easy travel from the rest of Asia to India and China. The variations in architecture, traditions, and languages of the different people in the Himalayas region reflect the isolation the people had from other people on their continent.



**Top:** Haifa, Israel, is a city on the Mediterranean Sea. Its location makes it ideal as a port city. **Above:** An elaborate dragon is part of a Lunar New Year celebration in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), Vietnam.





### Theme 3 – Human/Environment Interaction: Shaping the Landscape

This theme describes how people make decisions about interacting with their environment and how the environment responds. For example, in parts of Africa, the cheapest energy source for cooking food is burning wood. Electricity is not available, and even if it were, electric ovens and stoves are too expensive. Wood is also used for heating in regions where the nights are cool. In some parts of Africa, it is estimated that 90 percent of the people burn wood or brush for cooking and heating.

Unfortunately, this practice has led to large areas of the continent becoming deforested. Africa's population is growing, so the demand for wood is likely to increase. Results from deforestation can be devastating. Local climates can change because forests have a cooling effect. Loss of habitat for animals is another problem that can lead to endangered plants and animals. Without trees, soils can erode in rains, washing away topsoil and leaving poor-quality soil in its place. In Africa, deforestation has also led to the expansion of the Sahara Desert in a process known as desertification.



**Top:** Farmers in Vietnam have built terraces into the hillsides to make the land there suitable for farming rice.

**Above:** Japan's bullet train passes near Mount Fuji. The train carries more than 150 million passengers a year between Osaka and Tokyo at a speed of 200 miles per hour.

### Theme 4 – Movement: People and Ideas Travel

Movement is when people, goods, and ideas travel from one location to another. Inventions like the airplane and large container ships have allowed people and goods to be shipped among nations quickly in the 21st century. Waterways such as the Suez and Panama Canals have cut travel times on the oceans. The invention of the Internet has allowed ideas to spread through social media websites, because people are able to communicate easily with others from all around the world.



The movement of people and goods can happen quickly in today's world. However, travel in the past was a bit slower. Before the opening of the Suez Canal, a trip by ship from Europe to Asia could take three months. When the canal opened in 1869, the time was reduced to three weeks! Today goods can be shipped from China to the United States in about a month by sea. If speed is an issue, small packages can arrive from China to the United States in less than three days!

### Theme 5 – Regions: How They Form and Change


Regions are areas with distinctive human and/or physical characteristics. In other words, a region is any unit of space that is united by the presence of some characteristic. For example, the desert region of Saudi Arabia is home to many nomadic Bedouin people. These people have maintained much of their traditional way of life, culture, and language in Saudi Arabia's desert. Although Saudi Arabia is a modern country in many ways, there are regions where people live much as their ancestors did many generations ago.

It is important to remember that regions are not the same as countries. Regions usually involve an area that includes partial or whole countries, or can be found across more than one country.

In this book, you will learn about the geographic decisions people have made across time and how these decisions have shaped the world you live in today. You will learn where people, places, and resources are located and why they are there. You will also explore the relationship between humans and the environment. As you study world cultures and cultural diversity, you will learn how humans create, learn, share, and adapt. You will also learn how culture has shaped our lives and society, as well as the lives and societies of others. The study of geography helps us to understand that *where* we live affects *how* we live.

### Reviewing the Section

1. What are the five themes of geography?
2. What is the difference between absolute and relative location?
3. What are examples of characteristics that are part of human geography?
4. Why is it important to study the relationship between people and their environment?
5. Why do geographers study the movement of people?



**Above:** Boats allow transportation to small, remote villages in India. They can transport people and goods and are also used for fishing.

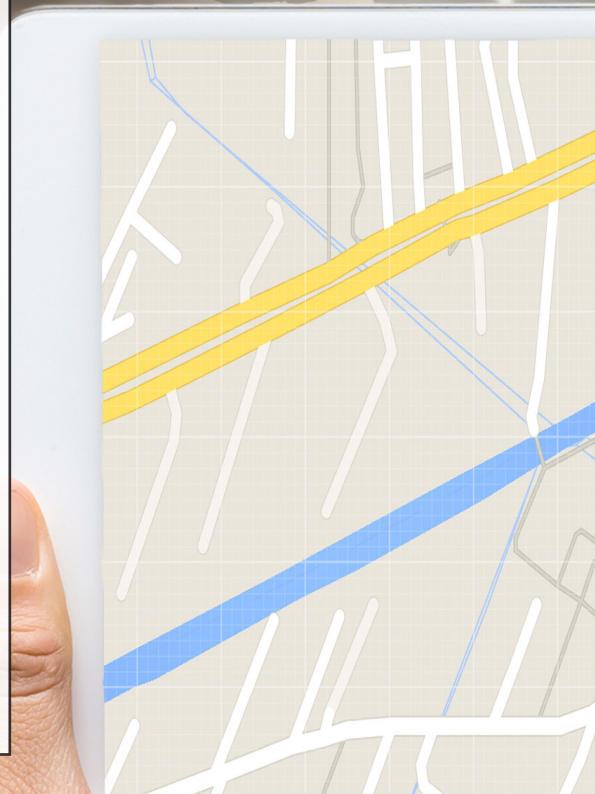


# special Feature

## Global Positioning System

Have you ever traveled by automobile to a place you have not visited previously? If you had not been there before, how did you find the place? If you had planned such a trip thirty years ago, you would probably have relied on printed road maps to guide you. While these maps took you in the right direction, they did not take you to your specific location and might not have had details you needed. For example, if you lived in south Georgia and you were going to attend a sporting event in Atlanta, your Georgia map could have guided you to Atlanta but not necessarily to the event's location. Once you were in Atlanta, you would have had to follow signs, get an Atlanta road map, or ask someone for directions.

In today's world there is a device that allows you to drive directly to your destination without the hassle of using paper maps or signs along the way. A global positioning system (GPS) allows you to have a navigation system in your car, on your smartphone, or even on a wristwatch. This system will take you wherever you want to go and will instantly show you the shortest or fastest route to follow. After selecting your route, the GPS will guide you with turn-by-turn directions. It can even warn you if there is a traffic problem and recommend an alternate route.



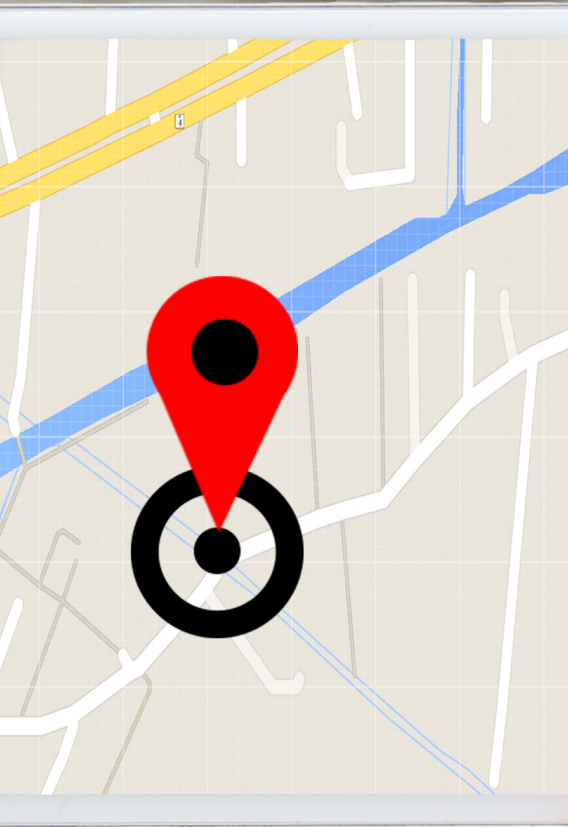




Have you ever wondered how these navigation systems work? Does it seem a little strange that your GPS always knows where you are? The GPS is actually a network of satellites in orbit 12,000 miles above Earth. They travel around 7,000 miles per hour and take about 12 hours to circle Earth. Satellites are positioned where a GPS receiver on

the ground can receive signals from at least six of them at any one time at any location. A GPS receiver calculates the satellites' speed and direction by using their change in position over time. The GPS device can calculate its position many times in as little as one second.

At first, GPS systems were used for the military. President Ronald Reagan decided to make them available for civilian use in 1980. Nearly forty years later, not only are they used for personal navigation, but they can be used for tracking. Tags containing a chip can be placed in items to make them easier to find. These tags can help you locate anything from your luggage to car keys to pets. Chips can be placed in golf balls so golfers can find lost balls more quickly and perhaps shorten their time on a golf course. The chips can also track the movement of people. A parent can track the movement of a child who has a device with a chip. Newer uses of the tracking system call for the insertion of a chip device in the shoes of elderly Alzheimer's patients. This technology would allow caregivers to locate patients who may have wandered away from their room. What other uses can you think of for GPS technology?





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*The way to secure liberty is to place it in the people's hands, that is, to give them the power at all times to defend it in the legislature and in the courts of justice.*

- John Adams,  
president of the  
United States

## Section 3

# What Is Political Science?

Setting a Purpose

### As you read, look for

- ▶ why people study government;
- ▶ the three parts of political science;
- ▶ the importance of civic education;
- ▶ terms: **political science, civic life, personal life, politics, government.**

**Political science** is the study of different types of governments. Once you understand different types of governments, you will begin to understand the decisions different governments make in the hope of helping their citizens. There are three main parts of political science: civic life, politics, and government.

A person's life can be divided into two areas: civic or public and private or personal. **Civic life** looks at how citizens' decisions affect the local community and its decisions. This would include voting for a candidate in an election or even running for office. On the other hand, private or **personal life** includes decisions that people make about their own personal interests, like making the decision about what to eat for lunch.

**Politics** is a process through which people with different opinions are able to reach decisions together that are agreed to and enforced. Every social group—including family, schools, clubs, and governments—is engaged in politics. Political life helps people accomplish goals they could not reach by themselves.





The final part of political science is government. **Government** is made up of the people and institutions in a society that have the authority to make, carry out, and enforce laws, as well as settle disputes. Most government decisions are focused on the distribution of resources in a society, as well as the allocation of benefits and burdens and the management of conflict.

It is important for citizens to understand that people have different opinions and views about civic life, politics, and government. Citizens must be able to make informed, or educated, decisions about their government and what their government should and should not do. Citizens must also be able to make decisions about how they live their lives together and how they can support the proper use of power in the government. It is very important for citizens to understand civic ideals and practices so they can fully participate in society. Such awareness is an essential part of citizenship education.

One important part of citizenship education is understanding the relationship between historical events and government. You will learn about the purposes and functions of government. This will include learning how much power each government has, as well as the difference between democratic and nondemocratic governments. This knowledge will help you comprehend the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy and understand the importance of being an active citizen in your country.

**Below:** Casting ballots and raising hands are examples of how people can show their opinion on issues.



## Reviewing the Section

1. Why do people study political science?
2. What are the three parts of political science? Define each one.
3. Why is civic education important?

“

*Every voter ought not merely to vote, but to vote under the inspiration of a high purpose to serve a nation.*

- Calvin Coolidge,  
president of the  
United States





**Below:** Merchants use this floating market in Thailand to buy their fresh fruit, meat, vegetables, and baked goods.

## Section 4

# What Is Economics?

Setting a Purpose

### As you read, look for

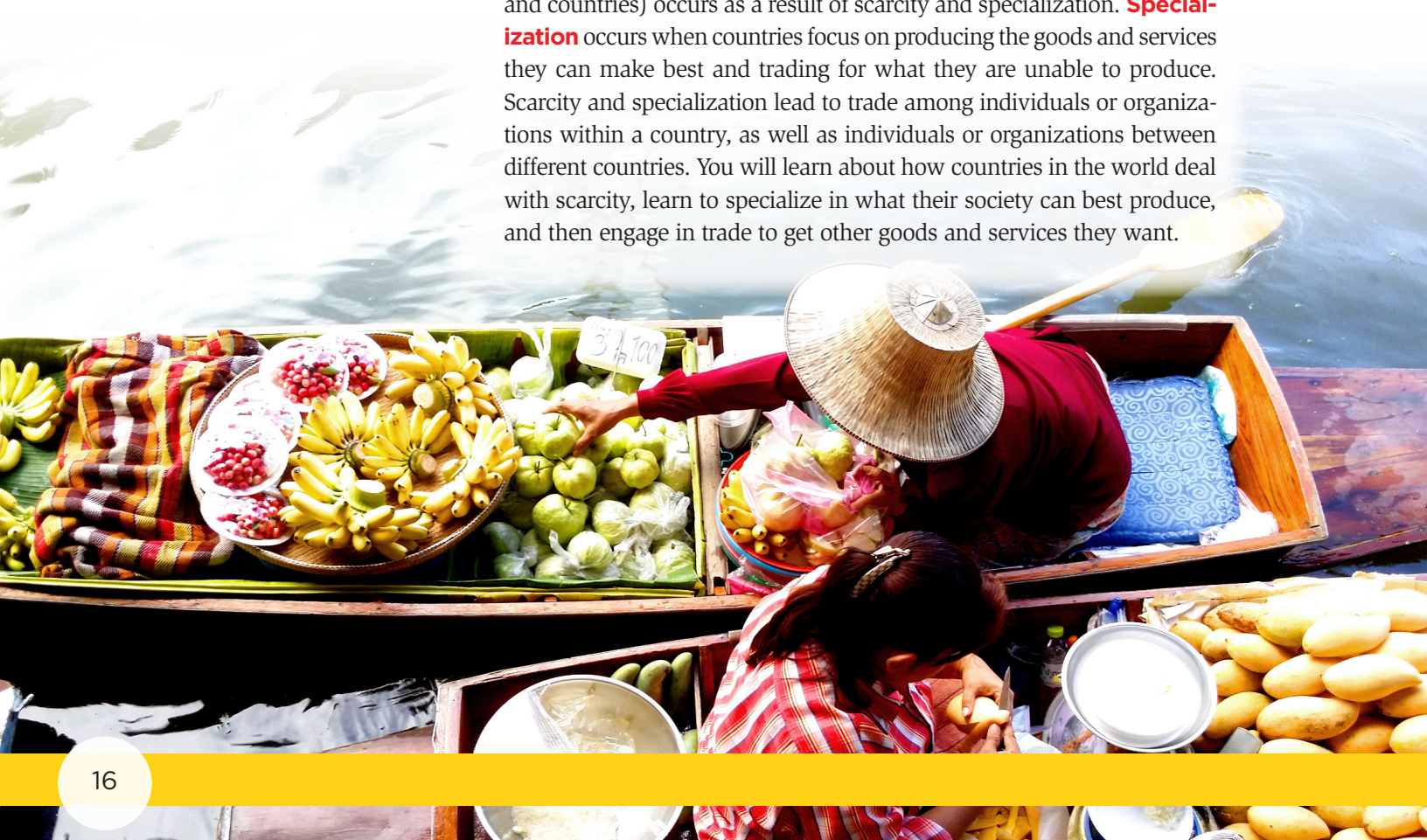
- ▶ why people study economics;
- ▶ the role scarcity and specialization play in creating trade;
- ▶ terms: **economics, scarcity, trade, specialization, domestic, globalization.**

Every nation on the Earth that embraces market economics and the free enterprise system is pulling millions of its people out of poverty. The free enterprise system creates prosperity, not denies it.

- Marco Rubio,  
US senator, Florida

**Economics** is the study of how decisions are made about how to allocate, or distribute, limited resources in order to satisfy our unlimited wants. Resources are limited; therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want. Individuals, groups, and societies all experience **scarcity** (the situation that exists when there is unlimited demand but not enough supply of a good or service). As a result, people must choose some things and give up others. Effective decision making requires a person to compare the additional costs of alternatives, or choices, with the additional benefits.

**Trade** (the voluntary exchange of goods and services among people and countries) occurs as a result of scarcity and specialization. **Specialization** occurs when countries focus on producing the goods and services they can make best and trading for what they are unable to produce. Scarcity and specialization lead to trade among individuals or organizations within a country, as well as individuals or organizations between different countries. You will learn about how countries in the world deal with scarcity, learn to specialize in what their society can best produce, and then engage in trade to get other goods and services they want.







Learning about trade allows you to study how people organize production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. It also prepares you to understand **domestic** (having to do with one's own country) and global economic issues. Being able to understand global interdependence means you understand the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies. Because of rapid transportation and instantaneous communication, your world is getting smaller every day. It is important that you know about countries all over the world. Understanding trade and interdependence will also help you understand problems that are a result of **globalization** (the development of an increasingly worldwide economy).

## Reviewing the Section

1. What is scarcity?
2. Why are scarcity and specialization important to understanding global economics?
3. Why is it important to understand trade?

**Above:** Instantaneous communication and rapid transportation allow businesses to trade in the global marketplace.



## Section 5

# What Is Decision Making?

## As you read, look for

- ▶ the importance of decision making;
- ▶ the important steps to take before making a decision;
- ▶ terms: **decision, issue, options, consequences, values.**



Learning how to make decisions is at the core of social studies. A **decision** is a determination reached after consideration. Throughout history, people have made decisions by thinking about alternatives and choosing to do what they believe is best for them. Of course, people have not always made the best decisions. When Nigeria gained independence from Great Britain in 1960, there were high hopes for democracy in western Africa. Great Britain set up a parliamentary leadership and left control to an elected leadership. Unfortunately, Nigeria was united in name only. It was really made up of over 250 tribal groups that the CIA described as diverse and antagonistic. The tribes had long histories, and the effort to suddenly unite them failed. By 1967, a civil war broke out, and over 3 million people lost their lives. The country was ruled by military leaders

for most of the next 30 years until democratic rule returned in 1999. A decision can be good for one group and bad for another.

To make good decisions, you must first clearly identify an **issue** or problem that needs to be solved. It helps to write out the issue as a question. If your current problem is your need for a new cell phone, you would write that as a question: How can I earn enough money to buy a new cell phone? Many times, the issue or problem has two parts: a goal to accomplish and a barrier, or obstacle, that is preventing the goal from being accomplished. In our example, your goal is to buy a new cell phone and your obstacle is that the cell phone costs more money than you currently have.



**Above:** Cell phones are a good often purchased for children in the United States.



The next step is for the decision maker to develop a list of possible solutions that could lead to achieving the goal. There may be two, three, or even more **options** (choices). Each option has **consequences** (outcomes), which can be both good and bad. The decision maker must think about the costs and benefits of each alternative. What are the possible solutions for this cell phone problem? Some solutions may be saving your money, earning more money by doing chores, or deciding to wait until the phone you want becomes cheaper. Think through the costs and benefits for each of these solutions.

Decisions involve balancing choices against one's personal values. What you **value**, or what is most important to you, will affect which option you choose. In addition to values, you must also consider both short-term and long-term consequences of each option. How will things be immediately different? How will things be different one month from now, one year from now, or even ten years from now? Think back to our cell phone example and possible solutions. What are the short-term and long-term consequences of each possible choice?

Finally, after combining information about your various options, your values, and the short-term and long-term consequences of each option, it is time to make the decision. You should pick what you think is the best solution to the problem. Be sure to ask yourself the following questions. What do you think should be done? Why do you feel this is the best option? Going back to our example one last time, which solution did you pick? Why do you think that is the best option?



### Reviewing the Section

1. Why is decision making important to know about?
2. What are two important steps to take before making a decision?
3. What are important questions to ask yourself before making a final decision?

**Above:** Students often work after school hours so they can earn money to buy goods they want.



# Chapter Review

## Chapter Summary

### Section 1: What Is History?

- History is the study of successes and failures from the past that have shaped our world today.
- Studying history helps us understand our world and make informed decisions based on examples from the past.
- Studying the history of many places around the world allows us to better understand people from other countries.

### Section 2: What Is Geography?

- Geography is the study of the physical features of Earth, as well as human adaptations of and interactions with Earth.
- Location (a position on Earth's surface) can be described as an absolute or relative location.
- Place describes the unique human and physical characteristics of an area.
- Human/environment interaction describes how humans adapt to or change physical environments and how these choices shape the environment and human lifestyles.
- Movement is when people, goods, and ideas travel from one location to another.
- Region is an area with a distinct human and/or physical characteristic that does not necessarily follow political lines.

### Section 3: What Is Political Science?

- Political science is the study of different types of governments.
- Civic life examines how citizens' decisions affect their local community and its choices.
- Politics is the process by which people with different opinions reach decisions and agree on enforceable rules.
- Government is the people and institutions with the authority to make, carry out, and enforce laws in addition to other responsibilities.

### Section 4: What Is Economics?

- Economics is the study of how decisions are made to distribute limited resources to satisfy our unlimited wants.
- Scarcity (a lack of products and services) and specialization (mainly producing your best product) encourage domestic and international trade.
- Today, countries are interdependent because of a global economy formed from many international trade deals.

### Section 5: What Is Decision Making?

- Making decisions is an important process that requires thinking about solutions, consequences, and personal values to solve a specific issue.
- The long-term and short-term consequences of each possible option must be considered.
- Value, or what is most important to you personally, will affect your decision.



## Activities for Learning

### Reviewing People, Places, and Things



Match each of the following with the correct description that follows:

history  
human geography  
latitude  
longitude  
civic life  
politics  
political science  
relative location  
specialization

1. the story of the successes and failures from the past that shaped our world
2. an imaginary line that measures a location's distance north or south of the Equator
3. the study of different types of governments
4. how citizens' decisions affect the local community and its decisions
5. characteristics that include languages spoken, customs practiced, and belief systems
6. when a country focuses on producing the goods and services it can make best
7. an imaginary line that measures a location's distance east or west of the prime meridian
8. a location described by where it is in relation, or compared, to somewhere else
9. a process through which people with different opinions are able to reach decisions together that are agreed to and enforced

### Understanding the Facts



1. How does studying social studies help make good citizens?
2. What is human geography?
3. Give an example of an idea that moves from one location to another.
4. What is civic life?
5. Do politics exist outside of the government?
6. How do scarcity and specialization create interdependence?
7. What two concepts help people make decisions?
8. How does history help us make decisions today?

### Developing Critical Thinking



1. Social studies includes history, geography, political science, and economics. Which discipline (or two) do you think is most important for understanding the world? Why?
2. How is someone's civic life different from his or her private life? Why is it important to understand the difference before engaging in politics?

### Writing across the Curriculum



Think of a decision made in the past that has had long-term consequences. Write a short report describing how this decision still affects the world today.

### Applying Your Skills



Create a booklet about the five themes of geography with an illustration and definition for each theme.

### Exploring Technology



Go to <https://mynasadata.larc.nasa.gov/latitude-longitude-finder/>. Use this website to find the absolute location of these places: (a) your school, (b) a place you want to visit, (c) a city in Africa, and (d) a city in Europe.