

## Lesson 1—Introduction to Maps

### Key points

- There can be many different maps of the same place.
- Not all information about a place can be put on one piece of paper.
- For maps to communicate, they focus on showing a limited number of things.

### How this lesson relates to the geographic themes

*Location*—where things are—is the most fundamental geographic concept. The first task in geography is to locate places. Maps are the tools students need to accomplish this task. This lesson also helps students understand that there are many different kinds of maps.

*Place*—physical and human characteristics—is another key concept in geography. All places on Earth have distinctive characteristics that give them meaning and character, and that help distinguish them from other places.

As students learn about Salt Lake City, a city near both a lake and mountains, they will start to understand that physical characteristics make a place unique.

Geography involves not only learning the location of places, but analyzing *why* the place is there: the interaction of physical, climatic, economic, and historical factors. Spatial analysis is the cornerstone of geography, and maps are the principal tools in performing that analysis.

### Materials you need for this lesson

1. A copy of Activity Sheet #1 for each student.
2. Your class social studies textbook.

### Suggestions for teaching this lesson (2, 30-minute sessions)

1. To begin the lesson, ask students to list all the different kinds of maps they have ever seen or used. Write the list on the board. It might include:

A road map

A political map

A shaded relief map

A topographic map

A map showing products from a State or region

A map showing the weather (either in the newspaper or on television)

A map on a television news program

A map showing the routes of an explorer

A map showing how different States voted in an election

A map featuring the agricultural products of different States or regions

2. Using either your own social studies textbook or a variety of texts, have students work in groups for 5 to 10 minutes to look through their textbooks. Have them list the kinds of maps they find on their activity sheet.

3. Ask students why there are so many different kinds of maps. The conclusion they should come to is that you can't display everything about a place on one piece of paper. So for a map to communicate clearly, it must show a limited number of things.

4. Have students look at the poster. Say, "We are going to use this poster to help us understand some of the major kinds of maps."

Ask students to look at the large photograph of Salt Lake City and environs. You may want to bring them up in groups of five or six to see the details more clearly.

Ask students to describe what they see. You may want to direct their comments to make sure they notice a variety of geographic features—the mountains, the city, highways, the State capitol building, etc.

5. Now direct the students' attention to the different maps on the poster. Say, "Here are several different maps of the Salt Lake City area. Each shows a different thing."

Have them write down one or two things that they can learn from each of the maps. (The next lesson focuses on specific skills needed to read, understand, and use maps.)

Talk a little bit with students about what they have learned. Tell them the next lesson will help them learn more about maps.

### Additional activities for follow-up

1. Develop a bulletin board showing as many different types of maps as possible. Have the students cut out maps from magazines and newspapers and bring them to school to put on the bulletin board.

2. Ask students to watch the evening news for three or four nights. Have them list all the maps they see on the news and what they show.

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