

Mastering MAPS

by Erica Mennerich

How can we
use maps
to find
places?



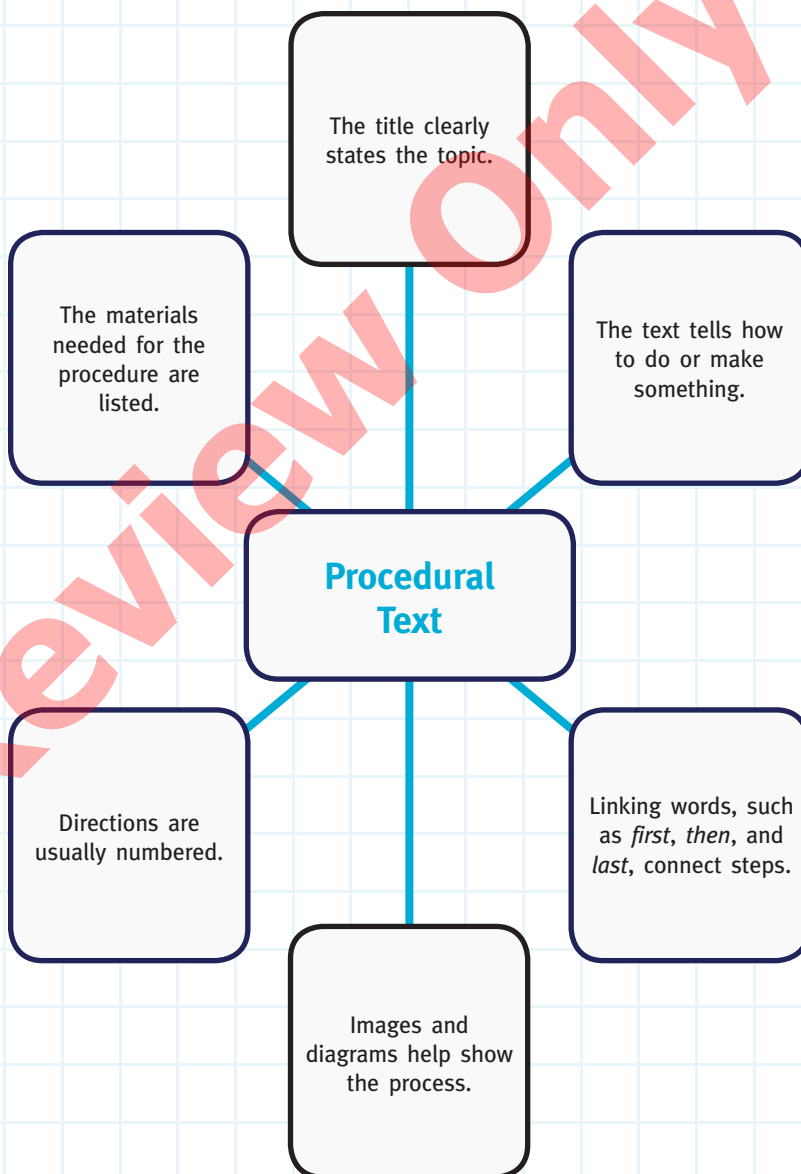
PROCEDURAL TEXT

SOCIAL STUDIES

Level	N/30
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Procedural Text

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



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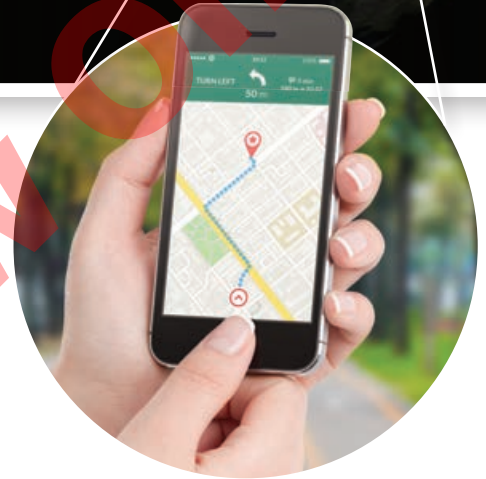
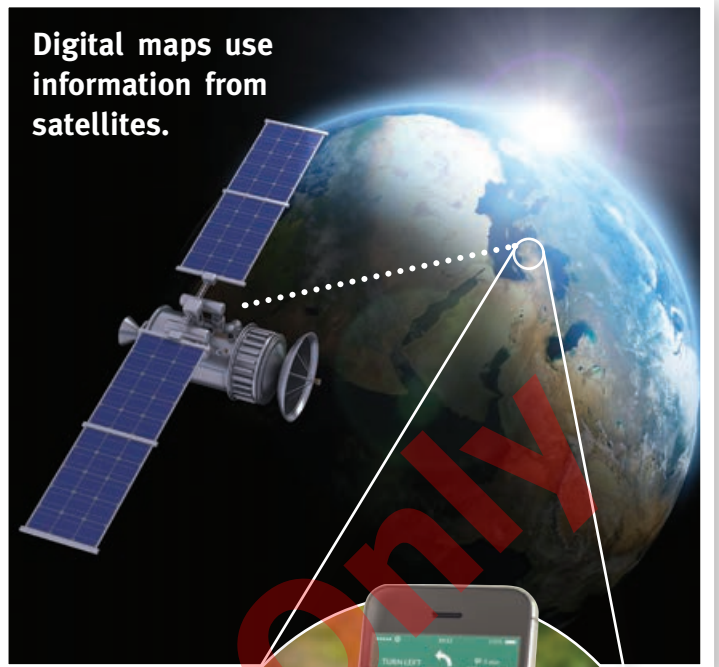
Mapping Our Way

How do people know where they're going and how to get there? Maps, of course! A map is a drawing that shows details about an area, such as Earth's surface. But unlike Earth or a globe, a map is flat.

A map gives a bird's-eye view of an area. This means that people can see things from above, which is very helpful for understanding the layout of an area. Maps can show an area as small as a room or as large as the world.



Digital maps use information from satellites.

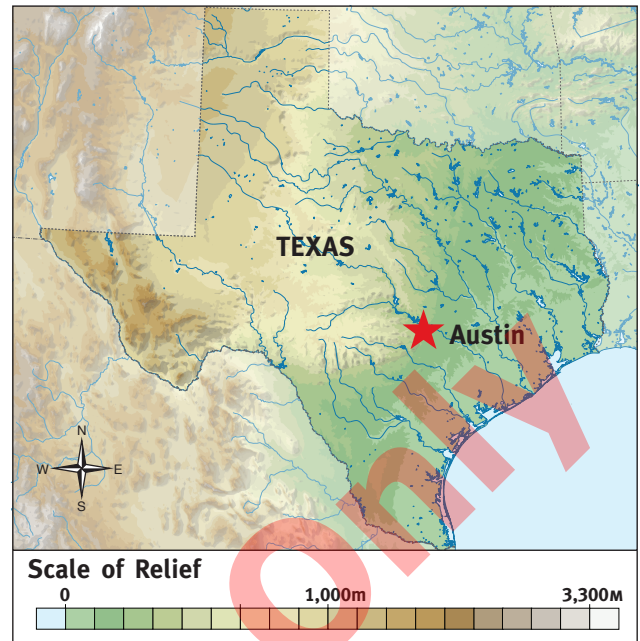


Today, many people use digital maps to find places or learn about the layout of an area. Digital maps are on computers, tablets, smartphones, GPS devices, and even watches. Digital maps use information from satellites. Satellites are machines in space that revolve around Earth. The information satellites send back to Earth is very detailed and reliable.

All kinds of workers, like pilots and truck drivers, rely on digital maps. People also use digital maps for everyday reasons, such as finding a friend's house or going on a hike. Unlike a paper map, the information on digital maps is updated often. Reading maps—both digital and paper—is an important skill. Continue reading to learn how to read and make maps.

Types of MAPS

There are many types of maps. People usually choose a map based on the information they want to know. Here are some examples of common maps.



▲ This physical map uses green to show lowland in Texas.

Physical

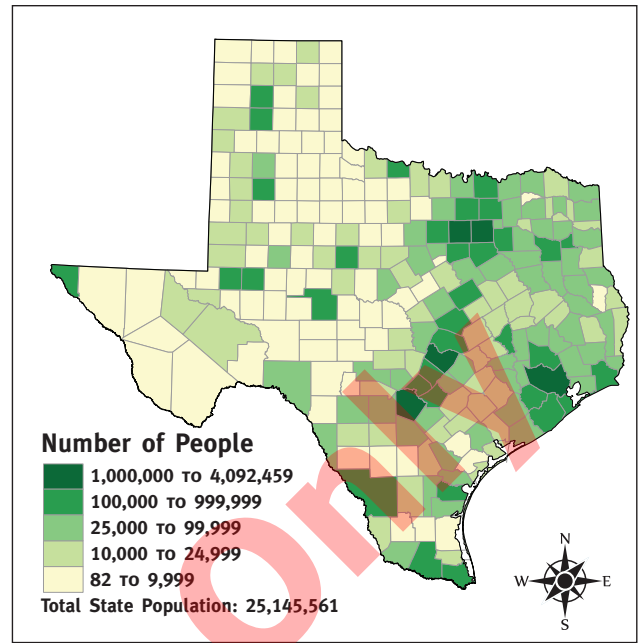
A physical map shows the **topography** of land. Topography is the physical features of land, such as mountains and plains. Shades of color show where the land is high and low.

A physical map is useful for getting a general understanding of the landscape in an area.





▲ This political map shows all the counties in Texas.



▲ This population map shows that more people live in east Texas.

Political

A political map shows human-created boundaries between countries, states, and counties. It may also show roads, highways, and major cities. A political map often uses lines and colors to show the boundaries between areas.

A political map is useful for seeing the location and size of places, such as countries, states, and counties.

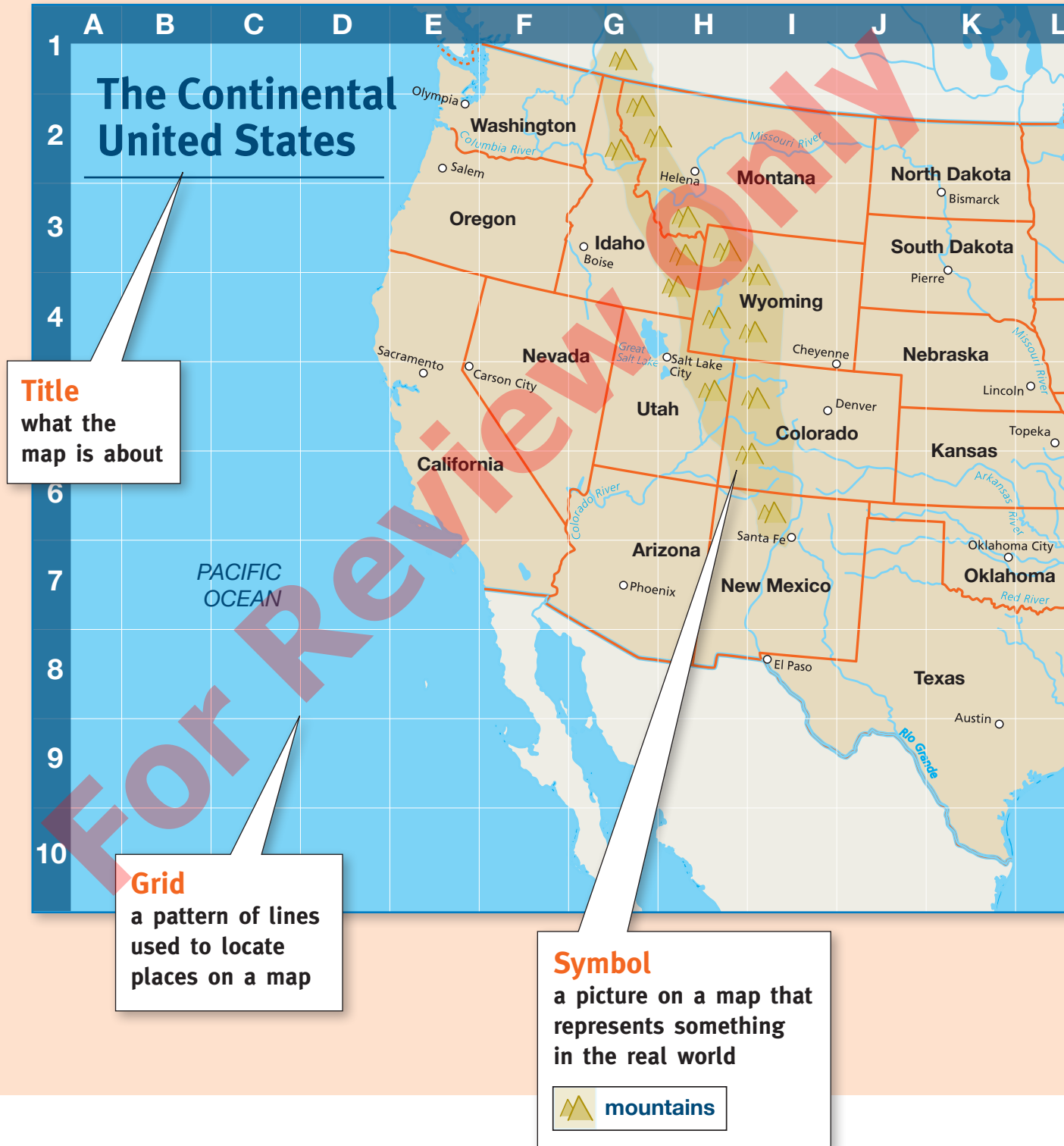
Population

A population map shows how many people live in a particular area, such as cities, counties, states, or countries. A population map uses colors to show the number of people in each county. The lighter colors mean less people. The darker colors mean more people.

A population map is useful for seeing which locations are the most or least populated.

Map Features

Most maps, no matter what type, share certain features. These are the important features found on many maps: symbols, grid, title, key, compass rose, and a scale bar. Examples are noted on this map.





Reading MAPS

In order to read a map, it helps to have in-depth knowledge of these important map features.

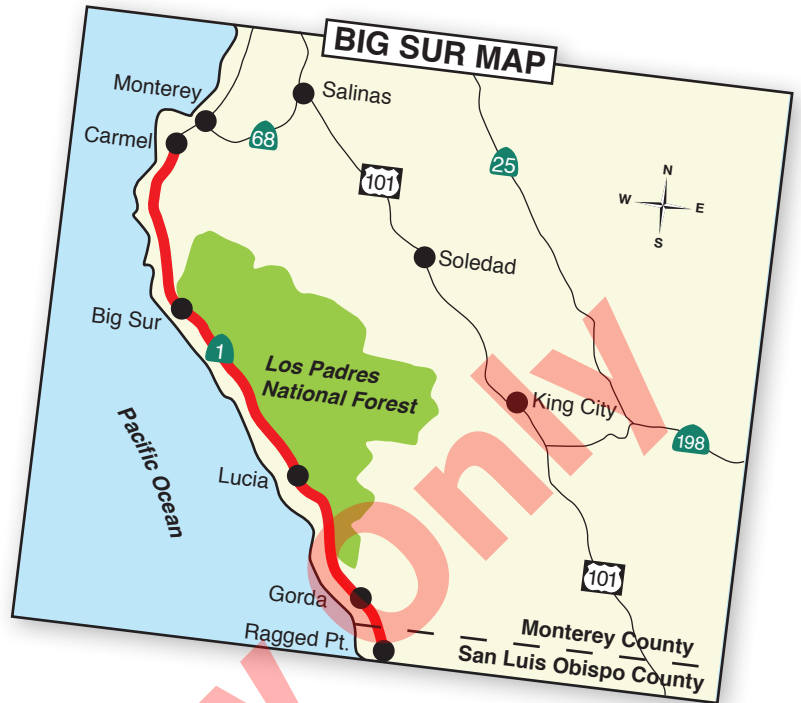
Title

The title tells us the subject of the map and the location. It may also state the type of map, such as a physical map. (Make sure to read the title first when looking at a map.)

Symbols

Maps are a **visual** representation of information, so they make use of symbols (to show information). A symbol can be a number, letter, line, dot,

color, or a small picture that represents something else. (A map may have many symbols.)



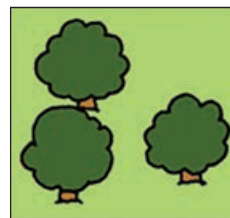
Examples of Symbols



capital city



mountains



forest



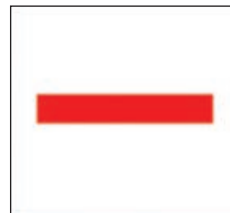
school



lake



airport



highway



river