Latitude and Longitude Lines

Latitude
Lines of latitude go across the earth from East to West, but they measure the globe from North to South starting at the Equator.

Lines of longitude run across the globe from North to South, but measure East and West starting at the Prime Meridian.

To find a place exactly, we need crossing lines that create an intersection or grid system. One grid system used by cartographers is the Latitude and Longitude Grid. Each location on the globe touches a line of latitude and a line of longitude. The crossing of the latitude and longitude lines is called a coordinate. Latitude and longitude are measured in degrees represented by the symbol “°”.

The coordinates for Salem, Oregon are Latitude 45° North and Longitude 123° West.

In this picture, the sign marks the 45th parallel, but there is no line on the ground because these lines are imaginary. We draw imaginary lines on the earth to help us find and explain exact locations of places on earth.