



Why Is Each Point on Earth Unique?

CHAPTER 1, KEY ISSUE TWO

What is Place?

- ▶ A *place* is a specific point on Earth distinguished by a particular characteristic.
- ▶ Describing the features of a place is an essential building block for geographers to explain similarities, differences, and changes across Earth.
- ▶ Geographers describe a feature's place on Earth by identifying its *location*, the position that something occupies on Earth's surface.

Location, Location, Location

- ▶ Location can be identified in three ways.
 1. Place Names
 - ▶ A *toponym* is the name given to a place on Earth.
 - ▶ Names derived from people of prominence, religious affiliation, physical features, or origins of its settlers
 2. Site
 - ▶ *Site* is the physical character of a place.
 - ▶ Characteristics include climate, water sources, topography, soil, vegetation, latitude, and elevation.
 3. Situation
 - ▶ *Situation* is the location of a place relative to other places.

Region: A Unique Area

- ▶ An area on Earth defined by one or more distinctive characteristics is a *region*.
- ▶ Most often applied at two scales
 1. Spanning political states
 2. Constrained within one political state.
- ▶ A region derives its unified character through the *cultural landscape*—a combination of cultural, religious, and physical features.
 - ▶ “Culture is the agent, the natural area the medium, the cultural landscape is the result.” – Carl O. Sauer, American Geographer
- ▶ Regions **change** over time.

Region: A Unique Area

- ▶ Regions are separated from each other by a transition zone.
 - ▶ An area of spatial change where peripheries of two adjacent regions join
 - ▶ Marked by a gradual shift (rather than a sharp break) in the characteristics that distinguish neighboring regions.
 - ▶ Area of mixed characteristics; possible tension (i.e. cultural groups, religious groups, etc).

Region: A Unique Area

- ▶ Geographers identify three types of regions.
 1. Formal Region (aka uniform region or homogeneous region)
 - ▶ An area in which everyone shares in common one or more distinctive characteristics
 - ▶ Characteristic could be local population as language, income, or religion. Could also be physical such as elevation or climate
 - ▶ Characteristic may be predominant rather than universal.
 - ▶ Formal regions must be measureable
 - ▶ Examples:



Region: A Unique Area

2. Functional Region (aka nodal region)

- ▶ An area organized around a node or focal point
 - ▶ The characteristic chosen to define a functional region dominates at a central focus or node and diminishes in importance outward.
 - ▶ Examples:

Functional Region Example

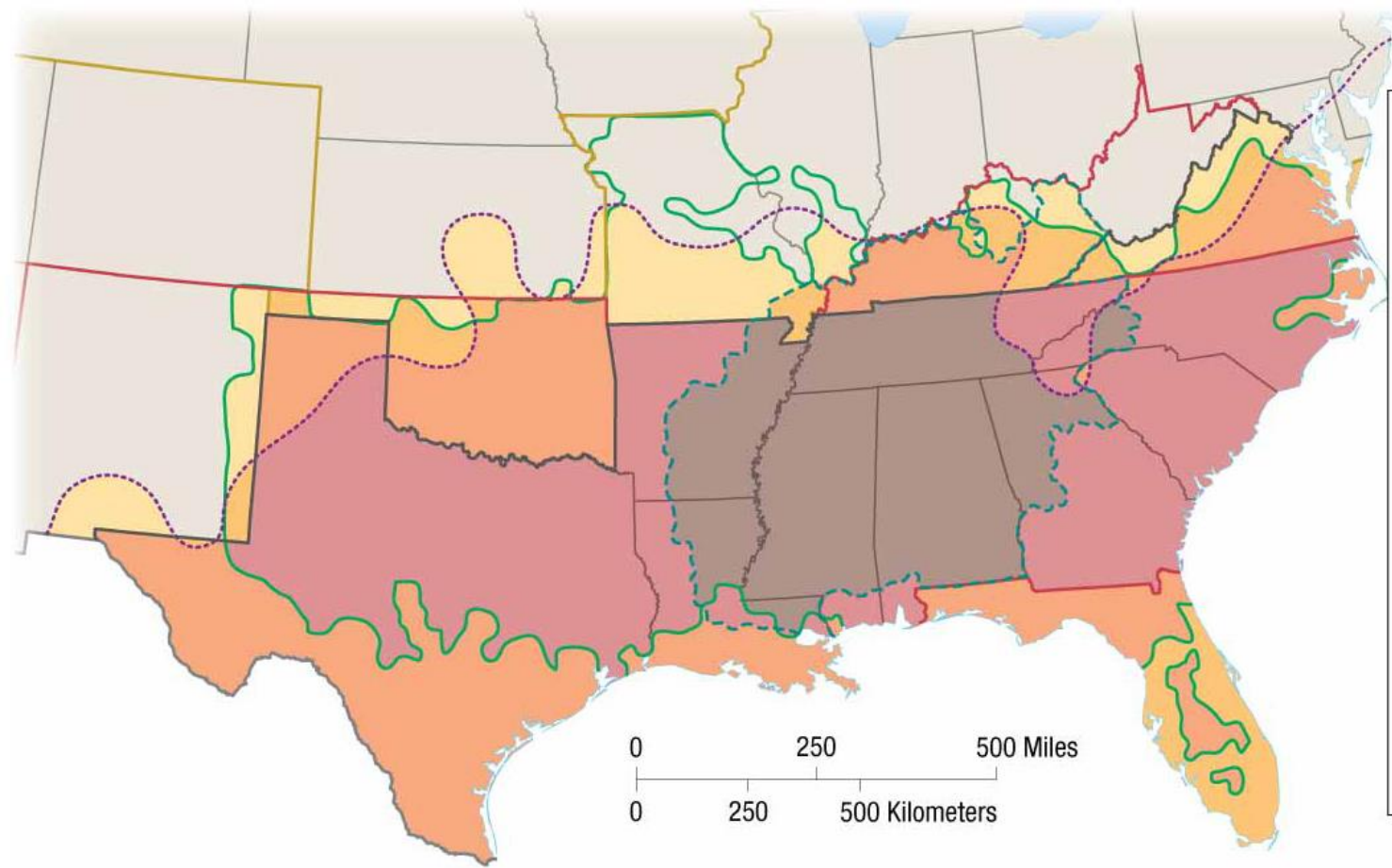


Functional Region Example



Region: A Unique Area

2. Vernacular Region (aka perceptual region)
 - ▶ An area that people believe exists as part of their cultural identity.
 - ▶ More likely than other regions to change over time.
 - ▶ Frequently based upon stereotypes, as people's definitions of perceptual regions are influenced by travel, media, reading, films, and conversations.
 - ▶ Examples:



Number of Definitions of South

5	2
4	1
3	

- Confederate states
- Below average high school and college graduation rates
- "Right to Work" states
- - - Winter precipitation exceeds 21 inches
- More than 50% Baptist
- - - Last freeze before April 1

Perceptual Region Example



Let's see if we've been paying attention...

- ▶ Texas
- ▶ Amazon River Basin
- ▶ Dixie
- ▶ Sun Belt
- ▶ Muscogee County
- ▶ Brazil
- ▶ Chinatown
- ▶ North Columbus
- ▶ Formal
- ▶ Functional
- ▶ Vernacular
- ▶ Vernacular
- ▶ Formal
- ▶ Formal
- ▶ Vernacular
- ▶ Vernacular

Regions of Culture



- ▶ *Culture* is the body of customary beliefs, material traits, and social forms that together constitute the distinct tradition of a group of people.
- ▶ Origin of word, *culture*, is the Latin *cultus*, which means “to care for.”
 - ▶ Two meanings
 1. To care *about*
 2. To take care of

Regions of Culture

- ▶ Geographers study both definitions of culture.
 - ▶ Culture: What People Care About
 - ▶ Geographers study why the customary ideas, beliefs, and values of a people produce a distinctive culture in a particular place.
 - ▶ Especially important cultural values derive from a group's language, religion, and ethnicity.
 - ▶ Culture: What People Take Care Of
 - ▶ The second element of culture of interest is production of material wealth, such as food, clothing, and shelter that humans need in order to survive and thrive.