Geographic Terms

1. Map Key (legend) - Lists and explains the symbols and colors used on a map.
2. Scale – Compares the length on a map and the unit of distance on earth.
3. Compass Rose – A Circle showing the principal directions of North, South, East and West printed on a map or chart.
4. Political Map - Shows features that humans have created on the Earth’s surface. Cities, states, territories and countries.
5. Physical Map – Helps you see the land forms and bodies of water in specific areas. By studying this type of map, you can learn the relative locations and characteristics of places and regions.
6. Symbols – A shape or sign used to help represent something else.
7. Prime Meridian – A longitude line that runs from the North Pole to the South Pole through Greenwich, England. It marks 0 degree longitude.
8. Projection – A way of showing the curved surface of the earth on a flat surface.
9. International Dateline – An imaginary line on the surface of the earth opposite the prime meridian where the date changes as one travels east or west across it. Roughly along 180 degrees longitude.
10. Climate – They typical weather conditions of a region over a long period of time
11. Hemisphere – Means half of the earth. Northern hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere are separated by the equator. Eastern and Western Hemispheres are separated by the prime meridian.
12. Latitude – Imaginary lines that run east and west around the globe. They show degrees north and south of the equator.
13. Equator – The latitude line that marks the halfway point between the north and South Pole. It marks 0 degree latitude.
14. Longitude – Shows the degrees east or west of the prime meridian. These lines run north to south.
15. Cartographer – a geographer (scientist) who creates maps.
16. Precipitation – Falling water droplets in the form of rain, snow, sleet or hail that fall to the ground.
17. Population Density – The average number of people living in an area.
18. Isthmus – A strip of land with the sea on either side, forming a link between two large areas of land.
19. Strait – A narrow strip of water that connects two larger bodies of water.
20. Mouth – A place where a river flows into a lake or ocean.
21. Source – Where the water in the stream originated. It is the furthest point from which water could possibly flow.
22. Tributary – A stream that flows into a larger stream or other body of water.
23. Canal – An artificial waterway constructed to allow the passage of boats or ships inland or convert water for irrigation.
24. Delta – A triangular area of land formed by deposits at the mouth of the river.
25. Plain – A large area of flat land with few trees.
26. Plateau – A broad flat area of land that is higher than the surrounding land.
27. Tropic of Cancer - also referred to as the Northern Tropic, is the most northerly circle of latitude on the Earth reached by the overhead sun.
28. Tropic of Capricorn - The parallel of latitude south of the equator and that is the southernmost latitude reached by the overhead sun: also referred to as the Southern tropic.