

How to Make Maps: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Cartography **Map Critique**

Overview

With a foundation on the role of cartographic principles in mapping, the question begs to be asked, “How can cartographic principles be misused in mapping?” In this example you will identify an example of poor cartography in order to provide a critical review of the work.

For this exercise, you should find an example of a **bad** map. The point is not to disparage specific maps, but rather to practice thinking about them critically. You can use a map from the Internet or a legible photo or scan of a hard-copy map. Indicate the source of the map in such a manner that another person would have little trouble locating it (such as a URL, date downloaded, or a formal citation).

Fill in the chart on the following page, which asks you to comment on the ten map elements discussed in the text. In your comments, indicate whether the map element is present on the map and critically evaluate its use: Does it help or hinder communication? How could that map element be improved or how does it improve the map? If the map element is missing, do you think that adding it would improve the map, or do you think that it is best left out, given the intent and context of the map? You don’t need to write more than a few words each.

Submit an essay that critically evaluates the map. In no more than 500 words, describe how the map you have chosen misuses cartographic principles. In your discussion, (a) describe the purpose of the map, (b) the context in which the map was presented, and (c) its audience. Using polished, well-organized, college-level English, you should explain (d) why your map is a bad example of cartography, drawing from the principles covered in the text (e.g., balance, visual hierarchy, objectivity, map symbolization, data classification / symbolization).

Map Element	Comments
Frame line	
Neat line	
Mapped area	
Inset	
Title and subtitle	
Legend	
Data source	
Scale	
Orientation	
Graticule	