

The second theme of geography is place.

In the coffee trade, for instance, place plays a key role. If you enter a Starbucks, you will see a list of blends named for the islands, countries, and territories from which they came. Brazilian, Javanese, and Sumatran are just a few names you might see. What do these places have in common? They are located between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, the area of the world where coffee plants are grown (*see map*).

Tropical places provide warm temperatures, ample rain, and fertile soil—the perfect environment for cultivating coffee. In fact, the first coffee plants were located in the Ethiopian Highlands of Africa, in an area called Kaffa. Some historians believe that the word *coffee* comes from *Kaffa*.

According to one legend, coffee's history began in the 9th century A.D., with an Ethiopian goatherd named Kaldi. One day, he noticed his goats dancing and bouncing after they had nibbled from coffee shrubs, grazing on berries that contained green beans. Kaldi tried a few himself. Soon, he too was dancing.

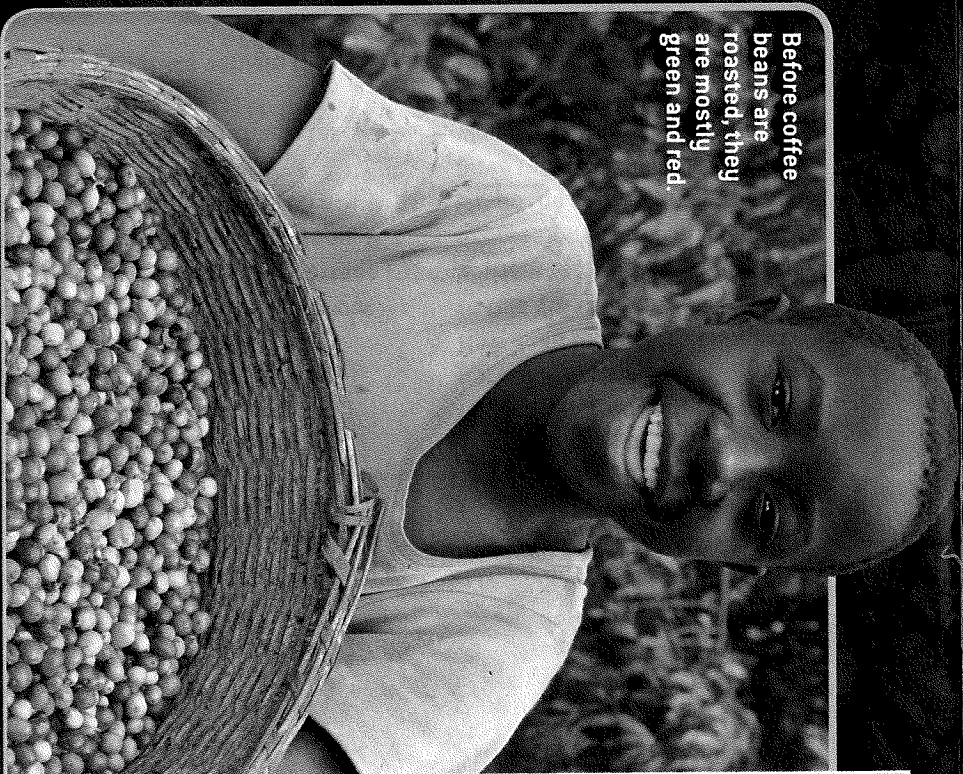
News spread about these powerful beans. Around 900 A.D., Arab traders transplanted coffee trees to the southern tip of Yemen. By the 13th century, Islamic monks brewed the first cups of coffee—a drink they used for meditation.

At the end of the 1600s, however, Dutch traders ended Arab control over coffee. Within a few years, coffeehouses opened across Europe. Coffee trees, meanwhile, were transplanted to India, Indonesia, the Caribbean, and the Americas.

Today, coffee is the world's second-largest agricultural commodity [article of trade] after cotton. Nearly 25 million farmers work in the coffee industry, which brings in about \$60 billion annually—an amount of money that is no small beans.

Study this page before answering the questions at right on a separate sheet of paper. —Jim McMahon

Before coffee beans are roasted, they are mostly green and red.



Top-5 Coffee-Producing Countries

Based on the number of 132-pound (60-kilogram) bags produced between May 2007 and April 2008.

Brazil	28,024,478
Vietnam	16,326,617
Colombia	11,818,485
Indonesia	4,577,211
Guatemala	3,957,566

Source: International Coffee Organization

Coffeehouses were important meeting places for early U.S. merchants and shipowners. In 1793, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) was established in the Tontine Coffee House, at the corner of the city's Wall and Water streets.

QUESTIONS

1. The tropics are located between which two latitude lines?
2. Which tropical latitude line is located at 23° 30' S?
3. In which country was the first known coffee plant located?
4. Which country produces the most bags of coffee per year?
5. Which continent has the greatest number of major coffee-producing countries?
6. Which Asian country produces the most bags of coffee per year?
7. To which country do the islands of Java and Sumatra belong?
8. Which two major coffee-producing areas are part of the United States?
9. Why do you think no European country is a major coffee producer?
10. What is the connection between coffee, commodities, and the NYSE?