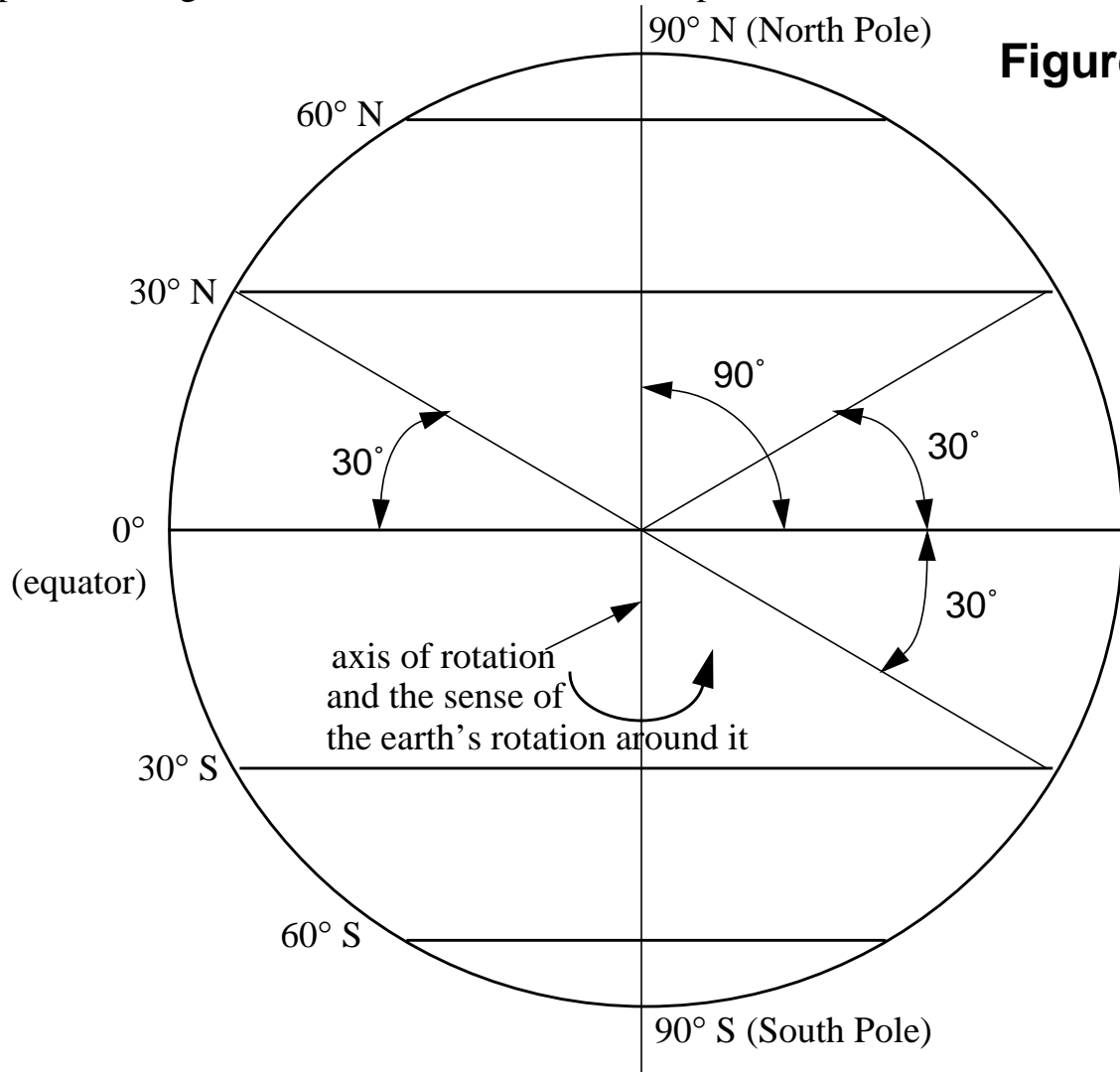


Latitude and Latitude Zones

Latitude is a measure of how far from the equator a place is, expressed as an angle. The angle is measured from the center of the earth, between the equator and the place in question (Figure 1, below).

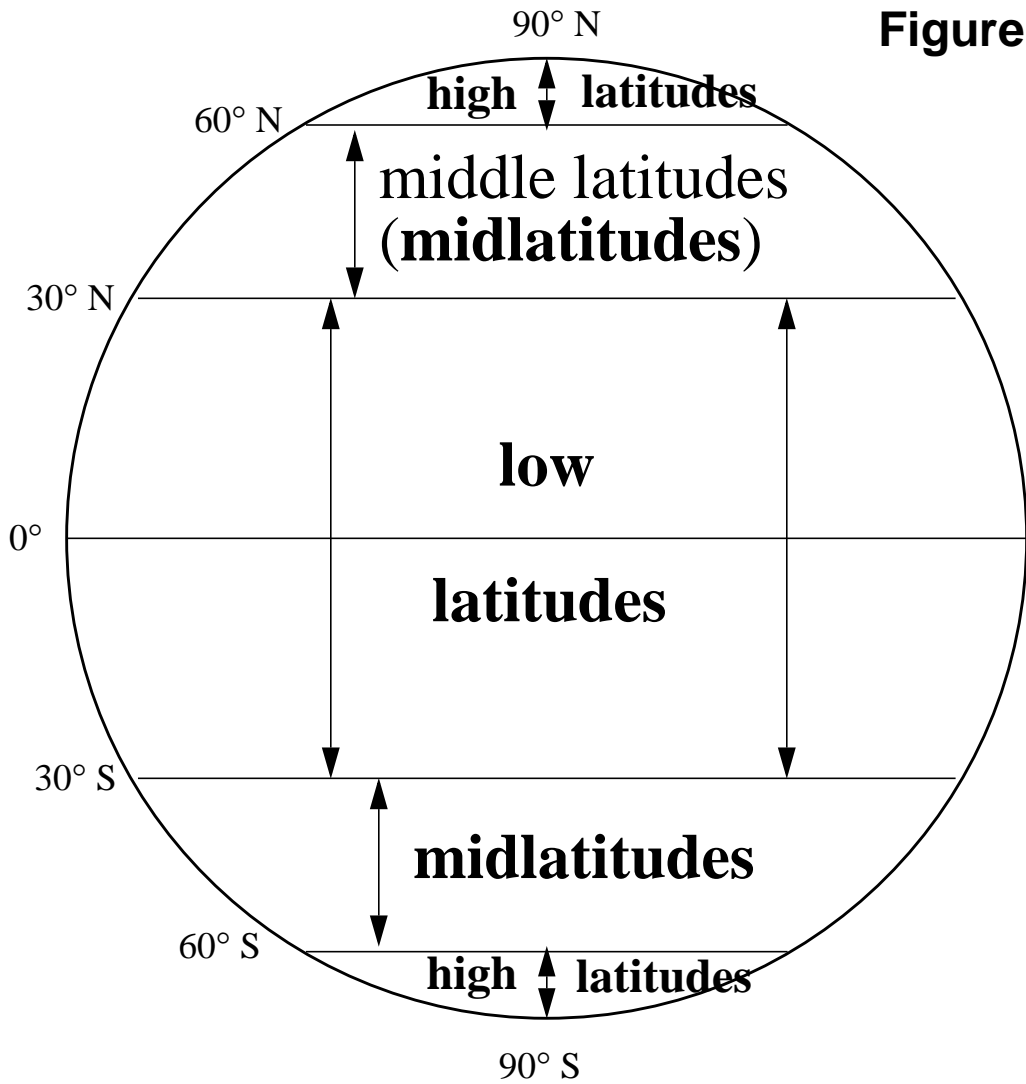
Of course, the closest you can get to the equator is the equator itself, so it has a latitude of 0° . The farthest you can get from the equator is the North Pole or the South Pole. The angle between the equator and either pole, measured from the center of the earth, is 90° , so the latitude of the North Pole is 90°North (or just 90°N) and the latitude of the South Pole is 90°S .

The set of places that are all the same distance from the equator form a circle, called a latitude circle. Latitude circles are centered on the earth's axis of rotation (an imaginary line around which the earth spins or rotates). The axis of rotation passes through the center of the earth and both poles.



Meteorologists define a set of meteorologically significant latitude zones, shown in Figure 2 (below), based very roughly on patterns of weather that can be found in each zone.

Meteorologically Significant Latitude Zones



Another set of latitude zones, based on astronomically significant latitudes (and a little bit on meteorologically significance), is defined in Figure 3.

Meteorologically Significant Latitude Zones Tied to Astronomically Significant Latitudes

