# **Places and Regions Discussion Guide (for use during or after reading)**

1. Describe the study of geography. Why might it be important to study geography? (Places and Spaces, p. 4-5)
   1. Geography is the study of places throughout the world. It includes studying Earth’s physical features as well as Earth’s man-made ones. Geographers study how places came to be, how they have changed over time, and how humans have changed Earth to suit their needs.
   2. Students’ answers about why it might be important to study geography will likely vary here. Encourage open discussion and questioning here. Help guide the discussion to include the different areas of study within geography and why each of those may be important individually and collectively.
2. What do you notice and wonder about the places and regions of Asia? (Asia, p. 8-11)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. Students may include the following information: Asia is the largest continent by area and population. It is divided into 50 countries, including China with approximately 1.2 billion people, or 20% of the world’s population! Asia also includes Russia, the largest country in the world. Asia includes mountains, coastlines, lakes, and deserts and has such man-made feats as the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, the temple at Angkor Wat, the Burj Khalifa, and more.
3. What do you notice and wonder about the places and regions of Europe? (Europe, p. 12-15)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. Students may include the following information: Europe is one of the smallest continents by size but contains 49 countries and 5 dependencies. Europe is densely populated, as it is the third largest continent by population. Europe includes fertile lands, landlocked areas, fresh water, sea water and oceans, mountains, islands, and many coastal features. In addition, Europe includes such man-made feats as the Eiffel Tower, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Tower Bridge, the Colosseum, and many famous cathedrals.
4. What do you notice and wonder about the places and regions of Africa? (Africa, p. 16-19)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. Students may include the following information: Africa is the second largest continent by both area and population. It contains 1.4 billion people living in 54 countries and 5 dependencies. Some areas of Africa are extremely rural, whereas others are quite populous. Africa is home to deserts, rain forests, farms, and cities alike. It includes the world’s longest river (the Nile River), flat-topped Table Mountain and Mount Kilimanjaro, as well as such man-made feats as the ancient Egyptian pyramids and Great Sphinx, beautiful mosques and churches, and modern buildings like Independence Arch or the Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre.
5. What do you notice and wonder about the places and regions of Australia, New Zealand, and their surrounding islands? (Australia, New Zealand, and Islands, p. 20-21)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. Students may include the following information: Australia is the only place that is both a country and a continent. New Zealand and the other surrounding Pacific Islands make up a region called Oceania. These areas are home to the Great Barrier Reef, the naturally spherical Moeraki Boulders, and the gorgeous scenery that makes it a popular tourist attraction. Australia, New Zealand and their surrounding islands also include such man-made feats as the gigantic statues found on Easter Island, Sky Tower, the Sydney Opera House, and the Sydney Harbor Bridge.
6. What do you notice and wonder about the places and regions of North America? (North America, p. 22-25)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. Students may include the following information: North America is the third largest continent by area and is divided into 23 countries, including those in Central America and on Caribbean islands. About half of North America’s population lives in the United States alone, with Canada following behind in population, but not size! Canada is the largest country by area in North America. North America includes such natural landmarks as Niagara Falls, Yellowstone National Park, Horseshoe Bend, and cenotes (underground lakes). North America also includes such man-made feats as the Golden Gate Bridge, a memorial to Crazy Horse, the CN Tower, and Chichén Itzá.
7. What do you notice and wonder about the places and regions of South America? (South America, p. 26-29)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. Students may include the following information: South America is divided into 12 countries and 2 dependencies. Brazil is the largest country in South America with 212 million people, covering about half the land of the continent itself. South America includes the world’s largest rain forest (the Amazon rain forest), its highest waterfall (Angel Falls), the world’s largest salt flat, and its driest desert outside the poles. South America is home to such man-made feats as Incan ruins from the 1400’s, Nazca Lines from between 100 B.C. and A.D. 800, the Panama Canal, as well as such vast cities as São Paulo, La Paz, and Buenos Aires.
8. What do you notice and wonder about the places and regions of Antarctica? (Antarctica, p. 30-31)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. Students may include the following information: Antarctica is the coldest, brightest, and windiest continent. No permanent residents live in Antarctica, but researchers do live and work there year-round. Antarctica is home to the South Pole, mountains, and even active volcanoes like Mount Erebus. The islands that surround Antarctica are home to many colonies and types of penguins. Some areas of Antarctica are not covered in snow because whatever snow does fall, quickly evaporates.
9. A region defines a specific, large area with common, distinct features. Describe the three major types of regions: physical, cultural, and political. (Physical Regions, Cultural Regions, and Political Regions, p. 34-39)
   1. A physical region is defined by physical characteristics like location, climate, natural resources, topography, or type of soil. Cultural regions are defined by features related to humans such as religion, language, common history, or economy. Cultural regions often do not have clear borders, which can lead to disagreements between groups of people. Often, your cultural region is a large part of your identity. Political regions are areas with defined boundaries, such as towns, cities, provinces, states, and countries. Political regions can be easier to define as they are often associated with and controlled by governments.
10. After reading this text, which places would you like to learn more about and why? (General)
    1. Students’ answers will vary. Sway the discussion towards students’ interests and prompt them to use information and examples from the text to support their opinion statements.