

Essential Elements of Maps

Maps provide us with a lot of information and we must know how to read and interpret it. Most maps have the same essential elements such as main body (or the map itself), legend/key, title, scale and orientation indicators (direction), inset map and source notes.

The legend or the key explains any symbol used in the map. A correct key has the symbol followed by its brief description.

A good title indicates the geographic name of the map.

The scale is the ratio of the map distance with the real distance on the ground.

A map has an arrow pointing towards the North on the upper hand corner. This is the orientation indicator of the map.

The source note shows where the information for the map came from.

