

Critical Thinking Skills Activity

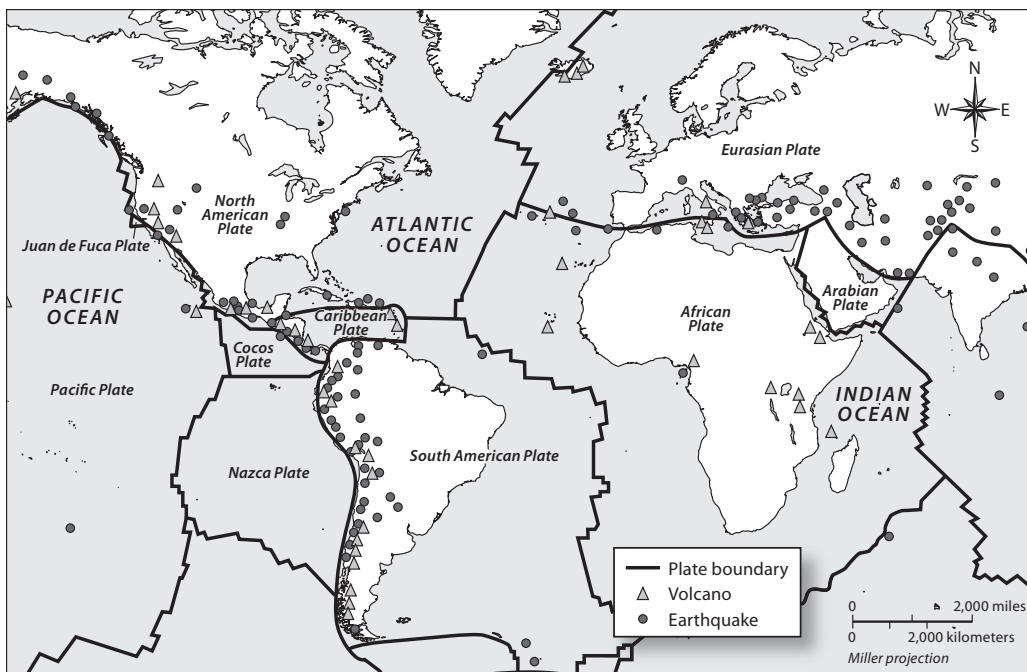
networks

Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands

Making Generalizations

Learning the Skill

- When you make generalizations, you take specific information and use reasoning to come up with a general, or non-specific, concept that unites the information. When making generalizations, you look at what the things, concepts, or ideas have in common with one another. For example, if you are studying a group of dogs, you could make the correct generalizations that dogs have four legs, fur, and sharp teeth.
- Generalizations should be made with care, however. If you do not have enough information or data, you may make an incorrect generalization. For example, if the group of dogs included only toy poodles, miniature schnauzers, and Chihuahuas, you might generalize that all dogs are small. This is because your sample does not include great Danes, golden retrievers, or German shepherd dogs. So your generalization is incorrect.
- Generalizations are useful because they help you understand unifying concepts. However, be aware that there are almost always exceptions to any generalization.
- One way to check whether a statement is a generalization is to find out whether the statement has exceptions. If it is basically true but not always, it is probably a generalization. Also look for clue words and phrases, such as *generally*, *as a rule*, *tends to*, *in general*, and *usually*.



Critical Thinking Skills Activity *cont.*

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Practicing the Skill

Directions: For each item, write "G" if the statement is a generalization. Write "F" if the statement is a fact rather than a generalization.

- _____ 1. The Pacific Plate is almost all ocean.
- _____ 2. Africa has few earthquakes.
- _____ 3. Earthquakes and volcanoes tend to occur in the same areas.
- _____ 4. Some areas have no earthquake or volcano activity.
- _____ 5. Earthquakes and volcanoes can happen under the ocean.
- _____ 6. Earthquakes usually occur along plate boundaries.
- _____ 7. Plates are generally very large areas.

Applying the Skill

Directions: Answer the questions based on information on the map.

1. Make a generalization about earthquakes in Central America compared to another part of the world.

2. Make a generalization about the shape of plate boundaries.
