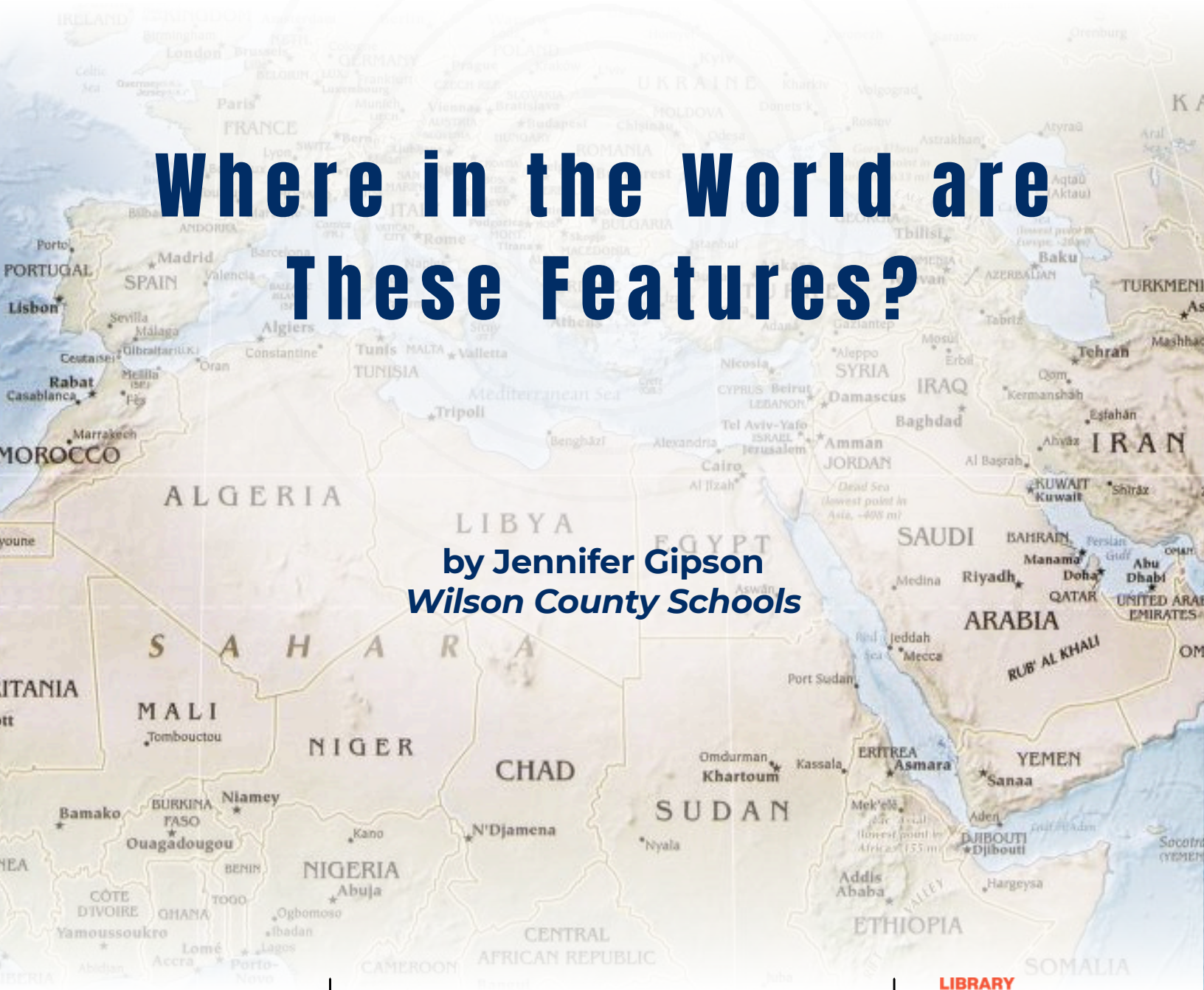
TN Standard 5.44 Social Studies

Mapping Student Possibilities: Navigating Primary Resources

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Where in the World are These Features?

by Jennifer Gipson
Wilson County Schools

This is an Open Educational Resource (OER) designed to provide inquiry-based lessons aligned with Tennessee 5th grade Social Studies Standards. This project bridges the gap between the new state standards and actual classroom implementation. Each lesson will help students transition from passive readers to active geographers, fostering the critical thinking and civic literacy essential for the next generation of Tennesseans. The Tennessee Geographic Alliance, Tennessee Council for the Social Studies, and Wilson County Schools Social Studies Department were instrumental to the process.

TGA

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Where in the World are These Features?	
Grade Level:	5th
Duration Time:	55 minutes

Brief Lesson Overview
Students will use maps from the Library of Congress to locate physical features of the world using clues in a Map Scavenger Hunt activity. They will then sort the features into the continents where they are located. The goal of this lesson is for students to utilize primary source maps to identify the major physical features of the world.

Standard:List the full standard including standard number
5.44 Identify major physical features of the world, including: • Rivers—Amazon, Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, Yellow, Ganges • Mountains and Ranges—Alps, Andes, Himalayas, Ural • Deserts— Gobi, Sahara • Bodies of Water—Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Black Sea
Success Criteria: I will know I am successful when I can…
I can identify the major rivers of the world on a world map. I can identify the major mountains of the world on a world map. I can identify the major bodies of water of the world on a world map. I can identify the major deserts of the world on a world map.

Assessment : Formative and Summative
Formative: The scavenger hunt worksheet and the physical features sort will serve as a formative assessment. Teachers should also move around the room as students discuss to notice and clarify any misconceptions. **Summative**: 5.44 Test: Students will label all 16 features on a blank world map correctly. Optional multiple-choice assessment (Google Doc or Google Form (the link forces you to make your own copy)

Resource Materials:(Include links sources-at least one source MUST be from the Library of Congress)
The World Map (2025) from Library of Congress (LOC) Physical Map of the World, 2002 from LOC Physical Map of the World, 2011 from LOC Blank World Map for students to label and draw Cognitive Interest Cue Slide Map Scavenger Hunt Worksheet Physical Features Sorting Cards
Other Materials: (anything else a student would need to complete this lesson)
Highlighters or colored pencils Computer

Cognitive Interest Cue: directly related to the standard and learning outcomes

The teacher will show all three LOC maps and zoom in on the map of Northern Africa showing Morocco, Spain, and Algeria (or use provided slides).
Discussion questions:

- Look closely and identify similarities and differences between the three zoomed in maps.
- Is there any information missing from any of them that the others show? Tell students these maps are all modern, but were made in 2002, 2011, and 2025.
- Do you notice any changes between the maps? Why might they have changed? (In the older two maps Western Sahara is shown, but in the newer map, only Morocco is shown and covers both previous pieces of land. Political boundaries have changed.)
- Why might cartographers need to continually make new maps of the same locations? (Possession of land changes over time.)
- Look carefully at the mountain range that runs through Morocco and Algeria? Ask which map would best help you identify the name of the mountain? (Only the colorful one labels them, but the others show the shading better.)

Tell students that they will be able to use the full versions of these maps from the Library of Congress to locate 16 major physical features of the world during this lesson. They will work with a partner to solve a scavenger hunt, using clues to locate each physical feature, and to sort the features by type and location.

Instruction: Step by step procedures for lesson

Cognitive Interest Cue and Success Criteria. (10 min)

Map Scavenger Hunt: (30 min) Students will work with pairs or small groups to explore the LOC maps. They will locate the 16 physical features by following the clues on their scavenger hunt worksheet and using the maps to find each feature. Once they locate a feature on the LOC map, they will highlight or draw it on their own blank map, labeling it with the correct name. (*See suggested scaffold.)

Physical Features Sort: (10 min) Students will work with their partner to sort the features in two different ways. First, they will sort by feature type (rivers, mountains, deserts, and bodies of water) and then they will sort them by the continent where they are located (or where they border).

Closing:(5 min) Ask students what they noticed as they sorted the features into continents. (Possible answer: it was hard to sort some because they border multiple continents.) Ask students to share which map they most relied on and why. Close by reminding students that maps, like history, are constantly changing even though the major physical features largely remain the same throughout history.

Suggested Scaffolds

The teacher can model locating the first clue on the scavenger hunt. They can use a think-aloud to show the process of how they choose a map and how they use their knowledge of continents to find where the clue is leading.

Pair students strategically to support students who may need assistance using the maps and/or reading the clues on the worksheet.

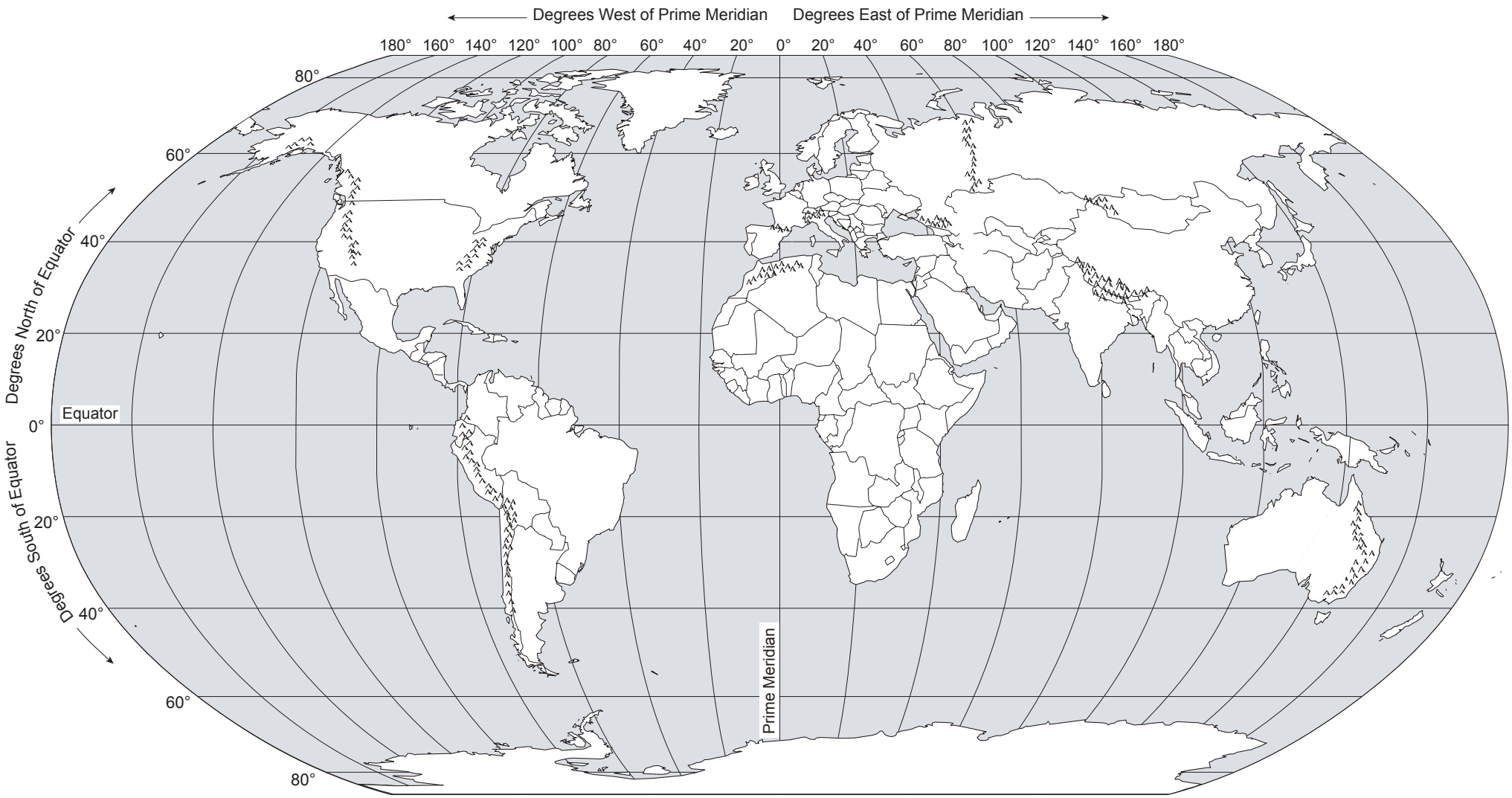
*If time is limited or students need reduced assignment, assign each pair one global regions (i.e. Northern, Southern, Eastern, or Western Hemisphere) to label in task 1. (This connects to standard 5.32)

Extension or Cross-Curricular Opportunities

Students could read articles about each feature and learn more about them.
Students could chat with a bot to research facts about the various physical features.
Students could create their own 3d map using materials from home to show the mountain ranges, rivers, and oceans.

The World and its Major Mountain Ranges, Rivers, Deserts, and Bodies of Water

5.44 Geography Test



Directions- Label the following on the map:

Amazon River	Alps	Gobi Desert
Nile River	Andes	Sahara Desert
Tigris River	Himalayas	Mediterranean Sea
Euphrates River	Ural Mountains	Red Sea
Yellow River		Black Sea
Ganges River		Persian Gulf

0 1000 2000 3000 Miles
0 3000 Kilometers
Projection: Robinson

ARIZONA GEOGRAPHIC ALLIANCE

Courtesy: Arizona Geographic Alliance **http://geoalliance.asu.edu/azga**
School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning
Arizona State University
Cartographer Susan Westhouse WRLDMTNS.PDF13

TN 5.44

World Geography- Physical Features

Identifying Physical Features of the World

Word Bank:

Amazon Nile Tigris Euphrates Yellow Ganges Alps Andes Himalayas Ural Gobi Sahara Mediterranean Sea Red Sea Persian Gulf Black Sea

World Map Scavneger Hunt

Directions: Using the LOC maps, find each of these physical features. Highlight and label them on your blank map, and write the answer on the lines here.

1. I am a massive river located in northern South America. I flow eastward through the country of Brazil and empty into the Atlantic Ocean. Find me running through the world's largest rainforest! _____

2. We form the longest continental mountain range in the world! Look along the entire western coast of South America, running through countries like Peru, Bolivia, and Chile.

_____

3. I am a narrow strip of water located between northeastern Africa (like Egypt and Sudan) and the Arabian Peninsula in Asia (like Saudi Arabia).

_____

4. I am a gigantic, hot desert covering almost the entire northern half of the continent of Africa, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Red Sea.

_____

5. I am a major river located in northern China in eastern Asia. I curve in a large loop through northern China before flowing east into the ocean near the Korean Peninsula.

_____

6. I am a sacred river located in Southern Asia. I flow southeast across northern India and through Bangladesh before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

_____

7. We are a famous mountain range in southern Europe, stretching across countries like France, Switzerland, and Italy, just north of the Mediterranean Sea.

_____

8. We are a mountain range running north-to-south through the country of Russia. We are famous because we create the geographic border dividing the continent of Europe from the continent of Asia!

_____

9. I am the longest river in the world! I flow northward through northeastern Africa, passing through the country of Egypt before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.

_____

10. I am a body of water in Western Asia located between the country of Iran to the northeast and the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia) to the southwest. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers empty toward me!

_____

11. I am a long river in Western Asia starting in Turkey, flowing through Syria, and joining the Tigris River in Iraq before reaching the Persian Gulf. Find me just southwest of the Tigris River!

_____

12. I am a cold desert located in East Asia, stretching across southern Mongolia and northern China, just north of the Yellow River.

_____

13. I am a large body of water located between three continents! I sit south of Europe, north of Africa, and west of Asia.

_____

14. I am a river in Western Asia that flows southeast through the country of Iraq. I run parallel to my "twin" river, the Euphrates, just to the east.

_____

15. We are the highest mountain range in the world, home to Mt. Everest! Find us in Southern Asia, creating a natural wall between China (Tibet) and India.

_____

16. I am an inland sea located between Southeastern Europe and Western Asia. I sit directly north of the country of Turkey and south of Ukraine.

_____

TN 5.44

World Geography- Physical Features Sorting Cards

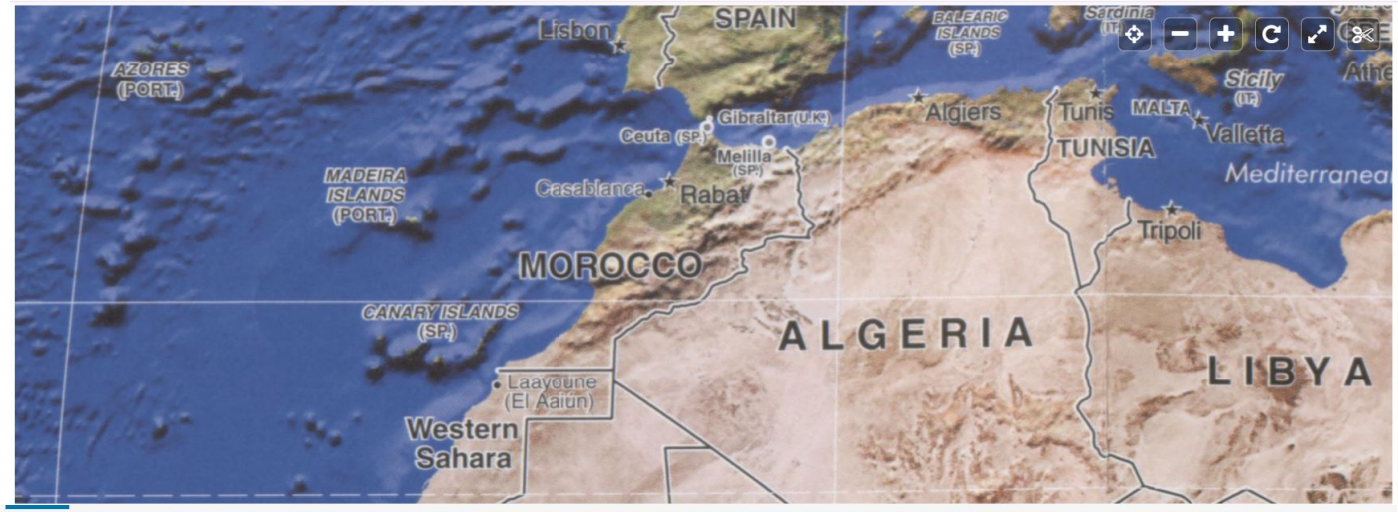
Identifying Physical Features of the World

Nile River	Amazon	Red Sea
Persian Gulf	Alps	Black Sea
Mediterranean	Sahara	Ural
Euphrates	Tigris	HImalayas
Ganges	Andes	Yellow River
Gobi		

Bodies of Water	Africa
Rivers	Asia
Deserts	S. America
Mountains	Europe

What is missing?

What do you notice about these three maps? What is the same or different? Is there information missing from any of them? Why might maps change over time?







Can you find the name of the mountain range that runs through Morocco? Which map would best help you identify it?

World Geography Assessment: Standard 5.44- Identify the major physical features of the world.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.

1. Which mountain range creates the geographic border dividing Europe from Asia and runs north-to-south through Russia?

- ☐ A. Ural Mountains
- ☐ B. Himalayas
- ☐ C. Alps
- ☐ D. Caucasus Mountains

2. A river flows northward through northeastern Africa, passes through Egypt, and empties into the Mediterranean Sea. Which river is this?

- ☐ A. Congo River
- ☐ B. Niger River
- ☐ C. Nile River
- ☐ D. Zambezi River

3. Which body of water is located in Western Asia between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers empty?

- ☐ A. Black Sea
- ☐ B. Persian Gulf
- ☐ C. Red Sea
- ☐ D. Caspian Sea

4. Which river starts in Turkey, flows through Syria, and joins with the Tigris River in Iraq before reaching the Persian Gulf?

- ☐ A. Ganges River
- ☐ B. Jordan River
- ☐ C. Euphrates River
- ☐ D. Indus River

5. What is the name of the cold desert located in East Asia that stretches across southern Mongolia and northern China, just north of the Yellow River?

- ☐ A. Kalahari Desert
- ☐ B. Arabian Desert
- ☐ C. Sahara Desert
- ☐ D. Gobi Desert

6. Which large body of water is located south of Europe, north of Africa, and west of Asia?

- ☐ A. Caspian Sea
- ☐ B. Mediterranean Sea
- ☐ C. Indian Ocean
- ☐ D. Atlantic Ocean

7. Which river flows southeast through Iraq and runs parallel to the Euphrates River, located just to the east of it?

- ☐ A. Nile River
- ☐ B. Tigris River
- ☐ C. Jordan River
- ☐ D. Indus River

8. Which mountain range is the highest in the world, home to Mt. Everest, and creates a natural wall between China (Tibet) and India?

- ☐ A. Ural Mountains
- ☐ B. Rocky Mountains
- ☐ C. Andes Mountains
- ☐ D. Himalayas

9. Which inland sea is located between Southeastern Europe and Western Asia, directly north of Turkey and south of Ukraine?

- ☐ A. Dead Sea
- ☐ B. Caspian Sea
- ☐ C. Red Sea
- ☐ D. Black Sea

10. If you were traveling from Turkey through Syria and into Iraq following a river that eventually meets another river before reaching the Persian Gulf, which river would you be following?

- ☐ A. Jordan River
- ☐ B. Nile River
- ☐ C. Euphrates River
- ☐ D. Tigris River

Answer Key:

1. A | 2. C | 3. B | 4. C | 5. D | 6. B | 7. B | 8. D | 9. D | 10. C