

Understanding Maps and Globes

Maps

A map is a two-dimensional drawing of an area as it would look if viewed from above. Significant features and boundaries are represented by symbols. There are maps for almost every place on earth. Maps of the world, individual countries, and your home town provide an abundance of information.



Globes

Globes give the most possible view of the earth. They are mounted on a center axis and spin freely to show how the earth rotates. Globes are tilted on their axis to accurately represent the angle at which the earth rotates.

Legend

The legend is the key to much of the information on a map. It is usually located in the lower-left corner of the map. The legend tells what the map's symbols stand for. It usually shows the lines used for coastlines, boundaries, and the colors that represent different kinds of land and geographic features. It also shows the symbols for cities, towns, and bodies of water. To find out what a symbol stands for, look carefully at the legend.

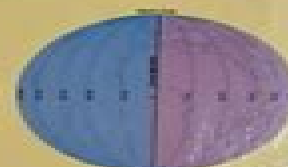
Legend

- International boundary
- State boundary
- National capital
- Major city
- Major highway
- Ocean route
- Railroad
- Canal
- River
- Mountain peak



Lines of Latitude

Lines of latitude, or parallels, run from east to west and indicate distances north and south of the equator. The equator is an imaginary line divided into two equal parts around the middle of the earth. It is located at 0° latitude and divides the earth into the northern hemisphere and the southern hemisphere.



Lines of Longitude

Lines of longitude, or meridians, run north and south from pole to pole. They indicate distances east and west of the prime meridian. The prime meridian is an imaginary line running from pole to pole that divides the earth into the eastern hemisphere and the western hemisphere. It is located at 0° longitude and is the starting point for measuring longitude.

Map Scale

A map scale is used to measure distances between points. The scale is used to measure distances on the map and actual distances in the real world. The scale shows the relationship between the distance on the map and the actual distance in the real world.



Compass Rose

This symbol shows the four cardinal directions and, in some cases, the four intercardinal directions.

Political Map

A political map shows national cities and the boundaries that divide one nation from another. Some political boundaries follow rivers, mountains, or coastlines. Others are straight lines on a map but invisible in the real world. Peoples eat and change political boundaries.



Physical Map

A physical map shows the earth's features of water and landforms. It uses brown, green, and different colors to show elevation and distinguish highlands, lowlands, and plains from mountains and valleys. Elevations are measured from sea level, the height of the ocean where it meets the land.



Skills For Understanding Maps And Globes

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