Welcome to North Carolina
Geography is the study of people and places on Earth. Geographers are people who study geography. They help us to understand our environment. When geographers study the environment, they think about five big themes: place, region, location, movement, and human-environment interactions.

Geographers study the physical and cultural features of a place. Physical features include landforms, bodies of water, animals, and plants. Cultural features include types of communities, languages, beliefs, and religions.

Geographers group places into regions. They define regions by physical features such as North Carolina’s Mountain region. Geographers also define a region by cultural features such as language.

Location and Movement
Relative location is where a place is in relation to other places. North Carolina’s relative location is south of Virginia and north of South Carolina. Geographers also think about absolute location. They use lines of latitude and longitude to describe a place’s absolute location. For example, Fayetteville, North Carolina, is located at 35 degrees north latitude and 79 degrees west longitude.

People, products, plants, animals, and ideas can all move from one place to another. They might move from one place because of war, unfair leaders, or lack of jobs. People are attracted to places that offer jobs, peace, and freedom. The physical environment can affect movement. For example, it is harder to move through tall mountains than flat land.

People and the Environment
People can change their environment. In North Carolina, people have built dams on rivers. Dams supply water and electricity to cities. Dams can also change the flow of a river, which can harm wildlife.

The environment affects people, too. Early North Carolina settlers used rivers to move people and crops. People who lived close to oceans and rivers learned to fish. Today, people adapt to their environment by building roads and using airplanes to transport goods.