

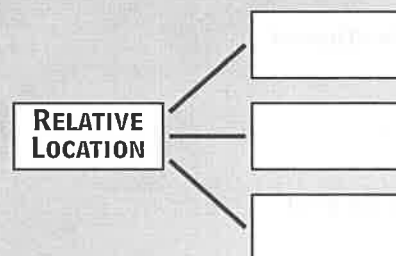
# Importance of Distance and Relative Location

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

How to describe locations in terms of relationships with other locations

## READING STRATEGY

Create a chart like the one below. List three examples of the importance of relative location in your life.



## TERMS TO KNOW

relative location, interdependence

**H**ave you ever been lost? Or have you just not been sure about how to get somewhere you wanted to go?

From the specific spot where you stand on the earth, you are different directions and distances from many other spots on the earth. You may be 22 miles south of your home. At the same time you may be 150 miles northeast of the capital of your state. You may also be three feet from the front door of your favorite pizza place. Your location can, in fact, be compared to the location of any other spot on Earth. This is called **relative location**.

Distance and location affect your life in many ways. If you live eight miles from school, you must wake up earlier each morning than someone who lives eight blocks away. If you live 2,500 miles from the nearest volcano, you will be much less concerned about its latest eruption than someone who lives in the valley below it.

The story of Houston, Texas, is an example of the importance of distance and relative location. One of the greatest oil strikes in history took place near Houston in 1901. The Spindletop Field was the first great oil discovery in Texas. Within a few years Houston, Texas, was an important center for the oil industry. Why? Because Houston's relative location was near the early oil fields. It was also located near the Gulf of Mexico. This made it possible to ship oil and equipment by water. Many oil companies built plants near Houston to make products from oil. These products were then shipped to other parts of the country, and around the world by water. As a result, Houston became one of the largest ports in the United States.

## Global Interdependence

Distance and relative location are important because we depend on people in other places for things we need. Depending on other people is called **interdependence**. We depend on them for certain goods and services, and they depend on us for others.

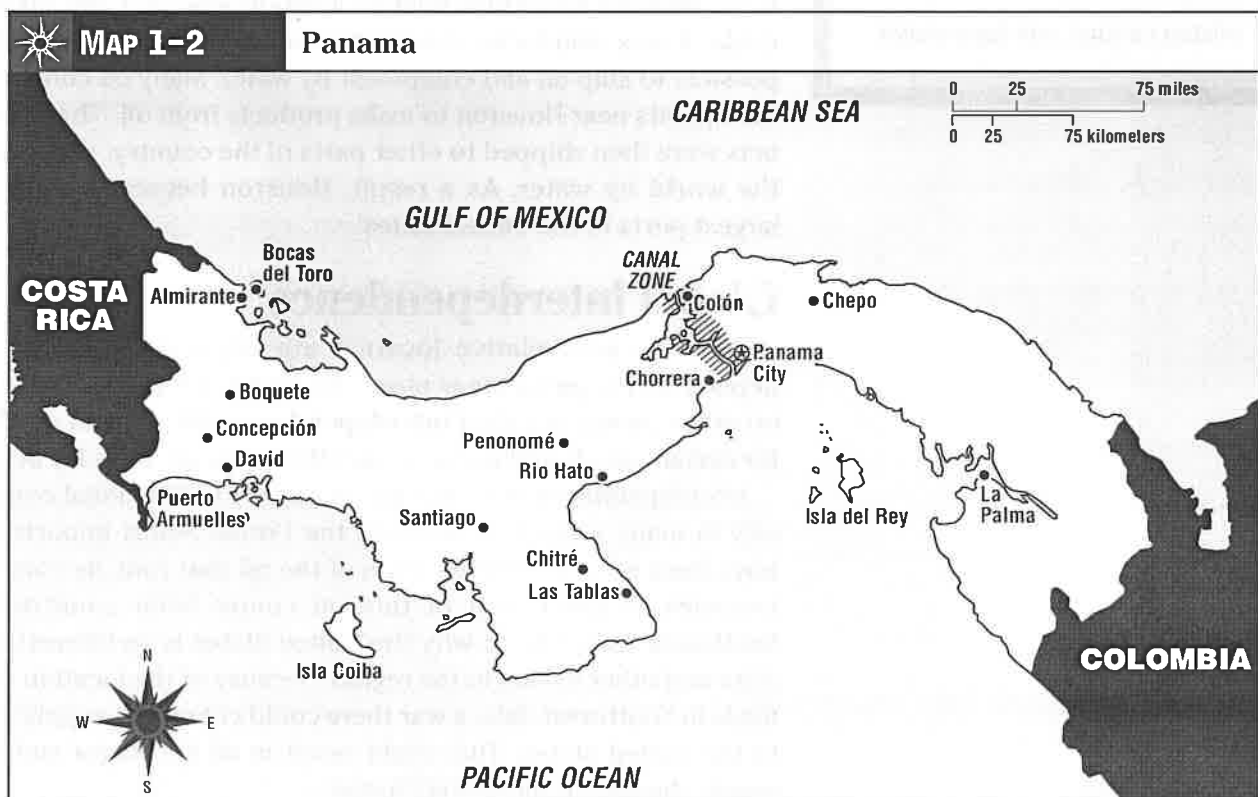
Interdependence links us together in the larger global community in many ways. For example, the United States imports and buys from other countries much of the oil that runs its cars and factories. A great deal of this oil comes from countries in Southwest Asia. This is why the United States is so interested in wars and other events in the region. Because of the location of oil fields in Southwest Asia, a war there could cut off the supply of oil to the United States. This could result in oil shortages and economic changes in the United States.

## Using Your Skills

### A PRACTICING MAP SKILLS

Use Map 1-2: Panama below to decide whether each statement about relative location is true or false. Write *T* if the statement is true. Write *F* if the statement is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Panama has water to the north and south.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The country of Colombia is located to the west of Panama.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Caribbean Sea is located to the north of Panama.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Canal Zone is located in the central part of Panama.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. When a ship enters the Panama Canal at Colón, it is northwest of the other end of the canal at Panama City.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Costa Rica is located northwest of Panama.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. According to this map, all parts of the Caribbean Sea are east of the Pacific Ocean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The city of Rio Hato is about 300 kilometers west of La Palma.



## B PRACTICING MAP SKILLS

Use Map 1-3: The World below to answer the questions about relative location. Use intermediate directions where necessary.

1. Where is the United States located on this map?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What country is to the north of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What country is to the south of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What direction is South Africa from the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What direction is Australia from the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
6. In what direction would you travel to go from Japan to the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In what direction would you travel to go from India to the United Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_

