

JigsawGeo Teaching Resources

World

Free printable geography activities for grades 2-8
A digital companion app - JigsawGeo from squishLogic



Want to explore geography digitally? Try JigsawGeo for iPhone and iPad.

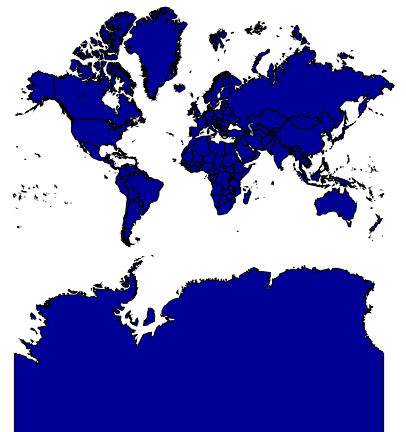


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Take Geography Beyond the Worksheet

Enjoying these free printable activities? There's a digital way to explore them, too.

JigsawGeo turns the maps in this packet into interactive puzzles for iPhone and iPad. Assemble World region by region, explore borders and flags, and learn geography at your own pace - at home or in the classroom. Six difficulty levels, from Traveler to Cartographer, let the app grow with your students from grade 2 through grade 8.



JigsawGeo - Interactive geography for curious minds.



Scan to learn more or download JigsawGeo.

Teacher Guide: Understanding Map Projections

Earth is a sphere, but every page in this packet is flat. Flattening a globe onto paper always distorts something - shape, size, distance, or direction - and every world map ever printed has had to choose which distortions to accept. These pages let students see and compare two very different choices.

Start with a Globe

Before opening this packet, show students a real globe so they can see the continents and oceans in their true shape and size on a sphere. If a physical globe is not available, JigsawGeo's own 3-D globe view makes a good stand-in: let students rotate it on a phone or iPad so they see the same true shapes before comparing them to a flat map.

Compare the Two World Maps (pages 4-5)

Have students look at the Mercator and Equal Earth pages side by side. Ask what shape outlines each map (a rectangle versus an oval), and why a rectangle might be easier to print in a book while an oval is more honest about the globe's true shape. Point out how large Antarctica and the Arctic islands look on the Mercator page, then ask what happened to them on the Equal Earth page.

Compare Greenland and Africa (pages 6-7)

This is the heart of the lesson. Using only the Mercator page, ask students to guess which is bigger: Greenland or Africa. Many will say they look about the same size, or even that Greenland looks bigger. Then turn to the Equal Earth page and ask again. In reality, Africa is about fourteen times larger than Greenland - the Mercator projection stretches land near the poles far beyond its true size.

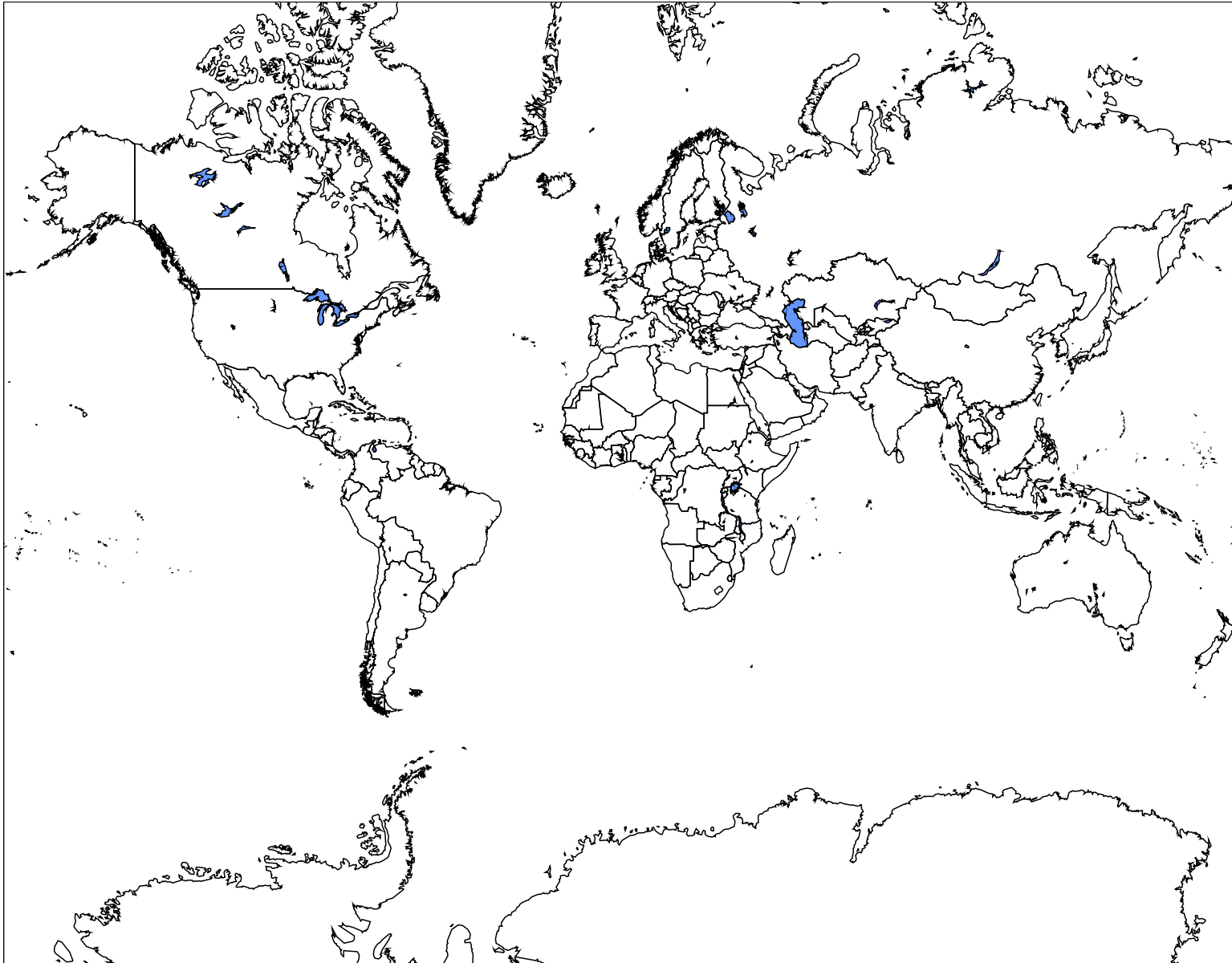
Why This Matters

In 2026 the United Nations passed a resolution encouraging schools and mapmakers to use equal-area projections like Equal Earth when teaching true relative size, while still recognizing that Mercator remains useful for navigation, since it turns a ship or airplane's compass heading into a straight line. No projection is wrong; each is a tool suited to a different job.

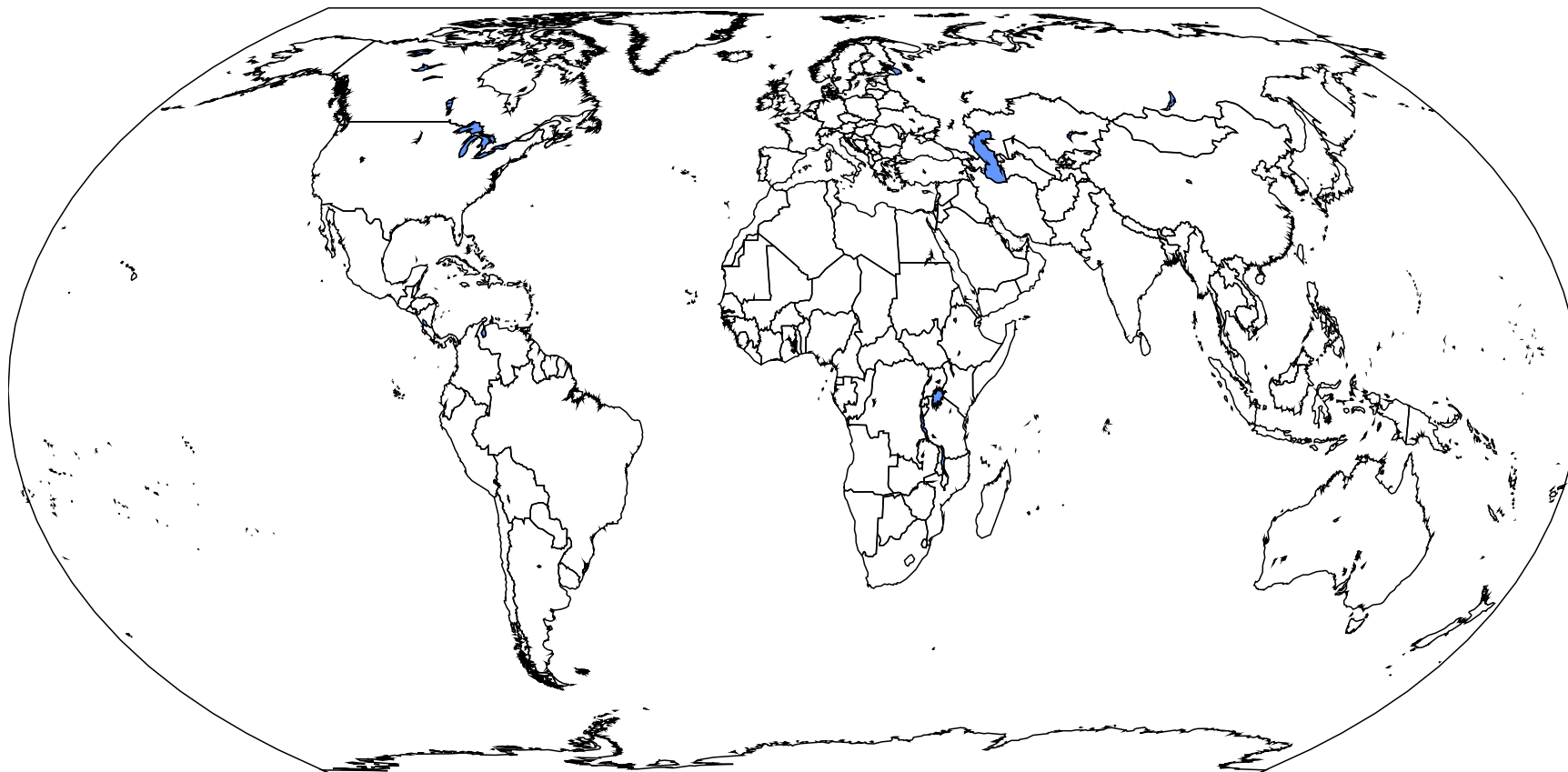
Discussion and Extension Ideas

- Which projection would you choose to plan an airplane route? Which for a classroom wall map? Why?
- Look up your own state or country's true land area and compare it to Greenland's.
- Find another example of a country that looks bigger or smaller than it really is on a Mercator map.

World Map: Mercator Projection



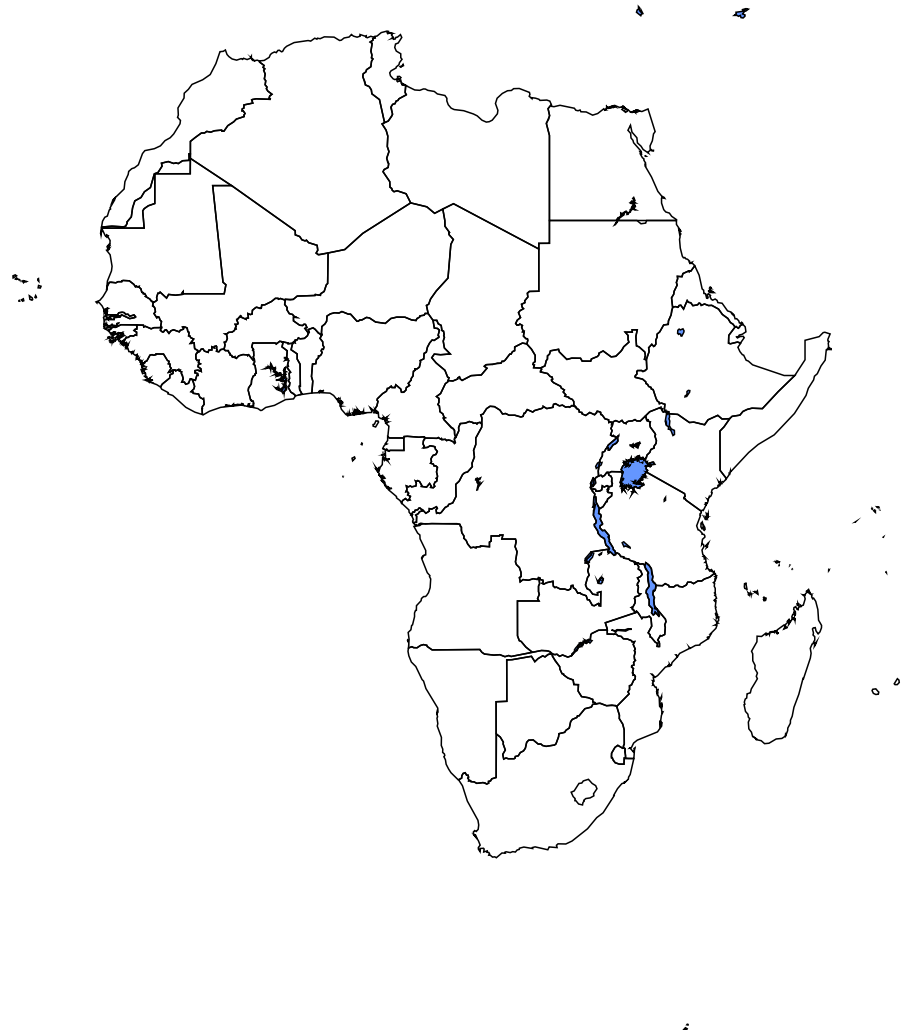
World Map: Equal Earth Projection



Mercator Projection



Greenland



Africa

Equal Earth Projection



Greenland



Africa