

ARTICLE ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Name
Date

Matthew Waller. "The Importance of the Regional Concept: The Case for an Undergraduate Regional Geography Course of Sub-Saharan Africa." In *Teaching Africa: A Guide for the 21st-Century Classroom*, edited by Brandon D. Lundy and Solomon Negash, 98-103. Bloomington, Indiana; Indian University Press, 2013. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16gzfkz>

Waller argues that, despite certain trends in scholarly practice, the regional study of geography is essential to the proper teaching of geography and that the best geography textbooks take it seriously in presenting their material. Waller uses the example of Sub-Saharan Africa, the work of earlier geographers, and an assessment of geography textbooks to demonstrate the importance of regional geographic study.¹

Waller supports his thesis by analyzing geography textbooks to determine whether they approach Africa from a regional or systematic perspective and to assess how they decide what defines being "Africa" and whether that results in a subdivision of the continent. Some divisions were based on culture or history and others were based on geographic elements that would have shaped a variety of cultural expressions (means of livelihood, myths, etc.) Waller states that the best textbooks took regional geographic approaches seriously in their discussions and were clear about how regional perspectives influenced their understanding and why they chose to use it (or not) in a particular discussion.

Waller points to the fact that the way we categorize geography affects how we understand geography and the people and cultures who inhabit it.² Our textbook reflects this by including north Africa as part of the discussion of Africa (although notably in separate chapters). This question of how preconceptions affect how we study is reflected more broadly in our discussion of early historical records in Africa. If we categorize paintings, architecture, or other non-written forms of history as inferior by nature, it will be difficult to take early African history seriously. Being clear and specific in articulating the reasoning for our presuppositions will help us to assess history (and geography) more clearly.

¹ Matthew Waller, "The Importance of the Regional Concept: The Case for an Undergraduate Regional Geography Course of Sub-Saharan Africa," in *Teaching Africa: A Guide for the 21st-Century Classroom*, eds. Brandon Lundy and Solomon Negash (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013), 98.

² Waller, "The Importance of the Regional Concept," 100.

Bibliography

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<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16gzfkz.14>.

SPECIAL NOTE: The above citations are the proper citations for a chapter in an edited volume (which is the example used). Since most of your possible sources will be articles instead, I am including the proper citation formats for an article here as well, in case you would like to review them. Remember that you need to choose only one format for your own citation.

Review format (beginning of assignment):

Gordon P. Hagberg. "The Peculiarities of Geography: Africa." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 335 (May 1961): 66-70.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1033255>

Bibliography format (end of assignment):

Hagberg, Gordon P. "The Peculiarities of Geography: Africa." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 335 (May 1961): 66-70.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1033255>