Unit 1: Basics of Geography

Five Themes of Geography

- **Location: Where is something on the face of the earth**
  - Absolute Location (mathematical) – grid coordinates
    - Latitude and Longitude
    - Universal Transverse Mercator system
    - Local Address Systems
  - Relative Location – uses relationships to landmarks and other places to determine location

- **Place: Characteristics that make a location unique**
  - Physical Characteristics
    - Wildlife and natural vegetation
    - Terrain
    - Natural Features
  - Human Characteristics – Cultural Landscape (Built Landscape)
    - Buildings and roads
    - Farms and Crops
    - Division of Land
  - Places have meaning
    - Ground Zero
    - Mecca
    - Jerusalem
  - Places can change
    - Physical changes: new buildings
    - Cultural change: new people
  - Places are interrelated
    - Distance Decay: the greater the distance between place the lesser the amount of interaction that will occur between two places
    - USA and Mexico have a lot of interaction
    - USA and Argentina have much less interaction
  - Place Names
    - Toponyms: The idea that place names reflect the culture and heritage of that place
    - Language of the name gives clues
    - Example: “Town”
      - English: “town”, “ton”, “boro”, “borough”
      - German: “burg”, “burgh”,
      - French: “bourg”, “ville”
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- Places are commonly named after:
  → Older places (New York, New Orleans, etc)
  → Important People (Washington, Jefferson, San Francisco, etc)
  → Characteristics of the place (Las Vegas (the meadows), Colorado, Rocky Mountains)
  → History of the area/Native traditions and groups (Cheyenne, Kansas, Miami)

- **Regions: Areas/places with similar characteristics**
  - Vary in size and scale
    → Global (most general)
    → National
    → Local (most specific)
- Three Types of Regions
  → Uniform (formal) Regions
    → have quantifiable characteristics in common
    → have defined borders
    → Examples: Colorado, the Bible Belt, Climate Regions
  → Functional (nodal) Regions
    → are defined by movement around a central hub
    → Examples: TV Viewing Area, Airport
  → Vernacular (perceptual) Regions
    → Based on people’s perception of an area
    → Different people have different perceptions
    → Examples: the South, East Coast

- **Movement: Travel of goods (trade), people (migration), and ideas (diffusion) across the earth.**
  - Time-Space Compression
    → The idea that movement has become faster and more frequent over the last 60 years

- **Human-Environment Interaction: How humans interact with, change, and adapt to the environment.**
  - Intentional Change – deliberate changes to environment
  - Unintentional Change – unforeseen consequences of intentional changes