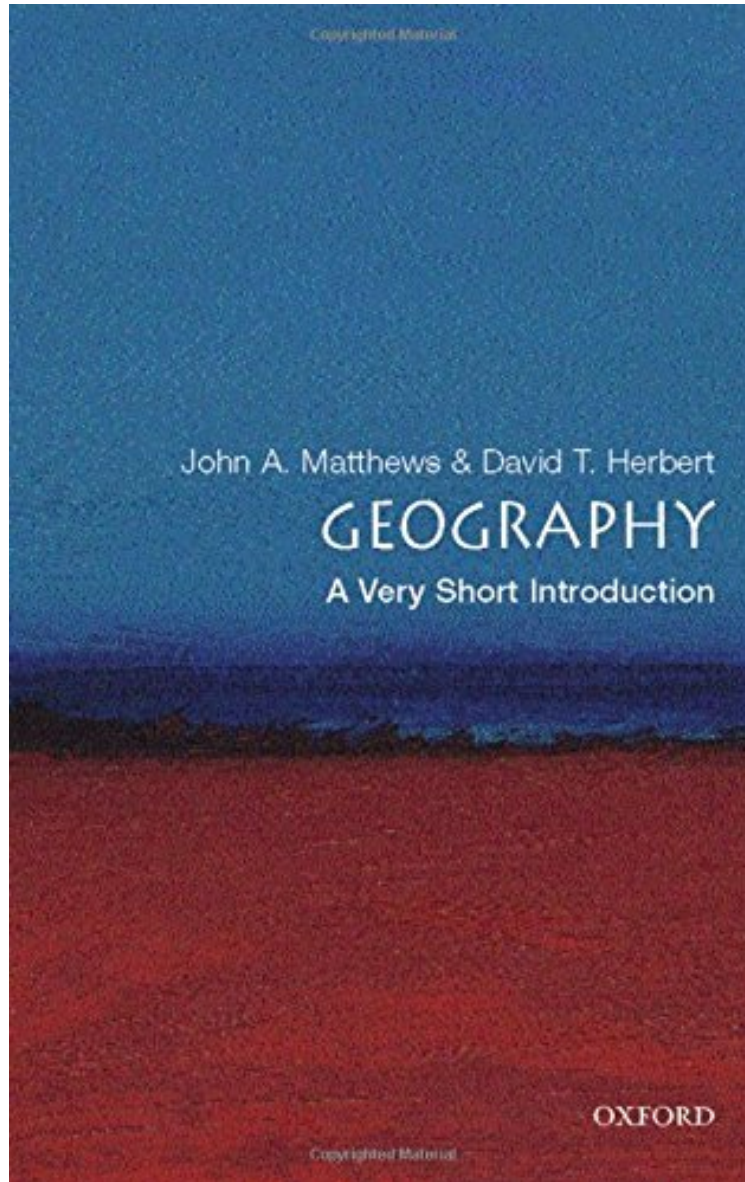


[Ebook pdf] Geography: A Very Short Introduction

Geography: A Very Short Introduction

John A. Matthews, David T. Herbert
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John A. Matthews, David T. Herbert : Geography: A Very Short Introduction before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Geography: A Very Short Introduction:

0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. goodBy karl rohrbaughExcellent shape and delivered on time. I am writing a script and needed the book to be in good shape. I am very pleased. Thank You. This is the quality I enjoy from and its subsidiaries.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Learning Something New in a Very Short

IntroductionBy Robin FriedmanOxford University Press describes its "Very Short Introduction Series" as intended "for anyone wanting a stimulating and accessible way into a new subject." "What better way to get older", I thought, "than by learning something new". I wasn't prepared to try, say, particle physics; but I wanted to read on a subject relatively new for me and manageable. I found this Very Short Introduction to Geography (2008) by John A Matthews and David T. Herbert. Matthews is Professor of Physical Geography and the University of Wales, Swansea, while Herbert is Emeritus Professor of Geography and Honorary Fellow at the same institution. The authors earlier collaborated on a book, "Unifying Geography: Common Heritage, Shared Future" (2004); and the title suggests a good deal of the theme of their very short introduction. Geography is a broad, diverse discipline, and most lay readers will have only a general idea of its scope. The authors quote a number of definitions and offer the readers the following simple explanation. "The subject matter of geography is the Earth's surface, including the envelope of atmosphere immediately above it, the structures that lie immediately below it, and the social and cultural environments contributed by the people who occupy it." The authors identify and explain the three "core concepts" of geography: space, place, and environment. The most interesting part of the book is the authors' frequent discussion about whether geography is one study or several. The study is at the cusp of physical science and human culture. It divides broadly into the fields of physical geography and cultural geography. There is room for doubt about the extent of the ties that hold the fields together. In addition each of the two broad fields seem to fold in with other sciences or studies. The authors discuss at length the difficulty of integrating the study of geography, but they are convinced the effort is important and worthwhile. In discussing the future of the discipline, they urge an effort to integrate its various components at their center. The book develops the science of physical geography, its subdivisions, and the relationship of the field to other sciences. They stress the quantitative, empirical character that the discipline shares with other sciences. Cultural geography is highly different from the physical science. It has moved over the years from an attempt to be quantitative and empirical to a search for meaning. In so doing, it has followed trends in the humanities and philosophy. The authors discuss subjects including deconstruction and feminism to show how the different ways people have developed to look at and understand the physical space they inhabit has changed the ways many cultural geographers view their subject. I was interested in learning how philosophy, which I have studied, has become important in the way in which at least some geographers view their discipline. The book discusses the tools and methodologies geographers bring to their tasks. Here again, the subject is frustratingly broad with the authors mentioning a range of studies from advanced mathematics and statistical theory on the one hand to T.S. Elliot's poem "Little Gidding" to Jacques Derrida on the other hand. The difficulty is to find the precise "space" (pun intended) for the discipline. The authors discuss the many ways in which geographers team to work with others, both in the sciences and the humanities. In reading the book, I thought of two uses of geography from my own recent reading. First, I read a novel by a writer I admire, George Gissing, which is set in the Lambeth area of London and in the outlying areas of London in the 1880s. A new edition of the book *Thyrza* includes an article by a cultural geographer describing in detail the physical environment of the London areas that Gissing describes in his novel. It was useful in providing a setting for the story. I also read a new collection of essays about the 1862 battle of Shiloh in the Civil War. A perceptive essay, using the work of a professional geographer, describes the complex terrain of the battlefield as it stood in 1862 and concludes that the terrain probably was the decisive factor in the Union victory on that field. *Rethinking Shiloh: Myth and Memory* It was valuable to tie in this very short introduction to geography with subjects I know. The authors maintain that the study of geography may function as a bridge between the sciences and the humanities. If so, it would be a valuable thing to do. I enjoyed learning something new and outside my usual reading in this book, and I also enjoyed getting a very short introduction to the study of geography. Robin Friedman 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Another great entry in the VSI series By WT Like the earlier reviewer of this book I noticed that the authors said John Glenn was the first man on the moon. However, I was not going to let that stop me from finishing it. I'm glad I didn't, because this was a great introduction to Geography. The book delves into area such as Physical and Human Geography and how they intertwine. Also covered are the tools used and a chapter on what the future of Geography might hold. A common theme in the book is that Geography is a very diverse subject and is really hard to pin down because so many new theories and branches of the discipline are evolving. While the authors cover this well I decided it is also the weakness of the book. They spend too much time reiterating this theme. I suppose it is important to the subject, but I found it repetitive. I will look into some of the further reading provided at the end of the book because my curiosity is piqued. I think that is a good sign of any book in the series of Very Short Introductions and that is why I give it four stars.

This Very Short Introduction answers four basic questions: what is Geography, how do geographers work, why is Geography important, and where is the discipline of Geography heading? Geography has always been important, though it has had only a short history as an academic discipline and is much misunderstood. Modern Geography has come a long way from its historical roots in exploring foreign lands, in mapping the world and in describing the physical and human features of the Earth's surface. There are two parts to the discipline: Physical Geography, which covers natural environments and landscapes; and Human Geography, which investigates people and the cultural

landscape. Physical and human geographers commonly do not agree with each other. But there are also common elements and Geography as a whole has an important role as a bridge between the sciences and the humanities. Using wide-ranging examples, the book paints a broad picture of the current state of Geography, its subject matter, concepts and methods, how it developed, and its strengths and weaknesses. The book's conclusion is no less than a manifesto for Geography's future. About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

The authors make an honest effort to represent the wide and diverse range of professional geographers' interests. * Geographical, * Matthews and Herbert's book is written- as befits the VSI series- in an accessible prose style and is peppered with attractive and understandable images, graphs and tables. * geographical. * About the Author John A. Matthews is Professor of Physical Geography in the School of the Environment and Society at the University of Wales, Swansea. He has led 36 expeditions to southern Norway for which he has received the Ness Award from the Royal Geographical Society. His books include The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Environmental Change and, with David T. Herbert, Unifying Geography: Common Heritage, Shared Future. David T. Herbert is Emeritus Professor of Geography at Swansea University. He is also a Honorary Fellow of the university. He has served on most of the main committees for British Geography, such as the ESRC, RGS/IBG and the Research Assessment Panel.