

Investigating a Map

The exhibit *Revealing the West: Lewis & Clark and the Shaping of America* looks at maps that show how mapmakers' views of America have changed because of exploration. These maps give us information about the times and places they come from.



You can learn a lot about a map by looking at it closely. Here are some questions to help you examine maps. Try using these on different maps you may have at home or school. You can also use this list to think about the maps in the exhibit or other historic maps at museums and libraries.

1. Does the map have a title?
2. Can you find any symbols on the map? What do these symbols represent?
3. Identify the direction “North” on the map. How do you know?
4. Are colors used? Why?
5. Are numbers used? Why?
6. Do any words stand out? What do these words tell you?
7. Why was this map created? How do you know?
8. Using clues from the map, tell what you know about the mapmaker.
9. Using clues from the maps, tell what you know about this time in history.
10. What does the map tell about places?
11. What does the map tell about people?