

Module 2: Mapping

Topic 2 Content: The Parts of a Map Notes

Introduction

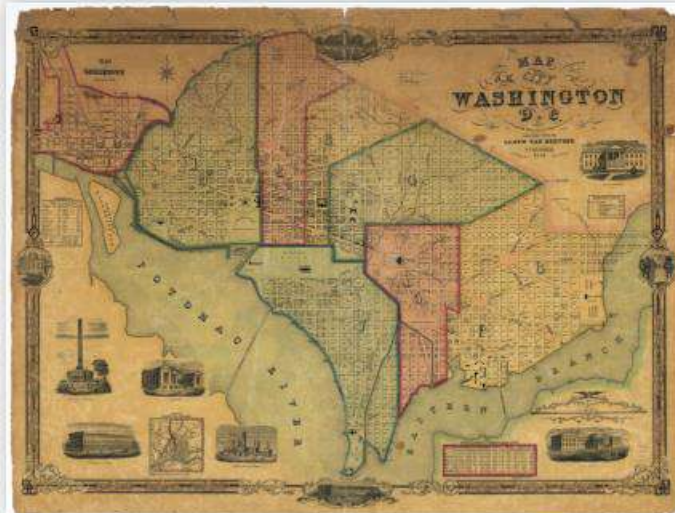
The Parts of a Map

Introduction

Maps show all sorts of different information. While geographers may use different types of projections, all maps should have five things in common, including:

- A title;
- A legend or key;
- A date;
- A scale; and
- A directional indicator or compass rose.

In this activity, you will learn how to identify each map part and how they are used.



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Title

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All maps should have a title. The title should be the first thing you identify, as it tells you generally what you will find on the map. For example, this map's title clearly indicates that it is the Map of the City of Washington, D.C.



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Legend

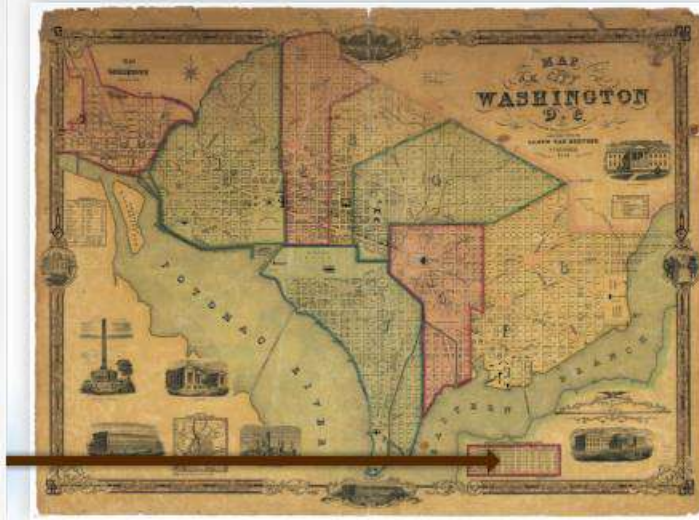
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Legend

All maps should contain a legend, or key, that provides all the details necessary to read them. While the title presents a general idea of the map's purpose, the legend outlines important information, such as defining all the symbols and colors on the map.



Color	Symbol	Description
Blue	Wavy lines	Water
Green	Shaded areas	Land
Red	Black outlines	Buildings
Yellow	Black outlines	Transportation



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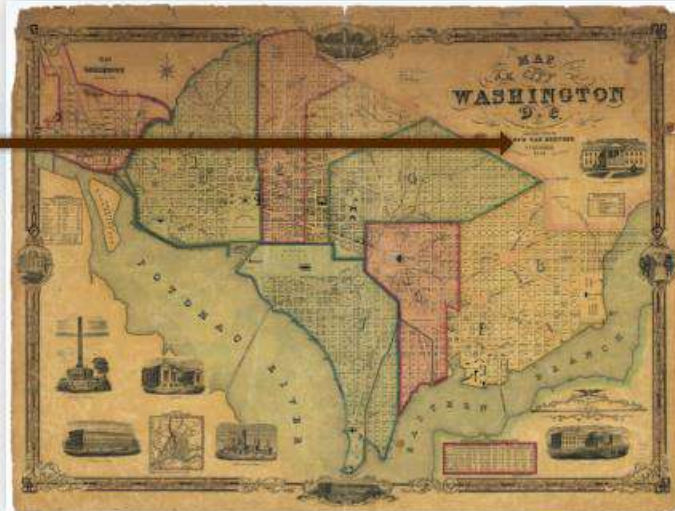
Date

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Date

Maps and geography change constantly, so all maps should have a date marked on them. For example, this 1851 map remains useful for historical purposes if you were researching the population growth of Washington, D.C. However, if you were planning a trip to the nation's capital, you would want to use a map with current street names and buildings.

LLOYD VAN DERVEER
PUBLISHER.
Camden, 1851, N.J.



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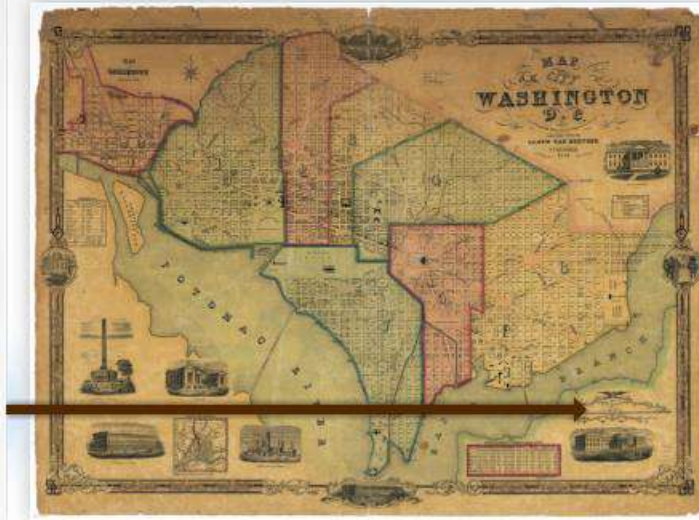
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Scale

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All maps should have a scale. The scale shows the ratio, or relationship, between a distance measured on the map and the actual distance represented by the map. A typical scale might be one inch to represent 10 miles, or one inch to represent 100 miles.



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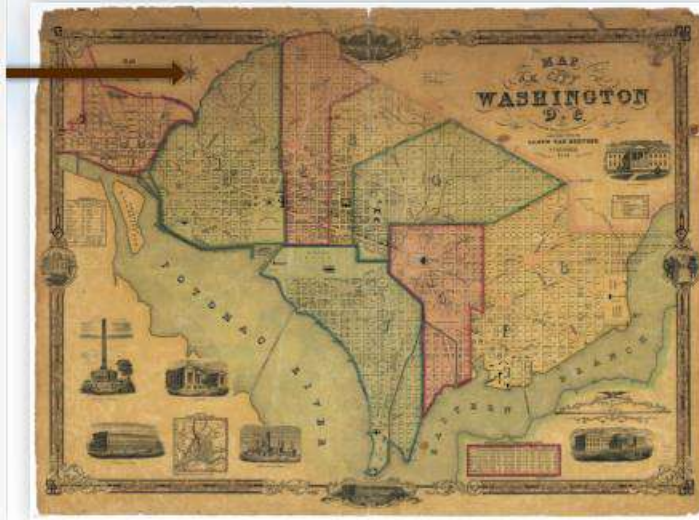
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Compass Rose

The Parts of a Map

Compass Rose

Finally, all maps should have a directional indicator, typically called a compass rose. If you know which direction on the map is north, you can figure out the other cardinal directions of south, east, and west.



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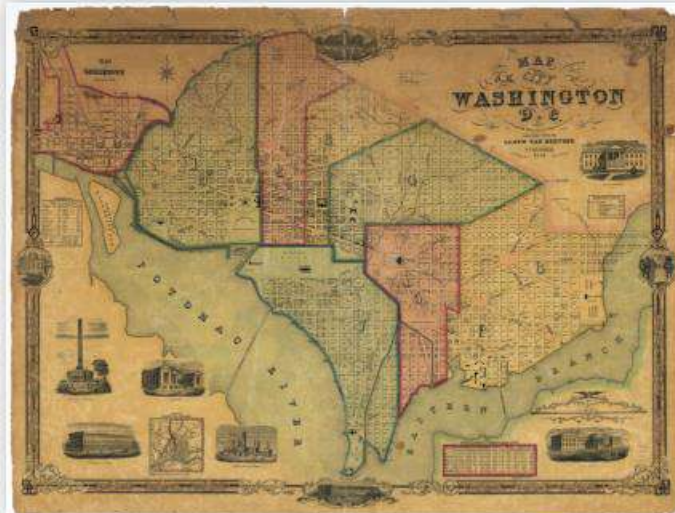
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Summary

The Parts of a Map

Summary

Unfortunately, not all maps have the five parts of a good map, which you now know are a title, a legend or key, a date, a scale, and a compass rose. One element map makers often neglect to include is the compass rose. Instead, the orientation of most maps is such that the top of the map points north. In other maps, particularly those in the southern hemisphere, the top of the map points south.



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