

Reading Maps



The International Cartographic Association defines a **map** as a “representation, normally to scale and on a flat medium, of a selection of material or abstract features on, or in relation to, the surface of Earth.” *Cartographers* are those people who transfer information from the surface of Earth to a flat sheet of paper.

A map provides information in a graphic way. Types of maps include topographic, physical/political, historical, and satellite. Maps may also be general purpose, special purpose, or thematic. Some of the most common maps found in textbooks include climate, weather, regions, movement, transportation, distance, cities, states, countries, waterways, transportation routes, natural resources, resources, and population.

When reading information on a map, students should

- identify the type of map,
- read the title to determine its subject and purpose,
- determine what type of information is found on the map,
- look to see if it has a scale that helps determine the distances between two or more points, and
- look at any other information that is included.

Reading Maps

To Teach students to read maps, use Selection 20 and Graphic Organizer 24. You may want to make a transparency of the map to use as you lead a discussion of the questions in the left column.

1. Make a copy of Selection 20 for each student or use a transparency of the map.
2. Have students answer the following questions from information they find on the map of Iraq.
 - a. What is the type of map?
 - b. What is the subject or purpose of the map?
 - c. What types of information are found on the map?
 - d. Does the map have a scale? What does it show?
 - e. What other information is found on the map?
3. Allow time for discussion of each question.

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1. What is the type of map you are analyzing?

Political/Physical

2. What is the title of the map?

3. What is the purpose of the map?

It shows a political area in the Middle East, focusing on Iraq.

4. What types of information are on the map?

Names of countries, names of cities, capital of Iraq

5. Is there a scale?

No

If yes, what does it tell you?

NA

6. Is there a legend?

No

If yes, what does it tell you?

NA

7. What conclusions can you draw from the information on the map?

Answers will vary but might include relative location of countries in Middle East, relative location of cities from Baghdad, etc.

To apply the strategy, have students look at a variety of maps in their textbook. Have students repeat the process, using Graphic Organizer 24, to “read” the maps. (**Note:** You may want to add some specific questions for the students to answer, based on the map(s) they are “reading.”)

To extend the strategy, have students bring in examples of maps they find in newspapers, magazines, on the internet, etc. Analyze each in regard to its purpose. Also, draw some conclusions from the information shown on each map.

Reading Maps

Selection 20



Reading Maps

1. What is the type of map you are analyzing?
2. What is the title of the map?
3. What is the purpose of the map?
4. What types of information are on the map?

5. Is there a scale?

If yes, what does it tell you?

6. Is there a legend?

If yes, what does it tell you?

7. What conclusions can you draw from the information on the map?

After Reading

Students should determine how well they have mastered specific content after they read. Three types of activities are typically used to assess students' understanding of the material. These include:

- Summarizing or paraphrasing (retelling) what they have read. Summarizing and paraphrasing may be used to develop a number of writing assignments, including reports, essays, and journaling. *Summarizing* involves the ability of students to shorten a reading by eliminating nonessential information. The summary must be written in the students' own words. *Paraphrasing* involves students' ability to reword a selection; the rephrasing, however, may be nearly the same length as the original writing.
- Synthesizing or applying what they have read. *Synthesizing* involves the ability of students to take what they know and display it in a new, somewhat creative manner. Examples of synthesizing include creating brochures, displays, games, drawings, and role-plays.
- Testing or evaluating what they have read. *Testing* may include a variety of types of questions, including true and false, matching, completion (constructed response), essay (extended response), or multiple choice (selected response).