GRADE 3 STUDENT TEXTBOOK

Alabama Geography, Resources and Communities

CHAPTER 5 | FIVE DAILY LESSONS

Read | Explore | Practice | Review

Original Ahava chapter edition, 2026

Using your student textbook

The book supplies explanations and examples for one chapter. Read each numbered lesson before attempting its corresponding workbook exercises. The separate teacher guide is for checking answers, not for copying.

- Read the vocabulary and the full lesson first.
- Study the worked example and explain it in your own words.
- Answer the checkpoint questions without a teacher’s key.
- Complete the matching daily PDF workbook and save privately.
- Review errors with your teacher before the next lesson.

Chapter contents

- Day 1: Physical and Political Maps
- Day 2: Waterways and Settlement
- Day 3: Resources and Economic Decisions
- Day 4: Local Government and Civic Participation
- Day 5: Geographic Evidence Check

This is one chapter edition, not a full 36-week textbook.

Lesson 1: Physical and Political Maps

Vocabulary

- physical map: a map highlighting landforms and bodies of water
- political map: a map highlighting borders and named jurisdictions
- legend: a key explaining symbols on a map
- scale: a relationship between map distance and actual distance

Student reading

Alabama is in the southeastern United States. Physical maps show features such as rivers, hills, valleys, and coastal plains. Political maps show states, counties, and city boundaries. A learner should compare these maps because the two kinds of information serve different purposes.

The Tennessee River runs through northern Alabama. Mobile Bay connects the southern part of the state to the Gulf of Mexico. These are physical features that appear on many reference maps. Montgomery is the state capital. A map showing Montgomery, Madison, Mobile, or another city must be read with attention to its date and geographic scale.

Every useful map should have enough information to identify what it shows. The title names the subject, the legend explains symbols, a compass indicates orientation, and the scale helps estimate distance. The north arrow matters because not all maps place north at the top.

Maps are evidence of geography and the choices of their makers. An old map can preserve earlier place names, but it may contain errors or omit communities. Do not assume that an absent symbol proves a place or person did not exist.

Worked example

A physical map marks Mobile Bay in the south. A political map labels Mobile as a city. They answer different questions: where the water body lies versus which place has a particular name. Read the map key to avoid confusing the two.

Check your understanding

- 1. What does a physical map emphasize?
- 2. What does a political map show?
- 3. Which map feature explains symbols?
- 4. Why include a scale?

After reading, complete Chapter 5, Day 1 in the corresponding workbook.

Lesson 2: Waterways and Settlement

Vocabulary

- watershed: land from which water drains toward a common waterway
- transportation: movement of people or goods
- settlement: a place where people live
- navigation: planning and following a route

Student reading

Rivers have influenced human travel and settlement in Alabama for thousands of years. Indigenous communities used waterways for movement, food sources, trade, and local knowledge long before European colonization. Later settlements and industries also depended on some navigable waterways.

The Tennessee River crosses northern Alabama. The Alabama, Tombigbee, and Mobile river system connects areas toward the Gulf Coast. Waterways may help carry goods where navigation is possible, but currents, seasonal water levels, obstacles, and technology affect how useful a route is.

A river can provide freshwater or transportation, while a floodplain may also create flood risk. People choose settlement locations for many reasons, including family, land, politics, work, security, and available resources. It would be inaccurate to say every community formed only because of a river.

Compare two sites using a map. Ask which waterways are nearby and which other features might matter. State a possible transportation advantage without claiming it was the only cause of a historical decision.

Worked example

Suppose a hypothetical town is beside a navigable river and another is far from it. The riverside town may have an advantage for boat transport. The map cannot, by itself, show which town had better schools, laws, or economic opportunities.

Check your understanding

- 1. Give one possible benefit of a river.
- 2. Give one possible river-related risk.
- 3. A town appears beside a river: observation or inference?
- 4. What source could help explain settlement decisions?

After reading, complete Chapter 5, Day 2 in the corresponding workbook.

Lesson 3: Resources and Economic Decisions

Vocabulary

- natural resource: a material or feature of nature that people use
- scarcity: having limited resources relative to wants or needs
- opportunity cost: what is given up when making a choice
- conservation: careful use and protection of resources

Student reading

Alabama has forests, land suitable for different crops, rivers, minerals, and other resources. Which resources are useful depends on technology, location, access, and social decisions. A natural resource is not automatically available to everyone on equal terms.

A community makes choices because resources, money, time, and labor are limited. If a town uses part of its budget for a park, that money cannot simultaneously pay for every other project. The next-best option given up is an opportunity cost.

Economic activities may include growing crops, processing materials, manufacturing goods, transporting products, and providing services. They connect communities because one worker or business often needs goods and services provided by others.

Conserving water and forests can protect habitats and support long-term community needs, but every proposal should consider evidence, costs, and effects on different people. A thoughtful answer weighs benefits and trade-offs instead of assuming every resource decision is simple.

Worked example

A fictional town has $1,000 for one project. Repairing a walkway costs $1,000; buying park equipment also costs $1,000. The town cannot purchase both with that money. If it repairs the walkway, the equipment it forgoes is the opportunity cost.

Check your understanding

- 1. Name two Alabama natural resources.
- 2. How does fertile soil support livelihoods?
- 3. Why does forestry require planning?
- 4. Give a benefit and cost of extracting a resource.

After reading, complete Chapter 5, Day 3 in the corresponding workbook.

Lesson 4: Local Government and Civic Participation

Vocabulary

- local government: public institutions serving a city, town, or county
- ordinance: a local rule adopted by an authorized governing body
- public service: work or services intended to serve the community
- civic participation: lawful ways people contribute to public decisions

Student reading

Local governments may manage certain roads, parks, zoning, sanitation, libraries, and public safety functions depending on their legal authority. A city council can adopt ordinances under applicable law. County governments and city governments have different responsibilities, and the exact division should be checked in current local sources.

A mayor, council, county commission, or school board may be involved in public decisions, but not every community uses identical offices or procedures. The teacher should consult current official sources before naming today’s officeholder or attributing a particular power to one official.

Residents can participate through public meetings, lawful petitions, informed questions, volunteering, and respectful communication. Children can learn civic habits by observing meetings with a responsible adult and practicing evidence-based suggestions about shared spaces.

A good proposal should identify a problem, who is affected, a practical solution, possible cost, and who has authority to act. Respectful participation does not guarantee that everyone will agree, but it improves the quality of discussion.

Worked example

A family notices litter near a park. They record where it occurs, ask which department maintains the site, and propose more bins or cleanup days. That is civic participation. It does not prove that the family has legal authority to change park rules.

Check your understanding

- 1. Name one local-government decision.
- 2. How can a resident participate?
- 3. Why does budget size matter?
- 4. Ask one fair question about a park proposal.

After reading, complete Chapter 5, Day 4 in the corresponding workbook.

Lesson 5: Geographic Evidence Check

Vocabulary

- claim: an assertion that can be evaluated
- evidence: relevant information supporting or challenging a claim
- inference: an interpretation going beyond direct observation
- reliable source: an identifiable source appropriate for the fact being checked

Student reading

Review the difference between physical and political maps. One map can show rivers and elevation, while another identifies county or state borders. The type of map should match the question being asked. Students need to name the map’s title, date, legend, and source when those details are available.

Review major Alabama waterways and their connections to settlement and economic activity. Rivers can support transportation and water needs, but the benefits vary with navigation, climate, and infrastructure. Never infer the entire history of a town from one waterway symbol.

Review choices about resources and local government. Scarcity forces trade-offs. Local officials and residents may have different responsibilities. An accurate civic explanation identifies which level of government has legal authority and which facts would inform the decision.

For the cumulative workbook task, support each factual claim with a map, source, or lesson passage. A strong answer separates direct observation from interpretation, identifies at least one uncertainty, and provides a clear explanation in complete sentences.

Worked example

Claim: Mobile Bay lies on Alabama’s Gulf Coast. Evidence: its location on a reliable physical map. Inference: access to the bay may support some transportation. Limit: the map alone cannot establish the traffic volume of a port in a particular year.

Check your understanding

- 1. What explains a blue line on a given map?
- 2. Why check the map date?
- 3. State one benefit and one risk of a riverside site.
- 4. Make a qualified claim about site choice.

After reading, complete Chapter 5, Day 5 in the corresponding workbook.

Chapter review

Revisit any missed questions using the reading and the vocabulary. State the evidence for each claim and distinguish observations from interpretations.

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Teacher and parent note

Use the separate answer key and teacher guide for review, reteaching and independent assessment. This edition is not yet a complete school-year text, nor has it been fully aligned and verified against all grade-level state standards.