

What's in a Map?

Map Key (or map legend)

Shows the symbols and colors used on the map and what each one means.

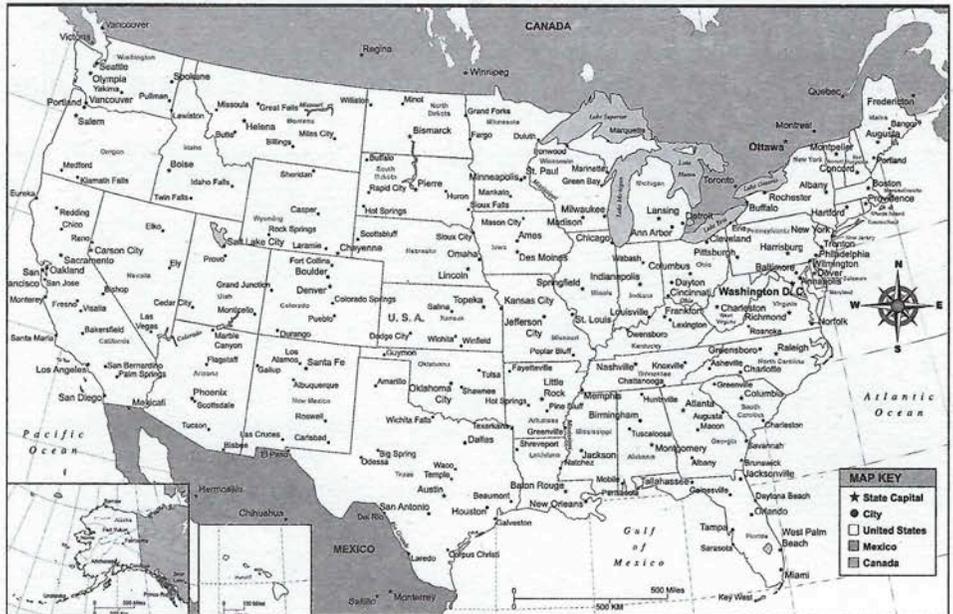
Compass Rose

Shows the directions north, east, south, and west. The letters N, E, S, and W are placed to indicate direction.

Scale Bar

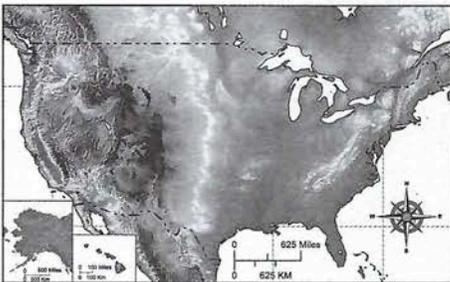
Shows the actual distance between points on the map.
(ex. 1 inch = 1 mile)

Cartographers make different types of maps for different purposes.



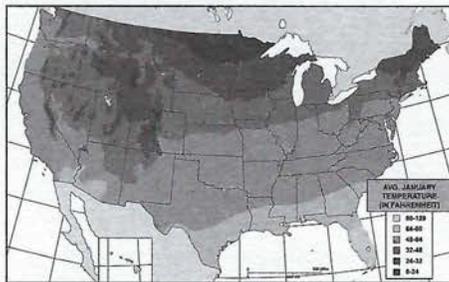
Political Map

A political map shows the man-made borders between countries, cities, and towns. Often, a political map uses different colors to display these boundaries.



Physical Map

A physical map shows only natural landforms, such as mountains, rivers, and fields. For example, a map of a river and waterfall would be a physical map.



Climate Map

A climate map shows the differences in the earth's climate regions. Above, notice the northern U.S. states are shaded darker to illustrate a cold climate.



Language Map

A language map uses shading to show which language is spoken in a particular region. This language map shows only the dominant languages spoken in these countries.



Did You Know?

A person who makes maps is called a cartographer. A good map has several features, such as a key, compass rose, and scale bar. A map always has many landmarks. Landmarks can be formed by humans or nature. For example, the Statue of Liberty is a human landmark. The Atlantic Ocean is a physical or natural landmark.

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