**Why is Geography Important?**

While many of us labored to learn geography in school, we always wondered why it mattered. Here are some reasons why a sound understanding of geography is more important today than ever before.

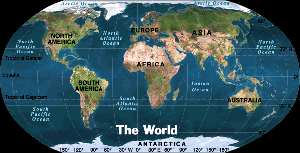
**Politics**

We live in a world that is shaped by the political climate in various locations around the globe. In order to understand the mindset of modern day politicians, we can often get valuable clues by looking at the present geography of the country, state, or province they serve. At some point in time, that geography was determined as a result of political actions that still have some lingering impact on the way the culture functions today. To understand the geography is to have a better grasp of how the political environment is shaped by past decisions and influenced by the realities of today.

**Culture**

Geographic designations that have developed over time also tend to be the foundation for the development of some sort of national pride or identity. Customs and traditions are often associated with aspects of the terrain and the borders for the jurisdiction. People begin to look within those geographical boundaries and discover or create common beliefs, characteristics, and physical aspects. These become the building blocks upon which a national sense of identity emerges. Why is Geography Important?

**Climate**

Understanding the way that the weather functions in various parts of the world is essential to a number of industries that we rely on it in order to meet basic living needs. We need to know what areas are rich with various minerals and natural resources, such as coal, oil, and salt. When it comes to food supplies, we need to know where conditions are just right for growing certain types of fruits, vegetables, and grains. When it comes to caring for livestock, understanding the climate in a given locale provides us with the knowledge of how to ensure the safety and health of the stock. Geographical conditions are shaped by weather conditions, which in turn influences how and where we can create and harvest the substances we need to keep our society going.

When one has a working knowledge of geography, there is much more at hand than simply being able to look at a map and identify localities by the proper name. Geography can be the launching pad to learning about many different aspects of living, from the politics we create to the replenishing of our food supply.