Slide 1

Text: Standard 5: Regional Geography: People Create Regions to Interpret Earth’s Complexity

[Map of with labeled regions of the world]

Audio: Standard 5 is Regional Geography. Because Earth is so huge and vast with various human and physical traits, people create regions to interpret it. In this map, you can see 12 regions as designated by the US State Department: North America, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, all in the Western Hemisphere. And then you see Western Europe, Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe in the former Soviet Union, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia and Australia, and the South Pacific. Sometimes we see these regions broke in down slightly differently depending in who's interpreting the Earth. A region then is a concept that is used to identify and to organize areas of Earth's surface for various purposes. A region has certain characteristics that given a measure of cohesiveness and distinctiveness that's set it apart from other regions.

Slide 2

Text: Standard 5: Regional Geography: People Create Regions to Interpret Earth’s Complexity

[Map of with labeled regions of southern United States]

Audio: As world within worlds and cultures within cultures, regions are used to simplify the Earth but organizing its surface on the basis of the presence or absence of selected physical and human characteristics. As result, regions are human constructs whose boundaries and characteristics are derived from sets of specific criteria. They can vary in scale from local to global. They can overlap or they can be mutually exclusive from one another. Understanding the idea of region and the processes of regionalization is fundamental to being geographically informed. On the left of the page, for the Futures Project, the South has been divided into five large sub regions. These divisions are roughly based on a couple of things. They're aggregations of similar ecological units and each also has a separate social, cultural and economic identity as well.

Slide 3

Text: Geographers defined regions in three basic ways.

[Map of the United States color-coded to show Democratic and Republican votes in the 2008 presidential election]
Audio: The first type of region is the formal region. It's characterized by a common human property such as the presence of people who share a language, a religion, a nationality, a political identity or a culture, or by a common physical property such as a particular type of climate, landform or vegetation. Political entity such as countries, states and provinces are formal regions because they are defined by a common political identity. Other formal regions might include climate, regions, such as areas with a Mediterranean climate throughout the world, or landform regions, with the Rocky Mountains or the Piedmont regions of Pennsylvania. And economic regions, for example, the wheat belt of Kansas, the citrus-growing areas of South Texas or the irrigated farmlands of the Central Valley of California. Formal regions can be defined by a measure of population, of per capital income. They can be defined by ethnic background or crop production or population density and distribution, or by industrial production, or you can map physical characteristics such as temperature, rainfall, growing seasons and the average date of the first and last frost. The map on the left shows which states voted Democrat, blue and which voted Republican, red in the 2008 presidential election. Although this is a formal region for the 2008 election it could change in the next or any election.

Slide 4

Text: Types of Regions continued
[Map of New York Subway system]

Audio: The second type of region is the functional region. A functional region is organized around a node or a focal point with the surrounding areas linked to that node like transportation systems or communication systems or other economic associations involving such activities as manufacturing and retail trading. A typical functional region is a metropolitan area as defined by the Bureau of Census. For example, the New York metropolitan area is a functional region that covers parts of several states. A functional region is linked by commuting patterns or trade patterns, television and radio broadcasts, newspapers, travel for recreation and entertainment. Other functional regions can include shopping regions centered on malls or supermarkets, an area served by branch banks and by ports, and there hinterlands. On the left is the New York subway system and that's an example of a functional regional.

Slide 5

Text: Third type of Region
[Map of Manufacturing Belt]
Audio: The third type of region is the perceptual region. A perceptual region is a construct that reflects human feelings and attitudes and it's therefore defined by people's shared images of those areas. A perceptual region tends to reflect people's mental maps. Thus, Southern California, Dixie, and the upper Midwest are perceptual regions that are thought of as being spatial units. These units may not have precise borders or even commonly accepted regional characteristics and names. For example, at the map in the bottom of this slide shows the manufacturing belt of the United States. The manufacturing belt is a sub region within the greater Great Lakes region. The manufacturing belt also is a dated name. Since so much industry has moved out of the region, what used to be the manufacturing belt is now commonly referred to as the Rust Belt.

Slide 6

Text: Which type of map is this? Formal? Functional? Perceptual?

[Map with labeled, colored sections]

Audio: The map on this slide shows physical regions of the United States. Starting on the West coast, we see the coastal range. Then we a have an area of called Basin and Range. Moving east, we see the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plain states and the Interior Lowlands. South of that is the Coastal Plain which also runs up the Atlantic Coast. And nestled between the Interior Lowlands and the Coastal Plains are the Appalachian Mountains. What kind of a map is this? Is this a formal region, functional region or perceptual region? If you said formal region, you're correct.

Slide 7


[Map titled June 2010 Precipitation] [Map titled June 2010 Temperature]

Audio: The two maps on this slide are climate maps and they're broken down into different ways. The upper left hand corner is the precipitation map from June 2010, and the map in the lower right corner is the June 2010 temperature map. Looking at both maps, you can see that they're subdivided into regions of the United States based on general climate of those regions. Looking back at the map in the upper left hand corner, the precipitation map, you can see the color gradients going from a dark red to orange to yellow to white and then three shades of green. This map is looking at precipitation, and it's showing--there are certain areas that may have, for example, record precipitation like in the East North Central portion of the United States around the Great Lakes. It's showing areas of much above normal, above normal, near normal, below normal, much below normal and record precipitation. The map in the lower right hand
corner is showing temperatures. It's also broken into the same sub regional areas as the precipitation map. But in this case, it's showing us temperatures that are either below normal or above normal or record temperatures highs and lows. These two maps are formal maps.

**Slide 8**

[Map of the United States showing the 29 biogeographic regions]

**Audio:** The map on this slide is identifying 29 biogeographic regions in the United States.

**Slide 9**

**Text:** Formal, Functional, or Perceptual?

[Map titled *USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map*]

**Audio:** This map of North America is a Plant Hardiness Zone Map. This is a formal map and what it showing us is where certain plants will thrive based on primarily physical characteristics, climate, sunlight, soil types, precipitation, and so on.

**Slide 10**

[Map of United States divided into regions]

**Audio:** The map on this slide is a map that's been produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. And what it's doing is breaking the United States into easily manageable categories for census counting. And it's broken them into three main sections, the West which includes the Pacific and the Mountain States. The Midwest which has four units, the West North Central, the East North Central, the West South Central and the East South Central states, and then the Northeast, the Middle Atlantic, the New England States as well as the final South Atlantic States.

**Slide 11**

**Text:** People Create Regions to Interpret Earth’s Complexity

[Map of Generic Names for Soft Drinks] [Map of Slave Populations in the Southern States]

**Audio:** People create regions to interpret earth's complexity. Understanding the nature of regions requires a flexible approach to the world. The criteria used to define and delimit regions can be spatially precise, such as coastlines and political boundaries, or a spatially amorphous as suggesting the general location of people with allegiances to a particular professional athletic team, or identifying a market area for distributing the recordings of a specific genre of music, or a regional name preference when referring to soft drinks. Regions can be as small as a
neighborhood or as vast as a territorial expense covering thousands of square miles in which the inhabitants speak the same language. Regions can be areas joining people in common causes or in social identity such as the map of the southern slave states in 1960 that you see on this page.

**Slide 12**

[Map of United States showing Percent change in Real GDP by state, 2007-2008]

**Audio:** The map in this slide shows the percent change in real gross domestic product by state, 2007 to 2008. What we're looking at here is the United States again broken into clusters: the Far West, the Rocky Mountains, the Plain states, the Southwest, the Great Lakes of Southeast, and the Mideast, and New England States. They're clustered for purposes of ease and managing the data. The data that we're looking at on this map shows us the change in gross domestic product. So for example, the darkest blue regions shows the highest quintile in terms of change in gross domestic product. The lighter blue is the fourth quintile, the white, the third, the second quintile is the lighter yellow, and that gold-mustard color is the lowest quintile in terms of real gross domestic product change by state.

**Slide 13**

[Map of Economic levels in Appalachia by county]

**Audio:** Some regions, especially formal regions, tend to be stable in terms of spatial definition, but they may undergo change in character. Others regions, especially functional regions, may retain certain basic characteristics, but may undergo spatial redefinition over time. Yet other regions such as the perceptual regions are likely to vary over time in both spatial extent and character. Regional change, in the context of the human spatial organization of Earth's surface, is an area of study that provides students with opportunities to examine and learn about the complex web of demographic and economic changes that occur. Regions serve as a valuable organizing technique for framing detailed knowledge of the world and for asking geographic questions. Because regions are examples of geographic generalizations, students can learn about the characteristics of other regions of the world by knowing about one region. Knowing about the physical processes that create the Mediterranean climate and vegetation of southern California, for example, can serve as an analogue for learning about other regions with Mediterranean climates and vegetation in Australia, Europe, South America, and Africa. Regions provide a context for discussing similarities and differences between parts of the world. In this map, you can see the economic levels and Appalachian by county. So what we're looking at are several variations of color moving from red to an orange to white to light blue to dark blue. We see the various states in which Appalachian is located and we see them by counties. We see
which counties are depressed or at risk or in transition or counties that are doing fairly well and are competitive and countries that have reach attainment that are sustainable.

**Slide 14**

**Text:** Standard 5: Regional Geography: People Create Regions to Interpret Earth’s Complexity

**Conclusion**

**Audio:** In conclusion, through understanding the idea of region, students can apply geographic knowledge, skills and perspectives to solving problems as immediate as making an informed decision about a neighborhood zoning issue or as long-range as predicting the reconfiguration of political and economic alliances or into resource shortages or changes in the global ecosystem. Most importantly, studying regions enables students to synthesize their understanding of both the physical and the human properties of Earth's surfaces at scales that range from local to global.

**Slide 15**

[Photo of Elizabeth Larson]

**Audio:** This lecture on Regional Geography was created by Elizabeth Larson, School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University, 2010.