

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS GEOGRAPHY?

HOW DOES GEOGRAPHY
CONNECT US TO OUR WORLD?

LEARNING GOALS

As you work through this chapter, you will

- learn why geography is an important subject to study
- explore the concepts of geographic thinking
- describe the geographic inquiry process
- learn to read maps and analyze data

Where do people live? Why do they live there? How do we and our settlements affect the natural environment? Why are some places wealthier than others? How can we all live sustainably forever?

Each of these questions is a part of the study of geography. These questions examine important information about you, the environment, and the rest of the human population. Geography is an exciting subject to study because it helps us to make and explain connections to the world around us.

Geography is the study of “where”. Everything we see, do, or think is interconnected. The role of the geographer is to connect the “what” with “where” and explain “why.”

In this photo, Bajau children are paddling boats in their floating village in the Celebes Sea in Southeast Asia. For centuries, the Bajau Laut have lived almost entirely at sea, residing in houseboats or stilt houses built on top of coral reefs. Traditionally, their livelihood has been dependent on fishing. However, recently many of the Bajau Laut have started to settle on land, in part due to the need for formal education and the effects of overfishing. Have you ever thought about how our settlements impact the environment and the way we live?

