How can we locate and describe places in New England and Massachusetts?

If you stand at Devil’s Pulpit on Monument Mountain in Great Barrington, you can see great views of the Housatonic River Valley. The mountain rises just over 1,700 feet.
Learn to Preview

Good readers learn to preview the chapter before they read. Previewing images, headings, and key ideas teaches you about the type of text you are going to read. Previewing can also help you know what to look for as you read each lesson.
What is the land like in Massachusetts? Who are the people who live here? How do they use the land to make a living? These questions have to do with geography. Geography is the study of the earth and the people, animals, and plants living on it. Places have natural features and human features. New England is made up of six states: Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. We can use maps to locate places.

In autumn, New England is a colorful place to be. People travel from all over to see the changing leaves. The trees here surround Forest Lake in Methuen. In the summer, the lake is a popular spot for swimming, boating, and fishing.

What is the land like in Massachusetts? Who are the people who live here? How do they use the land to make a living? These questions have to do with geography. Geography is the study of the earth and the people, animals, and plants living on it. It is the study of where places are located and how they are connected to each other.

The land has a lot to do with history and how people have lived here. It has to do with the foods people grew, the clothes they wore, and the kinds of homes they built. Geography is an important part of our story.

A Place Called New England

Captain John Smith was an explorer long ago. He was from England. As a young man, he had seen many places. He helped to settle Virginia. Later, he
came back to America to map the coast farther north. He named this large area of land “New England.”

As Smith and his crew sailed along the coast, they found many good harbors. (Harbors are protected places near the shore where the water is deep enough for ships to anchor.) Many fish swam around his ship. He saw woods and hills to the west. Hawks swooped above him in the bright blue sky. There were Native American villages along the shore. All of these features made Smith want to tell people back in England about this land.
Natural Features

New England and Massachusetts have features that make them different from other places. Take a look outside your window. What kind of land do you see? 

**Natural features** were made by nature. They include landforms, bodies of water, climate, plants, and soil. Landforms have to do with the shape of the earth’s surface. In New England, you will find islands, beaches, hills, valleys, and mountains. Landforms describe the shape of the land.

Water is an important natural feature. New England sits next to the Atlantic Ocean. It has rivers, lakes, and streams. People and animals have always had water to drink and fish to eat from our rivers and from the ocean. Native Americans used rivers as natural borders between hunting grounds. Early settlers used them as travel routes. Today, rivers, lakes, and streams give us water for farms, businesses, and fun.

What Do You Think?

Many of the cities in New England were built along rivers. Can you think of some reasons why? Think about all the ways people use water.
Natural Resources

New England has a lot to offer. There are many natural resources here. Natural resources are things found in nature that people use. New England’s natural resources include forests, water, soil, and minerals.

Some places in New England have good soil for farming. Farmers grow apples, potatoes, corn, blueberries, strawberries, and other crops. Massachusetts is known for its cranberries. Maine is known for its blueberries. Much of the land is good for dairy farming. Dairy farmers in Vermont sell milk, cheese, butter, eggs, and homemade ice cream.

New England is next to the Atlantic Ocean. It also has many rivers. The first people to live here used the ocean and rivers to find fish and shellfish. Today, there are fisheries where fish is canned or frozen, then sold to stores. People come from all over the world to eat New England lobsters, clams, cod, flounder, haddock, and scallops. People also use the water for travel and for fun.

Many animals live in the forests. People also use the forests. They cut down trees and use the wood to make homes, furniture, toys, and paper. In Maine, people grow Christmas trees and ship them to other places. People like to hike or camp in the forests. Have you ever been for a walk in the forest?

New England has sand, gravel, stone, marble, clay, quartz, and other minerals that people use. Two minerals found in Connecticut are copper and limestone. Copper is used to make wire and pennies. It gives color to green paint. Limestone is used to make cement and steel. Rhode Island has granite and crushed stone for building.
Human Features
People create human features to help them live on the land. The next time you take a ride, count how many towns, cities, bridges, tunnels, and roads you see. These are all human features. They have to do with how people use and change the land to meet their needs.

The People of New England
Today, the people in New England have choices about where to live. Many people live in big cities. Others live in the suburbs. Suburbs are places outside the city with houses, yards, and shopping malls. Some people live in small towns. Some live on farms. Some live in fishing villages.

People have to earn a living. They need to earn money to buy the things they need. To earn a living, many people buy and sell goods. (Goods are things that are made to be bought and sold.) In New England, people make maple syrup. They make cranberry juice from cranberries. They make books and build submarines. Can you think of other goods made in New England?

Services are things that people do for other people. People earn money by selling their services. For example, fixing a computer is a service. Coaching a baseball team is a service. People need health care from doctors and nurses. They need education from teachers.

In New England, many people work in education. There are very fine colleges here. Some people work at museums or restaurants. These are all services. We will learn more about goods and services in Chapter 5.

Waterplace Park in Providence, Rhode Island, was built in the 1990s. What human features do you see in this picture?

Harvard’s crew team practices for an upcoming race on the Charles River. What natural and human features do you see here?
New England sits next to the Atlantic Ocean. People have built lighthouses along the coast, like this one in Maine. Lighthouses help ship captains see where the land is. Is this lighthouse a natural or human feature?
**Locating the New England States**

When we say New England, we are talking about six states: Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Find them on the map below.

**Reading a Map**

Maps are one of the tools geographers use to locate places. There are many kinds of maps. Can you think of some? Maybe you thought of a treasure map! Maybe you thought of the GPS maps that your parents use on trips.

Maps help us know where we are. They help us get where we want to go. Look at this map of New England. The boxes point to tools that help us read a map.

**Title**

The first thing to look for on a map is the title. It is usually at the top. It tells you what kind of information the map shows. What is the title of this map?

**Scale of Miles**

To show us how far apart places really are, mapmakers use a *scale of miles*. A scale helps us measure the distance between places. One inch on a map might stand for 100 miles on land. On a map of the world, one inch might stand for 1,000 miles or more. Use the scale on this map to find the actual distance between two places in New England.
Cardinal Directions
A compass rose like this one shows which way is north (N), south (S), east (E), and west (W). We call these the **cardinal directions**. Halfway between north and east is northeast, or NE. Halfway between south and west is southwest, or SW. These are examples of intermediate directions.

Legend, or Key
Mapmakers use symbols to keep things simple. The symbols can stand for cities, rivers, forests, buildings, and other things. The **map legend**, or key, explains what the symbols mean. What is the symbol for the capital of Massachusetts on this map? What other symbols are on this map?
Mapmaking has changed a great deal since John Smith’s time. Today, mapmakers use satellites orbiting Earth to help them do their work.

Crystal Schaaf is a professor at the University of Massachusetts in Boston and a space-age mapmaker. In fact, she is a member of NASA’s science team. (NASA stands for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, a government agency.) NASA’s main mission is to explore space. It creates rockets and satellites to learn about the planets and stars.

Dr. Schaaf uses NASA’s newest Earth-observing satellite to track weather and climate changes around the globe. She looks at how changes in the forests affect Earth’s climate.

**Find the Facts**
1. What is geography?
2. What are the cardinal directions?
3. In what part of the United States is New England located? (Use the cardinal directions in your answer!)

**Tell What It Means**
4. What do you think is the most important natural resource in New England? Why?
5. How can a map legend help us read a map? What about a scale of miles?

**Make Connections**
6. Give an example of a natural feature in your neighborhood.
7. Give an example of a human feature in your neighborhood.
8. Look at a map of your community today. Use the scale, legend, and cardinal directions to help you describe where in New England your town is located.
We are part of New England, but we live in Massachusetts. In some ways, Massachusetts still looks like it did when John Smith first saw it. It still sits beside the Atlantic Ocean. It has many miles of coastline. The sandy shores of Cape Cod still stretch out to the sea. These basic natural features have not changed much.

Smith saw land that had been cleared so crops could grow. Hunters and fishermen were changing the land and water. In time, people would cut down some of the forests and dam the rivers.

Massachusetts’ human features have changed more than Smith could have thought. Today, Massachusetts has big cities, small farms, and everything in between. We can use maps to locate cities and towns across the state.

Why “Massachusetts”?

Massachusetts got its name from a group of Native Americans called the Massachusett. They lived at a place called the Great Blue Hill, near what is now Milton. It is the highest point for many miles around. The word Massachusett is thought to mean “people who live near the great hill” or “at the great hill.”
Locating Places in Massachusetts

Both natural and human features make up the place we call Massachusetts. Can you find the town of Nantucket? It is on an island of the same name. To get there, you have to take a ferry or plane. Nantucket has sandy beaches and beautiful sunsets. It has human features such as cobblestone streets, charming shops, and hotels. Its three lighthouses are landmarks. A landmark is a feature that people can see and recognize.

Now find New Bedford. When most people think of New Bedford, they think of whaling. The ocean has played an important role in this city’s history. In the 1800s, New Bedford was one of the world’s greatest whaling ports. A port is a town or city where ships can load and unload. Sailors left New Bedford and sailed around the world hunting for whales. They brought back whale oil and bones to sell. Today, you can learn about whaling at the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

Pittsfield is a small city in the western part of the state. Its natural features include the Berkshire Hills, the Housatonic River, Berry Pond, and Pittsfield State Forest. Canoe Meadows is a great place to watch for osprey, great blue herons, and other birds. Pittsfield also has human features. People have built the Colonial Theatre, the Barrington Stage Company, and the Berkshire Museum there. At Hancock Shaker Village, you can explore how a group of people called Shakers lived. Find Pittsfield on the map.

A Land of Many Rivers

Rivers are an important natural feature in Massachusetts. A long time ago, rivers made it easier to move people and goods from place to place. It was easier to float down a river than to clear trees to make a road.

In the past, people used the rushing water of the rivers to power machines. Some of the first mills and factories were built along the Merrimack River. Mill workers used machines to weave
textiles (fabric and cloth). Find the Merrimack River on the map.

The Charles River flows through Boston and empties into Boston Harbor. From there it meets the Massachusetts Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Find these waterways on the map. Have you crossed any of the bridges that stretch over the Charles? Maybe you have watched fireworks over the river on the Fourth of July. The famous “Hatch Shell” is on its banks.

Can you find the Connecticut River? It is the largest river in New England. It flows all the way through Massachusetts from north to south. Its rich valley has soil that is good for growing crops.
A Bird’s-Eye View of Massachusetts

Another way to see the natural and human features of our state is from the air. Let’s explore by taking a trip in a hot-air balloon! We’ll lift off at the tip of Cape Cod and move west.

From up here in the sky, Cape Cod looks like a great arm that curves out toward the sea. A cape is a point of land that juts out into a large body of water. Pine and oak trees grow in the sandy soil.

As the Cape curves toward the ocean, the winds pick up. They blow in hard from the sea. Few trees are strong enough to take the pounding. The pines and oaks give way to tall grasses.

As the arm of Cape Cod turns in, even the tall grasses disappear. Sandy beaches stretch to the Cape’s tip.

Look at the many ponds. Are those beach plums and blueberries growing along the banks? If you look closely, you might see chipmunks, squirrels, and raccoons living in the tall grasses.

Lobsters live in the waters near the shore. Cod and salmon swim...
Cape Cod and the islands are huge piles of sand built up from the ocean floor over millions of years.

farther out to sea. For part of the year, you can see whales in the ocean.

You can’t miss all the people who come to Cape Cod for vacation. See them swimming at the beaches and wandering through the shops. They stop to eat some of the best seafood in the world.

Do you feel the ocean breeze? Can you taste the salty air? We’re passing some islands. An island is land that is surrounded by water on all sides. Sandy beaches curve around Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket.

---

**A Day in the Life of Tim McNulty**

Tim McNulty knows a lot about lobsters. He is the chef at the Lobster Pot. People from all over the world eat at this restaurant in Provincetown. They know it by the bright red lights on the sign.

Let’s go back into the kitchen with Tim! When the lobsters are brought in, he sorts out which ones he wants to serve. He weighs them on a scale and measures them from claw to tail. He picks the best ones to use in many different dishes.

In the summer, the Lobster Pot serves more than 1,000 meals a day. Tim makes sure the food tastes delicious and looks great, too. He makes sure the cooks and servers do their jobs. Sometimes he finds time to leave the kitchen and talk to kids who are eating there. He tells them all about lobsters.

When he is not at the restaurant, Tim likes to fly his airplane or go fishing.
We are drifting north to another cape—Cape Ann. Listen! Do you hear the waves crashing into the rocky coast? The fishing boats look tiny from up here.

For hundreds of years, they have sailed from Gloucester and Salem on the North Shore. They have sailed from Plymouth and New Bedford on the South Shore.

The wind shifts, and we float south. As we pass Boston, the coast becomes sandy. The first Englishmen who settled here were not happy with the land. There were big rocks everywhere. The only crop that seemed to grow was the cranberry.

City in the Spotlight: Boston

Boston is our capital city. It is where the leaders of our state meet to make laws. It is also the largest city in Massachusetts.

In Boston, you can ride the swan boats at the Public Garden, go to a Red Sox game, ice skate at Frog Pond, and ride the “T.” There are tall buildings and busy streets. In other areas of the city, there are rows of brick homes called brownstones. You can cross over the Charles River on several bridges. Crew teams row by on the water below. Ships come in and out of Boston Harbor.

You can get a great view of the Boston waterfront from the air. Fishing boats are docked at the harbor in Rockport. Plimouth Plantation is a living-history museum in Plymouth.
Many people took to the sea to make a living. Today, cranberries, fishing, and textiles are important businesses on the North and South Shores.

The Gloucester Fisherman’s Memorial honors the thousands of fishermen lost at sea.
Heading west, the land begins to rise. Below us are forests of maple, oak, and hickory trees. Watch out for monadnocks! A monadnock is a rocky hill or mountain standing alone.

The wind is steady, so we glide over Worcester. It is the second largest city in New England, after Boston. See the busy factories making everything from farm equipment to roller skates and shredded wheat. Keep a lookout for museums and colleges below.

The land is rising. Ponds and lakes shimmer in the forests. Farms full of apples and sweet corn are nestled in the rolling hillsides. White-tailed deer roam the woods.

Long ago, this land was home to bobcats, wolves, and black bears, too.

What is that huge lake ahead of us? It is the Quabbin Reservoir. A reservoir is a lake made by people to collect and store water. The Quabbin stores water for eastern Massachusetts and some of western Massachusetts.

At the Quabbin Reservoir, you can see people hiking or having a picnic, but you won’t see anyone swimming. It is important to keep the water clean and natural. A bald eagle swoops by. A coyote trots through the trees. Fish swim in the clear water.

A statue honoring Americans who fought in the Spanish American War stands in Gardner.

The living history museum at Old Sturbridge Village attracts many visitors every year.

City hall in Worcester was completed in 1898.
A Day in the Life of Mike Wright

Mike Wright’s workday starts at 4:30 a.m., while you are still sleeping. He works in a factory called Saint-Gobain in Worcester. Mike and his team make ceramic bricks. The bricks are used to make ovens that get as hot as the inside of a volcano. Products are baked in the ovens to make them strong. For example, brick ovens are used to make tiny parts that go in computers. The sinks in your home may have been baked with Saint-Gobain products. Mike makes sure the people he works with have everything they need to make the best bricks possible.

Mike goes home at 2:00 p.m. It has been a long day. He may stop to visit a friend. He also likes to watch football, especially his favorite team—the New England Patriots!
The land tumbles down into the Connecticut River Valley. A valley is low land between hills or mountains. Farms spread out on both sides of the Connecticut River. Farmers grow apples, sweet corn, and asparagus in the rich soil. Sugar maple trees give syrup in the spring. Dairy cows graze in the meadows.

Since the early 1700s, this area has been called the Pioneer Valley. Farmers brought their families from Boston and other towns to find richer soil. Some people trapped beavers along the river. They sold the furs for a high price.

A bridge crosses the Connecticut River in Sunderland. Mt. Toby is seen in the distance.

The Basketball Hall of Fame is located in Springfield, the birthplace of the sport.
In the 1800s, people built mills along the river. Workers made paper from logs floated down from Vermont. Tobacco farming was common once, too.

The valley is home to some of the finest colleges in the nation, including Amherst, Smith, Hampshire, and Mount Holyoke Colleges.

**City in the Spotlight: Springfield**

The Connecticut River flows right through the city of Springfield. There are tall buildings downtown, but you can see green rolling hills for miles and miles around it.

The people of Springfield are proud of their city. One reason is that the game of basketball was invented there. If you go there, you can visit the Basketball Hall of Fame.
We're climbing higher as the land begins to rise. We float toward the Berkshire Hills and Taconic Mountains. Can you see why people call them the purple hills? When the fog settles at dawn and dusk, the hills seem to turn purple.

Below us, dairy farms are tucked away along the Housatonic River. In the spring, the mountains bloom with dogwood trees and colorful flowers. Our state flower, the mayflower, can be found there in spring. It is an endangered species in the rest of the state. There are not many of them left.

In the summer, the Berkshires come alive with the arts. People go to outdoor concerts at Tanglewood. Some go to festivals in Williamstown and Stockbridge.

More people visit the Berkshires in the fall than at any other time of the year. The hills turn bright red, orange, and yellow as the leaves change. In the winter, there is snow for skiers and
snowshoers. Even with all the tourists, you might catch a glimpse of a bear, gray wolf, or deer.

It has been an exciting ride! We have floated across the state and seen some beautiful places. We have looked down at some of the people who live, work, and play in Massachusetts. Our balloon is slowly drifting down to the ground. It is time to land and drive home. Where is your hometown?

Bish Bash Falls is located in the southwest corner of Massachusetts. This is the highest waterfall in the state.
Where is your town located? Find it on a map. Then answer these questions with your class.

- Is your town in eastern Massachusetts, central Massachusetts, or western Massachusetts?
- What cities are close to yours?
- Look out the window. What is the land like around you? Is it flat, rocky, or hilly? Are there beaches or woods nearby?
- Is there a river or another waterway near your town? What direction is it from you?
- Do you live in a city? Cities have tall buildings and busy streets. There are cars, trucks, and trains. People live close together in apartments. Do you live in a suburb? Suburbs are the areas outside of the cities. They have more space and fewer people. They have houses and yards. Do you live in a small town in the country? Are there farms close to your home?
- What landmarks are in your town? Were they made by nature or by people?
- What do the people in your town do for a living? Can you think of some businesses in your town?

A Look Ahead

In this chapter, we learned about the land called New England. We learned about the land called Massachusetts. You learned about the land in your town. We will learn more about these places by reading about the people who have lived here in the past. We will see how they made history.

LESSON 2 What Did You Learn?

Find the Facts
1. What states border Massachusetts? What natural feature forms its eastern border?
2. Name and locate three rivers in Massachusetts.
3. Name and locate three major cities in Massachusetts.
4. Locate your hometown on a map.

Tell What It Means
5. Name three differences between eastern Massachusetts and western Massachusetts.

Make Connections
6. Describe the landforms in your town or city. How are they different from other areas of Massachusetts?
7. Describe the landmarks in your town or city. Why do people use them as landmarks?
Maps of Northborough, Past and Present

You can see how your town has changed by comparing maps. For example, here are two maps of Northborough, Massachusetts. One is a historic map, and the other is more modern. Study the maps and answer the questions.

**LOOK**

1. What is the title of the first map? The second map?
2. What year was the first map made? The second map?
3. What kinds of information does each map show?

**THINK**

4. What features are the same in both maps?
5. What features are different?

**DECIDE**

6. What do you think the first map might have been used for? The second?
Study a Population Map

In this chapter you have learned how maps can help us figure out where places are. However, maps can show us other kinds of information. For example, maps can show us the weather, businesses, or natural resources of place. Certain maps can even tell us the population of an area. Population means the number of people in a place. Study the population map and answer the questions below.

1. Which part of Massachusetts has the most people? Why do you think so many people live in that part?
2. Which part of Massachusetts has the lowest number of people? Why?
3. Why do you think more people live in eastern Massachusetts than western Massachusetts?
4. Why do you think the population of Boston is higher than the population of Cape Cod?
5. How do you think the US government finds out how many people live in a certain area?
6. Based on what you have learned in Lesson 2, how do you think the geography of Massachusetts affects where people choose to live?
7. Compare the present-day population map on this page to a historic population map from 1860 at [www.geo.umass.edu/faculty/wilkie/Wilkie/hist_mass_p32.jpg](http://www.geo.umass.edu/faculty/wilkie/Wilkie/hist_mass_p32.jpg). Write one or two sentences describing the similarities and differences you see between the two maps.
Become a Better Reader

Learn to Preview

Good readers preview the text before they read. Previewing helps you become familiar with a book before you read it. This helps you to better understand what you read. It might even make you more interested in what you are about to read.

You learned to preview a textbook and all its parts. Use what you learned in Chapter 1 to preview Chapter 2. As you preview, think about the main ideas of the chapter. Write three predictions of what you think you will learn in Chapter 2. Share your predictions with a partner. Explain how you came up with your predictions. After reading the chapter, revisit your predictions to see if you were right!

Technology Tie-in

Making Maps of Massachusetts

Visit nationalatlas.gov/mapmaker to find out more about the geography of Massachusetts. At the upper right corner of the map, find where it says, “Zoom to States.” Select Massachusetts. This will give you a more detailed map. Practice “redrawing” the map using the different categories given on the right. (Put a checkmark in the different boxes and click the “Redraw Map” button on the upper right.) After exploring the categories, study and print at least three maps from one of the categories. Write a paragraph about what you learn from studying the maps. Share your findings with the class.

Key Idea Review

Lesson 1

1. What is geography?
2. How are natural features different from human features?
3. Name the six states that make up New England.
4. What tool(s) can we use to locate places?

Lesson 2

5. Massachusetts sits next to which ocean?
6. What is the biggest city in Massachusetts? On what major river is it located?
7. How is the geography of eastern Massachusetts different from the geography of western Massachusetts?