Latitude and Longitude

Where am I? If you know how to use latitude and longitude, you will always know where in the world you are!

**Latitude**
When looking at a map, latitude lines run horizontally. Latitude lines are also known as parallels since they are parallel and are an equal distant from each other. To remember latitude, imagine them as the horizontal rungs of a ladder ("ladder-tude"). Also, when you lay something FLAT, it is horizontal, so “flatitude.” Degrees latitude are numbered from 0° to 90° north and south. 90° north is the North Pole and 90° south is the South Pole.

**Equator** This special imaginary line of latitude is located at zero degrees. It is the line which divides our planet into the northern and southern hemispheres.

**The Tropic of Cancer and The Tropic of Capricorn** The Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn each lie at 23.5 degrees latitude. The Tropic of Cancer is located at 23.5° North of the equator and The Tropic of Capricorn lies at 23.5° South of the equator. The area bounded by the Tropic of Cancer on the north and Tropic of Capricorn on the south is known as the "tropics." This area does not experience traditional seasons as we know them. Instead, they have a wet and a dry season.

**Longitude**
The vertical longitude lines are also known as meridians. To remember longitude, think about when you measure how “long” your hair is, you are measuring vertically (up and down). They meet at the poles and are widest at the equator. While the equator divides the Earth into Northern and Southern Hemispheres, it is the Prime Meridian at zero degrees longitude and the line of longitude opposite the Prime Meridian (near the International Date Line) at 180 degrees longitude that divides the Earth into the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.