

What is Geography?

Geography is the description of the earth. The term geography was first coined by **Eratosthenese**, a greek scholar(276-194 BC).The word has been derived from two roots from Greek language geo(earth) and graphos (description).

Geography is the study of areal differentiation. According to **Richard Hartshorne**, "Geography is concerned with the description and explanation of areal differentiation of the earth's surface."

Hettner gave his definition of geography , "Geography studies the differences of phenomena causally related in parts of the earth's surface."

Geography is thus concerned with the study of Nature and Human interactions as an integrated whole.

Physical Geography and Natural Sciences

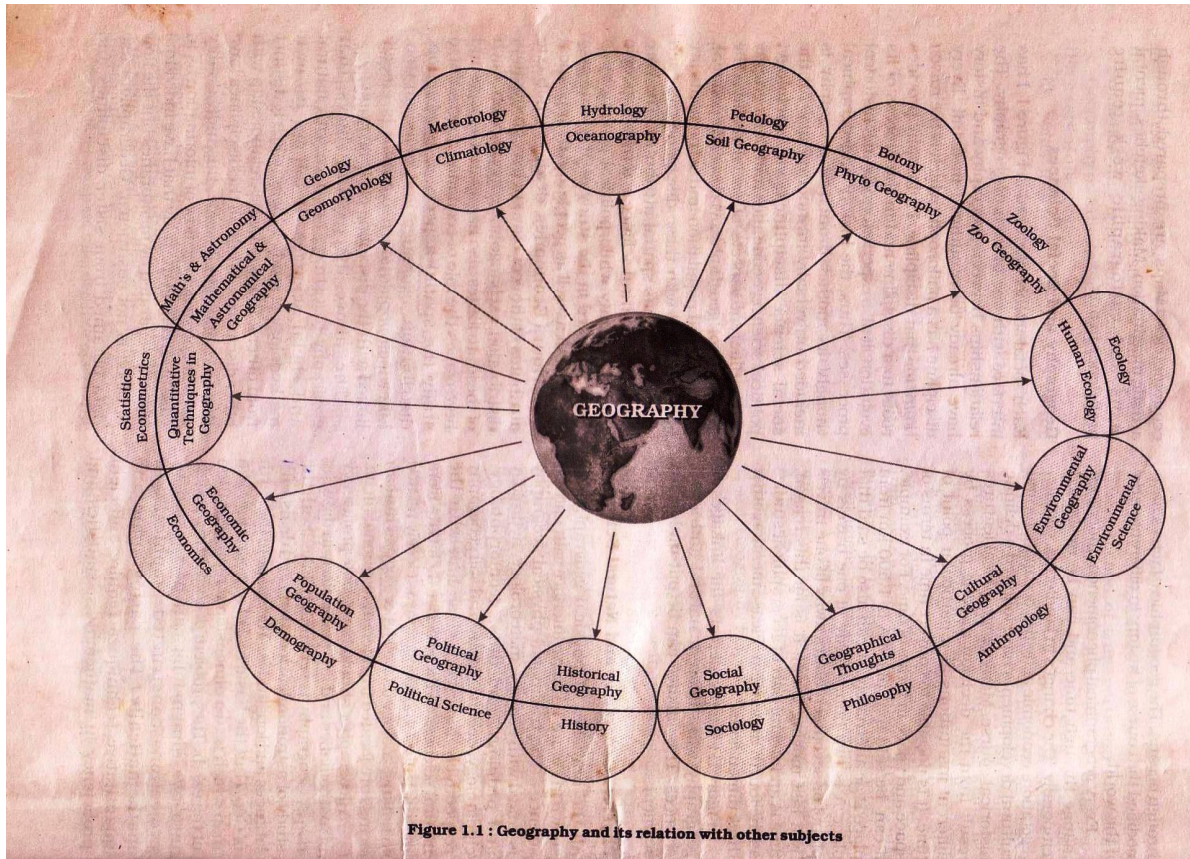
The traditional physical geography is linked with geology, meteorology, hydrology and pedology, and thus ,geomorphology , climatology, oceanography and soil geography have very close link with the natural sciences as these derive their data from these sciences. Bio-Geography is related to botany,zoology as well as ecology.

A geographer should have basic knowledge of mathematics because geography is concerned with astronomical locations and deals with latitudes and longitudes.The cartographic and quantitative techniques require sufficient knowledge of mathematics,statistics and econometrics.

Geography and Social Sciences

The branches of human geography have direct link with social sciences such as history,politicalsciences,sociology,philosophy,anthropology,economics,demograp hy,etc.History and geography are closely related to each other because these two subjects are concerned with time and space respectively. According to Hartshorne

“Description according to time is history, that according to space is geography. History is narrative, geography is description. Political science is concerned with territory, people and sovereignty while political geography is interested in studying the state as spatial unit as well as people and their political behavior. Economic geography is a very important branch of human geography which has a very deep relation with economics. Economics deals with economic needs of man and the sources of their supply. Economics is primarily concerned with production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods. Each of these attributes has spatial aspect which is studied by economic geography. Population geography is concerned with demography, social geography with sociology and cultural geography with anthropology.



Branches of Geography

The major approaches to study geography have been

- (i) Systematic
- (ii) Regional

The systematic geography approach is the same as that of general geography. This approach was introduced by Alexander Von Humboldt, a German geographer (1769-1859) while regional geography approach was developed by another German geographer, Karl Ritter (1779-1859)

- (i) **Systematic approach.** In systematic approach, we select one geographical factor and study its distribution for the whole world or a part thereof. Relief, drainage, climate, vegetation, soil, mineral wealth, agriculture, industry, transport, trade and commerce and population are some of the important geographical elements. These elements are studied separately with reference to a particular area. This area could be a country, a continent or the whole world. The best way to study the systematic geography is to consider the variations on the surface of the earth with reference to a particular geographical element.
- (ii) **Regional approach.** In regional approach, the world is divided into regions at different hierarchical levels and then all the geographical phenomena in a particular region are studied. These regions may be natural, political or designated region. The phenomena in a region are studied in a holistic manner. Regional geography helps us in identifying the region. Larger regions are further divided into smaller regions. Eg; Ganga plain, Chotanagpur plateau or Assam valley and study their location, relief, drainage, climate, soil, vegetation, mineral, agriculture, industry, transport, trade, population, etc.

Distinction between Systematic and Regional Geography	
Systematic Geography	Regional Geography
1. Systematic geography studies a particular element over the earth or a part thereof	Regional geography studies a particular region with reference to all the geographical elements.
2. It presents an integrated form of the area.	It presents isolated form of the area.
3. It is based on political units	It is based on geographical units
4. This study presents the facts	This study examines the man-environment relationship
5. In the systematic study, types and sub-types are determined on one particular factor, i.e., climate	The boundaries of the region are identified. This is known as regionalisation