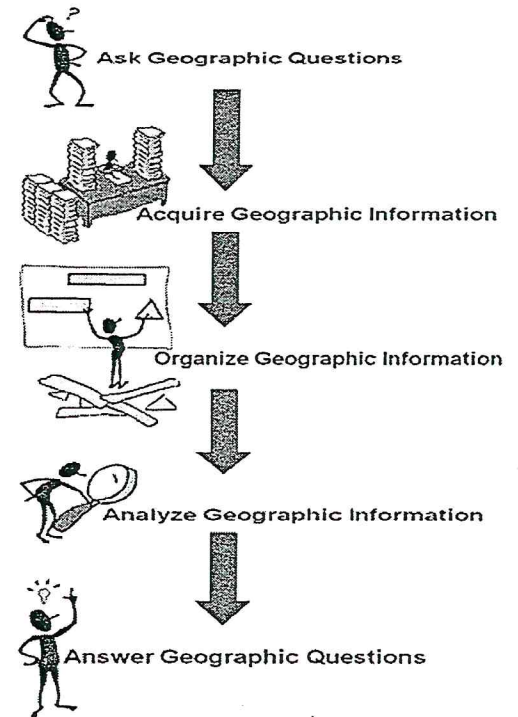


What is geographic inquiry?

Understanding the way in which social scientists investigate problems will help you conduct your own investigations about problems or issues facing your community and our world. Geographers use an inquiry process to answer geographic questions. While the inquiry process in general applies to all social scientists, the types of questions geographers ask, the evidence they use, and their ways of knowing differ from other social scientists. By combining the perspectives of different social scientists, we get a more complete picture of our world and our place in it.

Geographic inquiry is a method used for investigating geographic problems and issues. Similar to science, this process has steps that must be completed in the proper order. First, geographers must **ASK** geographic questions. Typically, geographers ask questions about where and why certain human and environmental conditions exist. Second, they must **ACQUIRE** geographic information. In this step, geographers use maps, geographic information systems (GIS), global positioning systems (GPS), online mapping, observations, surveys, photographs, mathematical models, satellite images, environmental data, and other geographic tools to gather information. Sometimes, gathering geographic information can lead to more questions, which will require you to gather even more information.



Graphic.SS0601.2 MC3 Project

Once all of the information is gathered, the third step that geographers take is to **ORGANIZE** the information. Organizing the information may include the creation of maps, charts, diagrams or written documents. This requires re-reading the information and grouping similar information together. At this point, geographers may also see that they need to revise their question, have additional questions, or need more information. As with all inquiry and research, it is important to reflect on what information is found and consider how to refine the initial question and research.