Physical & Cultural Boundaries
Boundary

- **Boundary**: invisible line that marks the extent of a state’s territory

- Why are they important?
  - Access to resources
  - People know which government they are ruled by
  - Others?
**Boundary** — a vertical plane that cuts through the rocks below and the airspace above, dividing one state territory from another.
Frontiers

- **Frontier**: a zone where no state exercises complete political control
  - Uninhabited or sparsely settled
    - Few pioneers looking to live outside organized society
  - Provides a buffer zone
2 Types of Boundaries

Physical Boundary
- Features of the NATURAL landscape
- Such as: mountains, deserts, & water

Cultural Boundary
- Follow same cultural characteristics
- Such as: geometric, religion, ethnicity, & language
Physical Boundaries

- **Mountain Boundaries**
  - Boundary by mountains
  - Effective boundaries because they are difficult to cross
  - Contact is difficult to make between opposite sides
  - Permanent & sparsely inhabited

- Example: Argentina & Chile Andes Mountains
Physical Boundaries

- **Desert Boundaries**
  - Hard to cross
  - Sparsely inhabited
  - Common in Africa and Asia

- Example: Algeria, Libya, and Egypt

**Sahara Desert**
**Physical Boundaries**

- **Water Boundaries**
  - Boundary created by water
  - Rivers, lakes, and oceans
    - Readily visible on a map
    - Typically - middle of the water
  - Good protection against attack, why?

- **Example: US & Mexico**
  - Rio Grande River

- **Problem:**
  - Precise position of the water may change over time (especially rivers)
  - Ocean boundaries on the coast - claim part of water too for fishing
Rivers can change over time - Has this happened in Illinois?

Current population: 14
Who owns the Sea?

**U.N.** states’ rights, responsibilities, & use of the earth’s seas & oceans & their resources

- Sovereignty for defense & control of fishing & other resources (oil)
**Cultural Boundaries**

- **Geometric**
  - Boundaries formed by straight lines
    - Latitude & longitude
    - Follow an arc
  - Why are Geometric lines considered a cultural boundary?

- Example: US and Canada
  - $141^\circ$ west longitude between Alaska and Yukon Territory
2 Types of Boundaries

- **GEOMETRIC** – Used by colonial powers in Africa
  - Advantages - lines are easy to determine with a GPS
  - Straight lines serve as political boundaries - unrelated to physical and/or cultural differences
Cultural Boundaries

- **Religious**
  - Boundaries created to separate 2 conflicting religions in an area
  - Religious differences

- Example: Pakistan & India
Cultural Boundaries

Language

- Language used to separate different nationalities
- Common in Europe

Example: Versailles Peace Conference (After WWI) used language to create boundaries in Eastern and Southern Europe.
Both Physical & Cultural between Mexico & Canada