

5 themes of geography (courtesy of Lisa Keys-Mathews, University of North Alabama)

1. Location – relative or absolute. **Relative locations** are described by landmarks, direction, or distance from one place to another. **Absolute locations** are exact and use longitude and latitude and street addresses.

2. Place – physical characteristics and human characteristics. **Physical** characteristics would include rivers, mountains, soil, beaches (think of landforms or anything physical) **Human** characteristics include the ideas, actions, and attitudes of humans towards a specific place. These ideas and actions are formed by the changes of environment and the experiences that people have in a certain place.

3. Human/Environmental interaction - Humans adapt, modify, and depend on their environment. Sometimes we change the environment and sometimes mother nature changes it back. Think of some examples. We can adapt to the environment by using our surroundings to the best of our abilities or changing along with the environment. We depend on our environment for many things like transportation. We modify our environment to perhaps make things more comfortable or life easier.

4. Movement – People, goods, and ideas. The movement of all three have changed and shaped our world. We live in a global community where ideas and goods are exchanged. People interact with each other through movement.

5. Regions - a region is a unit of study in geography and shows unity in an area. There are three types; formal, functional, and vernacular.

Formal – region defined by governmental or administrative boundary. These are not open to dispute so physical regions fall into this category too.

Functional – a region defined by its function. It can be classified by patterns of spatial interaction or organization. If the function ceases to exist, so does the region.  
(newspapers, railroads, trade flows, radio and television broadcasts)

Vernacular – regions loosely defined by people’s perception and can be disputed.  
(Middle East, the South)