**Defining Regions**

**What is a Region?**

A **region** is a group of places that share common characteristics. The places within a region are connected by trade, culture, and other human activities. They also share similar physical processes and characteristics such as climate.

A region often includes an entire continent. A continent is a large landmass on Earth’s surface. The seven continents are: Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America.

Geographers study the world’s regions but they also take a global perspective when they investigate Earth. For example, geographers study ocean currents around the globe or how one affects another. Both ways of looking at the world add to our understanding of it.

**Types of Regions**

There are two types of regions: **physical regions** and **human/cultural** regions. *Physical regions* are areas that are grouped based on the location of landforms, climate, vegetation, and/or animal life. *Human/cultural regions* are areas that are grouped based on the activities of the people and can be defined in many ways.

Some examples of physical regions include:

1. Geographic regions—Texas’s Gulf Coastal Plains extend from the Atlantic Ocean to beyond the Rio Grande River. Cities such as Corpus Christi, Galveston, and Houston lie within this region of the United States.
2. Climate regions—the Atlantic Region of Canada has a fairly humid (moist) continental climate. A continental climate is a relatively dry climate with very hot summers and very cold winters.

Some examples of human/cultural regions include:

1. Religious regions*—*As of 2015, over 1.7 billion or about 23.4% of the world population are Muslims, or follow in the Islamic faith. By the percentage of the total population in a region, 91.2% of people living in the Middle East and North Africa consider themselves Muslim.
2. Economic regions *–*There are 13 countries that control 40 percent of oil production around the world and 73 percent of the world’s “proven” oil reserves. The majority of the countries are located between Africa and the Middle East and export, or sell, oil to other countries.

Reading adapted from “World Regions.” National Geographic: World Cultures and Geography. 2015