

Biology

Developmental Module: Using Google Earth™

GIS tools, like Google Earth™, provide a quick and easy way to examine geographically important places. Using Google Earth™ allows you to find places of personal significance, such as your home, your school, and other places in your community like the local library, a movie theater, a favorite restaurant, or a sports complex. It also allows you to explore remote locations to which you do not ordinarily have access. With Google Earth™, you can view different aspects of geographic locations in three dimensions and even explore bodies of water.

Installing Google Earth™

In order to install Google Earth™ on your computer, use the following directions:

1. Visit the [Google Earth™ download website](#).
2. Review the Google Maps/Earth Terms of Service and click on the link to *Agree and Download*.
3. Using the installation file, select the option to run the software installation.
4. The software will automatically open and place a shortcut on your computer's desktop.

Google™ provides a variety of video tutorials to introduce users to the Google Earth™ mapping tool. For more assistance with using the software, access the [Beginner Tutorials on Google Earth™](#).

Practice Activities

The following activities will help you practice using Google Earth™.

Task 1: Find North America

- Click on the Google Earth™ icon to start Google Earth™.
- Center your map so that you can see the whole continent.

Task 2: Experiment with the Controls

- Move your mouse to the right side of the screen. Click on the plus (+) and minus (-) buttons to zoom in and out.
- Move and rotate the globe by clicking on it and dragging with the mouse.

Task 3: Use Layers

GIS programs show information in layers, or groups of related elements. You can use layers to add additional data to the map such as borders, geographic features, traffic, weather, population density, and landmarks.

- Look at the left sidebar at the box that says "Layers".
- Click on the box for "Borders and Labels".
- Did the borders for states appear? If you zoom in closer, State names and cities will appear.

Task 4: Find Places of Personal Significance

- On the left sidebar, find the box that says "Fly To" and enter your address (including the city and state)
- You should see your neighborhood on the map. Now zoom in closer until you can see your house.
- Note that Google Earth automatically includes the coordinates of the location you selected.
- Don't forget the layers! Try adding one or more interesting layers to your selected location.
- Once you have an image you like, click on "File" on the top menu, and then scroll down to "Save" then "Save Image". Name your image and save it to your computer.