Using Google Earth to Determine Bounding Coordinates for Cartographic Materials

Setting Preferences for Google Earth

1. **Install** Google Earth.


3. **Start** Google Earth.

4. On the Main Menu, **go to View>Grid** and **activate** the Grid Overlay, if it is not already active.

5. On the Main Menu, **go to Tools>Options.** **Click on the 3D View Tab** if it is not already active.

6. Under the **Show Lat/Long item**, **set your preference** for displaying geographic coordinates. **Click OK** to apply the change.

```
Degrees, Minutes & Seconds = 38°57'33.84"N, 95°15'55.44"W
Decimal Degrees = 38.959400°, -95.265400°
```

To convert latitude and longitude values from degree-minute-second (DMS) to decimal format, you can use this formula:

\[
degrees + (\text{minutes} \times \frac{1}{60}) + (\text{seconds} \times \frac{1}{3600}) = \text{decimal degrees}
\]
Displaying Geographic Boundaries and Features

1. In the Layers Side Panel, Uncheck the Primary Database item to disable visibility of all layers.

2. Expand the borders item by clicking on the + sign to the left of the item.

3. Check the checkboxes of any geographic boundaries you wish to have displayed while working.

4. Expand the Populated Places item and check the checkboxes for the feature classes you wish to display.

5. If necessary, expand the Alternative Place Names item and select alternative display languages for features.

6. Activate the visibility of any other geographic features necessary for your work using the same methods.

7. When finished, you can click on the arrow in the Layers Side Panel Title Bar to reduce its visibility.
Searching for Places and Determining Bounding Coordinates.

1. In the Search Panel, enter the search term “Venice, Italy” and click on the Search Button.

2. Google Earth will “Fly” to Venice, Italy.

3. Use the Pan Tool (it is the default for your Mouse Cursor), to pan until you locate the extent of the map of interest.

4. You can use the Navigation Tools (in the upper-right corner of the Google Earth View Window) to zoom in and out until you have a view that is satisfactory for determining coordinates.

5. Note that the Lat/Long Grid you enabled is scale-dependent and graticules are added and labeled as you zoom in and out of the view.

6. You should now be able to compare the view in Google Earth to the extent of your map and determine the Bounding Coordinates for the map.

7. Note that Google Earth displays the Latitude/Longitude coordinates for the position of your Mouse Cursor.

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decimal points) at the lower-left of the View Window.

**Tips & Tricks**

- If you are unable to find geographic features using the search tool, try enabling the Feature Names Layer for the class you are seeking and use the Navigation Tools to Zoom & Pan to the general area of the feature. Feature names available in the Layers Panel are not necessarily available to the Search Feature.

- You can use the Placemarks tool to create markers that will allow you to return to an area quickly from the Places Panel.