

# Careers in Geography

---



A question students often ask themselves and their teachers is, “What can I do with geography in the real world?” This question is not unexpected, because while it is easy to understand getting excited about maps, different cultures and environments, and even being better citizens through geography, it is harder to see how geographic knowledge can lead to good jobs or meaningful careers. However, in recent years people have discovered that large number of societal problems have geographic dimensions and that education and training in geography provide essential skills for real-work problem solving. As a result, geography has become a necessary ingredient in hundreds of jobs.

## **Remember...**

- Geography is a way of approaching issues and situations.
- There is not single body of facts which can be called geography.
- Anything that can be mapped is geography.

## **What basic skills does Geography develop?**

- An ability to perceive relationships and patterns, and to see the working of a total system.
- An ability to communicate effectively in speaking and writing.
- An ability communicate through design and construction of charts, graphs, tables, and diagrams.
- An ability to read and interpret maps and photographs.
- An ability to use basic techniques of statistical analysis.
- An ability to create clear, precise maps – especially those using GIS.
- An ability to research using a variety of methods and media.
- An ability to sort through huge volumes of information and knowledge and select the material which is relevant to your specific topic or issue.
- An ability to interview.
- An ability to work as part of a team.

## How do you know if you want to be a geographer?

If you answer yes to a majority of these questions, you may have a bright future in geography.

### 1. Are you curious about **places**?

If so, geography channels this interest into a rigorous study of the makeup of places and what makes them tick.

### 2. Do you like to study **maps**?

The geographer's first inclination is to put information on a map in order to see how it looks spatially.

### 3. Do you prefer the **window seat** on airplanes?

Geography tries to explain the constantly-changing patterns of human activity and natural phenomena on the landscape.

### 4. Are you interested in **foreign areas**?

Many geographers specialize in a particular part of the world such as Latin America, Europe, Asia, or Africa.

### 5. Do you like to work **outside**?

Many geographers obtain their basic data from field investigation in environments that range from wilderness areas to cities.

### 6. Are you a **problem solver**?

As scientists, geographers are naturally curious about how the world is arranged. They ask lots of questions about why things are located the way they are and then they try to answer those questions.

### 7. Are you good at seeing **connections** among seemingly unrelated processes?

One of geography's strengths is its ability to integrate ideas about human behavior, social institutions, and the natural environment.

### 8. Can you adapt to rapid **technological change**?

Geography has been buffeted by monumental changes in technology. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) have revolutionized the way geographers collect, store, analyze, and present spatial information.

### 9. Do you try to see the **big picture**?

Geographers look at how places interact with each other, and how they are influenced by larger, more global forces. Geographers think big!

### 10. Are you interested in connections between people and the **environment**?

Geographers see the world as the human habitat, one that we have transformed and that has transformed us.