

Latitude and longitude

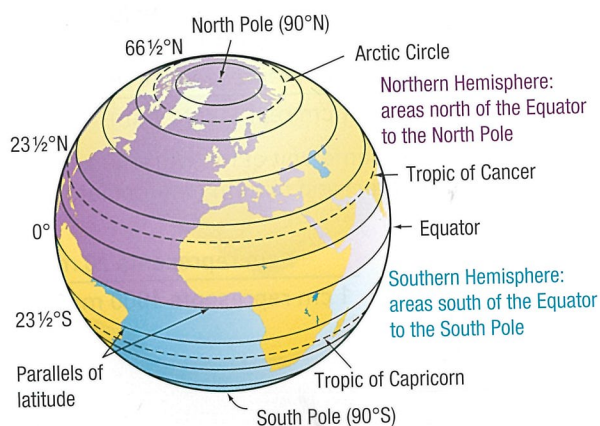
Locating places and features

Most of the maps you will use in your study of Geography include lines of latitude and longitude. These allow you to quickly and accurately locate places and features on the earth's surface.

Latitude

Lines of latitude (see Figure 1.9.1) are imaginary lines that run in an east-west direction around the earth. Because lines of latitude are parallel to each other, they are often referred to as **parallels of latitude**.

The most important line of latitude is the Equator (0°). The Equator divides the earth into two halves: the Northern and Southern hemispheres. All other lines of latitude are either north or south of the Equator.



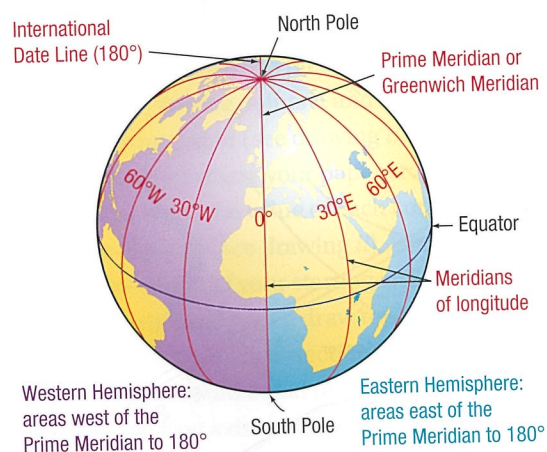
1.9.1 Lines of latitude

Longitude

Lines of longitude (see Figure 1.9.2) run in a north-south direction. They are not parallel to one another; they all converge, or meet, at the North and South poles. Any number of these lines can be drawn. These imaginary lines are called **meridians of longitude**.

The most important line of longitude is the Prime Meridian (0°), which passes through Greenwich Observatory in London, United Kingdom. All other lines of longitude are located either to the east or to the west of the Prime

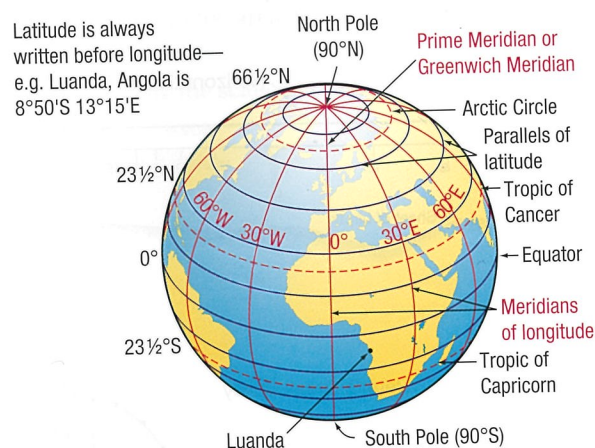
Meridian. The International Date Line (IDL) is on the opposite side of the world, at 180° . There is a change of day at the IDL. The Prime Meridian and the IDL divide the earth into two halves: the Western and Eastern hemispheres.



1.9.2 Meridians of longitude

Latitude and longitude

Together, lines of latitude and longitude form a grid that allows you to pinpoint places on the earth's surface (see Figure 1.9.3).



1.9.3 Latitude and longitude