

Why Place Name Geography is Important and a Call to Action

Every Adult Must Learn the Location of Every Country on Earth

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The rote memorization of place names and their location on the world map is an important part of geographic education. Certainly the discipline of geography is much deeper and wider than just toponyms (place names). However, one of the core aspects of geographic knowledge remains the ability to identify places on a map.

The need to know location evolves from the critical element known as location. By learning the location and names of countries, states, and capital cities, the educated global citizen develops a better mental map of our world.

It is this mental map that understands the relationship between places for security, resource, communication, and transportation purposes. The knowledge of the absolute location of places on the map is vital in today's global society.

Despite the information age, the Internet, and global telecommunications making the planet a smaller planet than it was decades ago, place still matters.

Human conditions vary widely on this planet and each nation state, through the world bodies and representation that currently exists internationally, has a powerful voice on the world stage.

A Call to Action

While place name memorization, for the most part, takes place in the early years of education, continually keeping that information up-to-date and accurate throughout one's life is an important aspect of being a geographically literate world citizen.

Every adult, at a minimum, should know the location of every country on the planet if provided the country name. If you haven't achieved this minimum standard of geographic literacy, it is time to start working on this. If you have, congratulations.

Learn the names of the capitals and locations of the major world cities.

Every home should likewise have an atlas as well as a globe. Being able to locate places in the world news on a map of the planet is an important part of being part of our global society. The news via the Internet and television of war, conflict, strife, genocide, disaster, and hunger reaches us every day. Everyone needs to know where these events are occurring on our planet. Both an atlas and a globe provide varying perspectives on location.

Once one knows the location of countries on the planet, one understands the relative location of places as well. One will know the neighboring countries of a country in conflict and know which (if any) water bodies are adjacent to the country in question.

I call upon every adult to ensure that they are adequately knowledgeable about the world by knowing the location of every country on our planet. By taking this step, the entire planet benefits because we will have brought the entire world into our personal mental and will thus better understand our planet and its political divisions.

Questions to consider and respond to in writing in paragraph form on a piece of notebook paper:

1. Do you agree or disagree with the author's "call to action"?
2. What parts do you agree with?
3. What parts do you disagree with?
4. Is it a realistic expectation?
5. Is it as important as he thinks? How did he convince you or why are you not swayed?
6. Do you think you will have an atlas or a globe in your home when you grow up? Why or why not?