



The World-Traveling Watermelon

Continents and Lines of Latitude/Longitude

Middle School Geography

Objectives:

Identify continents and read maps, using lines of longitude and latitude

Materials:

Political world maps and globes

Introduction:

Watermelons are thought to have originated in the Kalahari Desert. In 1850, explorer David Livingston found them growing wild in this area in southern Africa. The Kalahari Desert covers 70% of Botswana, and parts of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. The first recorded watermelon harvest occurred nearly 5,000 years ago in Egypt and was depicted in Egyptian hieroglyphics on the walls of their ancient buildings.

1. A **continent** is one of the 7 largest landmasses on a globe.

Name the 7 continents: _____

2. What continent are the Kalahari Desert and Egypt located on?

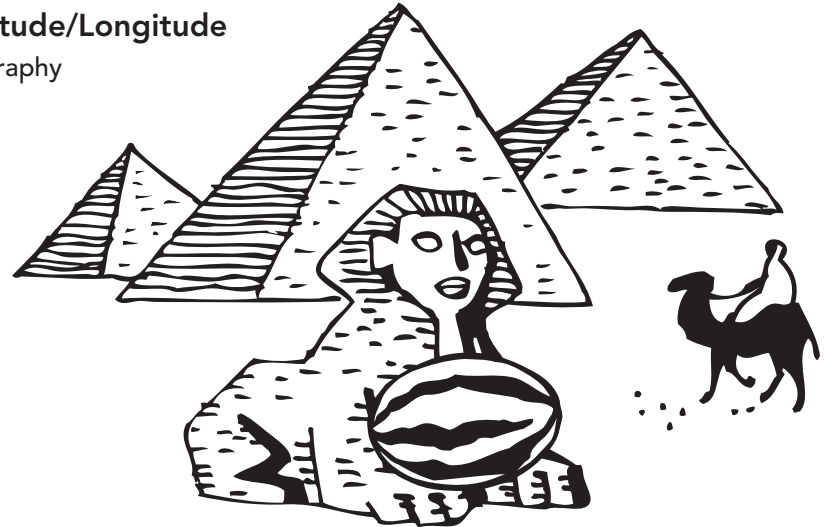
From Egypt, it is believed the watermelon spread throughout countries along the Mediterranean Sea by way of merchant ships.

3. What three continents surround the Mediterranean Sea? _____

By the 10th century, watermelon found its way to China.

4. What continent is China located on? _____

You can give an exact position on the Earth's surface by combining a specific latitude with a specific longitude. **Lines of longitude run north and south and are called meridians.** Zero degrees longitude is an imaginary line called the **prime meridian.** It passes through Greenwich, England. Half of the lines of longitude are west of the prime meridian and half are east of it.



Watermelon spread through the rest of Europe via the Moors during the 13th century. There is a funny story about a Roman leader and a watermelon. A watermelon was once thrown at Roman Governor Demosthenes during a political debate. Placing the watermelon upon his head, he thanked the thrower for providing him with a helmet to wear as he fought Philip of Macedonia.

5. Locate Rome, Italy, using lines of longitude, and write the coordinate below.

Lines of latitude are called parallels. They run east and west. The equator is at 0 degrees latitude. Half of the parallels are north of the equator and half are south of it.

Southern food historian, John Egerton, believes watermelon made its way to the United States with African slaves. Food historian John Martin Taylor says that early Greek settlers brought the method of pickling watermelon with them to Charleston, South Carolina.

6. Locate South Carolina, using lines of latitude, and write the coordinate below.
