ANALYZING MAPS
AND USING
SPATIAL THINKING SKILLS

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From Marshes to Mountains, Georgia’s Changing Landscape: Geography, History, and Community

Each year, GHS selects a person or topic significant in Georgia’s history as the focus of our educational programs and resources. The 2021-2022 focus of study is, “From Marshes to Mountains, Georgia’s Changing Landscape: Geography, History, and Community.” From online and in-person programs and events for the public, to new classroom resources and training opportunities for teachers, GHS explores how land and our relationship to it have been crucial factors in creating social, cultural, economic, and political systems over time.
WHAT ARE MAPS AND HOW DO WE USE THEM?

Whether you realize it or not, maps are a part of our daily lives. People have used maps as tools for centuries. Maps help us navigate from place to place and understand the world around us. Studying maps from the past can help us understand how our world has changed over time.

A map is a visual representation of a place, an event, or a set of data. Maps relate space to geographic information like mountains, rivers, and other land surfaces on Earth. Maps also display spatial data, such as the boundaries and borders of communities, regions, states, and countries. Maps orient us to a place through geographic information, but can also express the cultural, political, economic, and social landscapes that define our lives.

Maps can tell stories through a combination of text, symbolism, and imagery that can include words, illustrations, lines, and numbers. People read maps through this unique language.

The key to reading a map is understanding its various parts, which will help decode its story. The parts of a map can include a title, a scale, a legend, a compass rose, and lines for latitude and longitude, but not all maps will have all these parts.

All these tools aid us in studying and drawing conclusions from maps.
PARTS OF A MAP

CARDINAL DIRECTIONS
Represent the directions North, South, East, and West and are often shown on a compass rose.

SCALE
Establishes the ratio of a feature on a map to the actual size or distance of the feature in the real world.

LEGEND OR KEY
List of symbols used for understanding a map's details or data.

EQUATOR
The horizontal line that divides the globe into Northern and Southern hemispheres.

PRIME MERIDIAN
The vertical line that divides the globe into Eastern and Western hemispheres.

LONGITUDE
The vertical line that divides the globe into Eastern and Western hemispheres.

LATITUDE
The horizontal line that divides the globe into Northern and Southern hemispheres.

TITLE
Describes the subject of the map.

MAP OF THE
FOUR
KINGDOMS

CASTLETON
BARVILLE FORT
MEARLEY KE
MAP SKILLS PRACTICE

Directions: Practice identifying the parts of a map by analyzing the maps and answering the questions on pages 4 and 5. For assistance, review the terms on page 3.

1. Source Information: (Detail of) Chart of Savannah River, 1825.
   From the Historic Savannah Foundation collection of architectural drawings and maps at the Georgia Historical Society.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What is the title of the map? Hint: the title may be located in the map’s source information.
- Where is the compass rose? Is the city of Savannah north or south of the Savannah River?
- Point to the scale on the map. Measure it with your fingers. If the scale represents two miles, how long is Hutchinson Island on the map?
Use the latitude and longitude lines marked by numbers to locate the following parts of the map.

- Between which two longitude lines is the Georgia coastline located?
- What geographic feature is at 31 degrees latitude and 6 degrees longitude?
- Which latitude line, also known as a parallel, marks the northern boundary of the state of Georgia?
**Cartography** is the study and practice of creating maps. A cartographer, or mapmaker, draws maps. Cartographers make maps in a variety of ways ranging from hand-drawn to computer-generated. Although cartographers are professionally trained mapmakers, anyone can create or learn to use a map.

A map can help us understand more about what life was like during the time it was made. They reflect the perspectives of the people who made them. An important part of understanding the full story a map can tell us is to consider who made it and why—or its “who, what, when, where, why, and how.” Asking questions about a map can help us understand why it was made and for whom it was made. When studying maps, consider the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to ask while studying a map:</th>
<th>What the answers can tell you:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who made the map?</td>
<td>The point of view of the mapmaker refers to a person’s attitude or outlook, which can influence how a map is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the map made for?</td>
<td>Understanding the audience, or who the map was made for, can tell us who might be reading the map and how it might be used. Mapmakers also create maps in a way that appeals to their intended audience, which has an overall effect on how the map looks and what it may be used for. Audiences can also change over time, especially when maps are used to study the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why was the map created?</td>
<td>Considering the reason for creating a map helps us understand its significance or importance, and why it matters to what we are learning. Maps can be created for a variety of reasons. Some maps may be commissioned by an individual or group that formally requests a cartographer to create a map in exchange for payment. Some maps are created for surveying, or examining and recording, an area or features of land, including boundary lines. Maps can also be created to plot routes for trade, transportation, trips, or military strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How was the map made?</td>
<td>Understanding the tools, materials, and processes that the mapmaker used can help us understand more about the time and place where the map was made. We must also consider what type of data the mapmaker used to create the map. Some mapmakers use their own data, or measurements and observations, to create their map. Some mapmakers may research data or maps and records created by others to assist them in making their own map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was the map made?</td>
<td>Considering the date or historical period of a map can help us understand how long ago it was made. It shows us what was known about a certain place during a certain time. This information helps us make connections with the past and understand how a place has changed over time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where did the map originate?</td>
<td>Understanding where a map originated can tell us where the information on the map came from based on its geographic location. This can also help us to understand more about the mapmaker’s perspective or point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the subject of the map?</td>
<td>Identifying the location, place, or subject featured in a map is vital to understanding the story the map tells us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While maps can be studied based on a variety of details, they can also be studied by the information that is left out. For example, identifying the information that is missing on a map can help us understand how much data or information the mapmaker had or did not have available to create it.

## Mapping the Past

Historic maps can be useful primary sources, which are materials from the past that are eyewitnesses to history, and can help us learn about what happened during a certain time period. Maps can also be used as secondary sources, meaning they convey information about an event or place in the past but were created long after the time of the event. Drawing conclusions from studying historical maps allows us to see the past through unique historical lenses. Maps created in the past can illustrate historical places, ancient geographic features, old transportation routes, significant weather patterns, and events and people from throughout history. Through careful evaluation of historic maps, we can gather information about a particular point in history and reveal how the people of the past viewed the world around them.

## Types of Maps

Maps can be divided into two general categories: data and narrative. **Data maps** are visual displays of data. Data maps are also known as thematic maps. For example, these types of maps are used to show information like the population of Georgia, the temperature of a region, or the physical topography of a place which is the arrangement of natural and artificial features.
EXAMPLES OF DATA MAPS


NARRATIVE MAP-SKILLS PRACTICE

Narrative maps are used to tell a story. These types of maps track movement or change over time and through space. For example, narrative maps can show the change of a specific place over time or before and after particular events. Examples of narrative maps include migration and settlement patterns of people, animals, or wildlife over time, such as the period of westward expansion in Georgia from 1789-1840.

During westward expansion, White settlers moved from Georgia’s east coast toward the fertile lands of the western interior, often encroaching on Native-American territory. Railroads and other steam-powered forms of transportation allowed for more efficient trade while the cotton gin supported the expansion of the cotton industry and its reliance on enslaved labor. During this time, the state’s political boundaries were solidified.

Directions: Explore Georgia’s period of westward expansion by studying the three maps on pages 10–11. Answer the following “Questions to Consider” to determine how the three maps can tell a story or a narrative about how Georgia changed during this period.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

• What story do you think is being told through the three maps of Georgia?
• What changes can you see between the earliest map and the latest?
• How do the maps differ? How are they similar?
• Based on evidence in the maps, how do you think Georgia’s westward expansion affected Native-American groups such as the Creek and Cherokee and their territory?
• Do you notice any patterns?
• By comparing these maps, what conclusions can you draw about Georgia during this time?
• How did Georgia change due to westward expansion?
EXAMPLES OF NARRATIVE MAPS

Barker, W. Georgia from the Latest Authorities, 1795. From the Georgia Historical Society Map Collection, MS 1361-MP 063.

Sherwood, Adiel. Map of Georgia, 1829. From the Georgia Historical Society Map Collection, MS1361-MP 079.
WHAT ARE MAPS USED FOR?

Maps are used for a wide variety of purposes. Read pages 12-17 to learn more about how and why maps are used. Practice your map skills by answering the questions next to each example.

PURPOSE:

Migration and Settlement: Maps can illustrate patterns, changes, causes, and effects of how and why people move from place to place.

EXAMPLE:

The View of Savannah as it stood on 29th of March 1734, drawn by Peter Gordon is a map showing the plan for settling Savannah in 1734 that gives information about the first English settlement in Georgia.

Map-Skills Practice: Answer the following questions about the map.

- What can this map tell you about early English settlement in Georgia?
- How did settlers change the environment where they settled?
- Where did the people in the settlement migrate from and why?
- Do you notice any patterns?

View of Savannah as it stood on 29th of March 1734, drawn by Peter Gordon. From the Georgia Historical Society Map Collection.
PURPOSE:
Encounters between groups of people: Maps can illustrate the interactions between groups of people living in an area, the exchange of land, and the effects of different groups of people engaging with each other.

EXAMPLE:
The Travels of Oglethorpe map can illustrate the exchange of land over time between White settlers and Native Americans in Georgia.

Map-Skills Practice: Answer the following questions about the map.

- What can be inferred from this map about how White, European settlers and Native Americans interacted with each other?
- According to the map, who did Oglethorpe encounter during his travels?
- How does the legend help you read the map and better understand interactions between groups represented on the map?

Detail of: Travels of Oglethorpe ca. 1740. From the Georgia Historical Society Collection of Maps.
PURPOSE:
Topographic Maps: Maps can illustrate geographic features, such as rivers, towns, roads, other transportation or trade routes, and a wide variety of land features.

EXAMPLE:
The topographic Map of North Georgia made under the direction of Captain W. E. Merrill was created for the United States Army during the Civil War and commissioned by General Sherman. Captain Merrill was the Chief Topographical Engineer who served in the Army of the Cumberland. This map greatly aided General Sherman’s army during its campaigns in Northwest Georgia.

Map-Skills Practice: Answer the following questions about the map.
- What topographic features can you identify on this map?
- What can this map tell us about Northwest Georgia during this time?
- Why would a map like this be important to military campaigns?
PURPOSE:

Political Map: Maps can illustrate political boundaries, such as state borders and county lines.

EXAMPLE:

The Map of Georgia 1783-1802 was published in a book titled The government of the people of the state of Georgia in 1908. This map shows the political boundaries of the state from 1803-1802.

Map-Skills Practice: Answer the following questions about the map.

- Between 1783-1802 what was the western most boundary of Georgia?
- What nation controlled the land south of Georgia’s border?
- Eventually the territory noted as Georgia would be divided into three separate states, one being Georgia. What are the other two states formed within this territory today?

PURPOSE:
Transportation Maps: Maps that illustrate transportation routes.

EXAMPLE:
The Map of a Georgia Rail Road commissioned by the Georgia Railroad Company in February 1839 shows the rail lines connecting the east coast to the western frontier.

Map-Skills Practice: Answer the following questions about the map.

- What type of transportation routes does this map illustrate? There is more than one.
- According to this map, what areas of Georgia are connected by railroads?
- After reviewing this map, how do you think railroads impacted Georgia?
- Why do you think maps that illustrate transportation routes are important?

PURPOSE:

Reference of Location or Navigational Maps: Maps that establish the context of someone’s location in relation to a local, regional, national, or global view.

EXAMPLE:

The State of Georgia: base map with highways and contours is a road map that can help people get from one place to another in Georgia.

Map-Skills Practice: Answer the following questions about the map.

- What kind of boundaries and features does this map show?
- How would this map help you get from one location to another in Georgia?
- How could this map help you determine where you are in Georgia?

MODERN MAPS

Today, most maps you encounter are created or generated by computers and use data from satellites. For example, digital maps, like those using the Global Positioning System (GPS), are available at our fingertips via cell phones and computers. As a result, modern maps are found all around us and make our lives easier and more efficient. Digital maps can help us easily find a new restaurant to try or alert emergency services to our location. Apps on smart phones combined with digital maps allow us to track delivery services for food or other items as they travel to our homes. Although we may not realize it, digital maps are vital to our everyday lives.

MAPS FROM VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES*

Studying two or more maps of the same location that are created by different people or represent different times can help us understand how people and places change.

Directions: Evaluate the following two maps that show the Cherokee territory in Northern Georgia at two different periods. Using the maps, answer the following questions:

• How many years are between the date of the first map and the date of the second map?
• How are the maps similar? What do they have in common?
• How do these maps differ? What can be seen on one map, but not the other?
• What geographical features can be found in each map?
• What is the scale of each map? How does the scale of the map created from a Native American draft compare with the map that was surveyed in 1831?
• What can be concluded by looking at the scales of each map?
• What are the boundary lines for each map?
• What can these maps tell us about the spatial relationships of White settlers and the Cherokee in Georgia during the period of westward expansion from 1789-1840?
• Using evidence from both maps, what conclusions can be drawn about how Georgia changed over a seventy-year period?

*Idea from Newberry Library’s “Historic Maps in K-12 Classrooms.” See: https://publications.newberry.org/k12maps/module_02/3-5.html
Kitchin, Thomas, d. 1784. "A new map of the Cherokee Nation: with the names of the towns and rivers. They are situated on No. Lat. from 34 to 36 / engrav’d from an Indian draught by T. Kitchin, for the London Magazine." 1760. https://dlg.usg.edu/record/guan_hmap_hmap1760k5?canvas=0&amp;x=1533&amp;y=1186&amp;w=6931
Bethune, John, Surveyor General. A map of that part of Georgia occupied by the Cherokee Indians, taken from an actual survey made during the present year, in pursuance of an act of the general assembly of the state: this interesting tract of country contains four million three hundred & sixty six thousand five hundred & fifty four acres, many rich gold mines & many delightful situations & though in some parts mountainous, some of the richest land belonging to the state. Milledgeville, Ga.: John Bethune, 1831. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/2004633028/
About the Georgia History Festival

The Georgia History Festival is the signature K-12 educational program of the Georgia Historical Society, reaching hundreds of thousands of students statewide. Beginning with the new school year in September, a variety of public programs, exhibits, events, and educational resources bring history to life for students of all ages and encourage Georgians to explore the richness and diversity of our state’s past. In addition to new online and in-person programming, the Festival includes popular annual events like the Colonial Faire and Muster living-history program held at Wormsloe State Historic Site, Savannah’s Georgia Day Parade, and the elegant Trustees Gala.