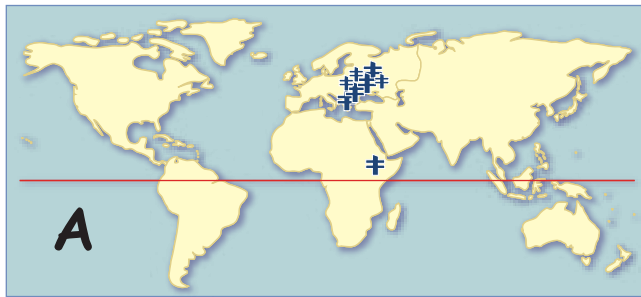


The Geography of Religions

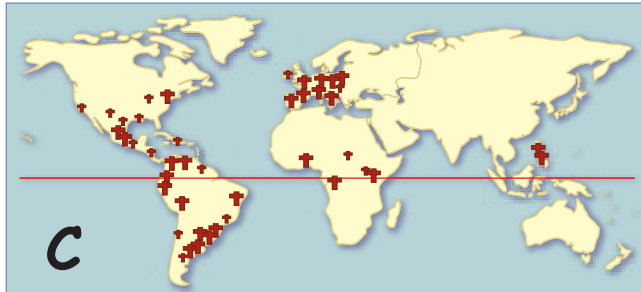
Religion	Millions in	
	1970	2010
Buddhism	250	500
Hinduism	500	1050
Islam	600	1750
Christianity	1200	2200
- Catholic	650	1300
- Orthodox	250	350
- Protestant	300	550



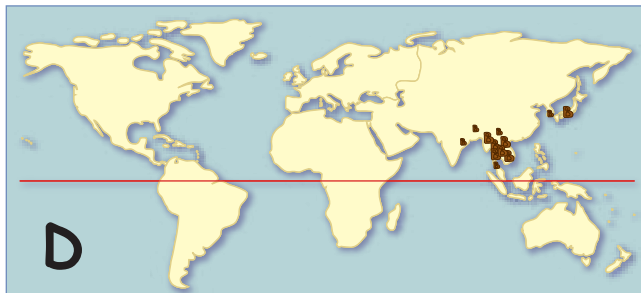
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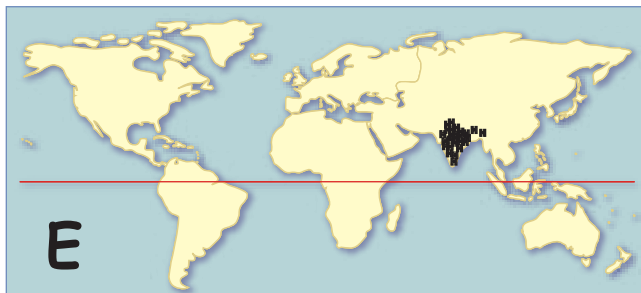
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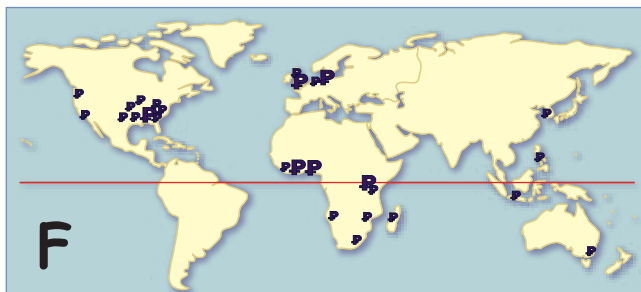
C



D



E



F

1. On the line to the left of each name, write the letter of the map that shows the geographic pattern of believers in that religion:
2. On the lines below each name, write the names of two countries where that religion is important.

___ **Buddhism**

___ **Hinduism**

___ **Islam**

___ **Roman Catholic Christianity**

___ **Orthodox Christianity**

___ **Protestant Christianity**

Teacher's Notes: **Religions – Maps and Data**

Overview: Students match maps with the names of the major religions of the world. Then they write the names of two countries where each religion is especially important. This can be done inductively, from the maps, or by using other sources such as the CIA Factbook or textbooks.	Grade: 6 - 12
	Related Discipline: History
	CC Standard: math, writing
	Time: ½ to 1 class period

Setup: Religion is an especially important influence on human behavior in many places. Religious organizations run hospitals, provide shelter, serve meals, run schools, and offer many other services. Religious organizations have also tortured people, incited terrorist acts, launched missiles, and started wars. In short, it's a complicated story. The bottom line is that a basic mental map of religions is one key foundation for understanding how people live in different parts of the world.

Unfortunately, textbooks often show religion on a single map, with countries colored according to the dominant religion (or, even harder to read, with colors based on percentages of adherents of a given religion). Those maps can be good reference sources, but they are difficult to use as teaching aids.

Procedure: This handout can support a number of activities, including whole-class discussions, individual matching efforts, mathematical calculations of percentages and growth rates, and so forth.

Answers: The countries named here are listed in approximate order of total number of believers. Students, however, need not list them in exactly this order – the goal is simply to build a better mental map of the world by associating religions, general regions of the world, and a few specific countries.

Buddhism – Map D, China, Thailand, Japan, Myanmar

Hinduism – Map E, India, Nepal, Bangladesh

Islam – Map B, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Iran, and many other Southwest Asian and North African countries

Roman Catholicism– Map C, Brazil, Mexico, United States, Philippines, and many other Mediterranean and Latin American countries

Orthodox Christianity – Map A, Russia, Ukraine, Balkan countries, Ethiopia

Protestant Christianity – Map F, United States, Nigeria, Korea, and many northern European and highland East African countries

Debrief: The important message is that most of the major religions of the world have clear geographic patterns, with occasional areas of significant overlap. The core areas of the patterns are important. So are the places with fairly sharp boundaries (e.g., between Islam and Hinduism in South Asia, or between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria). It is also important to see areas where several religions coexist. See the Southwest Asia clickable miniAtlas for a more detailed look at Sunni and Shi'a Islam.

Vocabulary: religion adherent believer denomination

Extension: Use a source such as the CIA Factbook to get information about religion within individual countries.