

Reading U.S. Maps

Grade 4 • SOCIAL-STUDIES • Students use physical and political map features to locate places and interpret geographic information about the United States. • Standards: D2.Geo.1.3-5, D2.Geo.2.3-5

Use the map features described in each question to find the correct answer. Read carefully and think about what each map symbol or feature tells you!

1. A compass rose shows four main directions. Which direction is opposite of south?
2. On a map legend, a star symbol inside a circle represents a state capital. What does a plain dot usually represent?
3. A map shows that River Valley is located at the point where two blue lines meet. What geographic feature do blue lines usually show on a map?
4. The legend shows that dark green areas have elevations above 5,000 feet, and light green areas have elevations below 1,000 feet. Which color shows higher land?
5. A political map shows that Pine City is 2 inches from Ocean Town. The map scale says 1 inch equals 50 miles. How many miles apart are the two cities?
6. A map legend shows that a thick black line means a state boundary and a dotted line means a county boundary. State A and State B are separated by a thick black line. State A and State C are separated by a dotted line. What kind of boundary is between State A and State C?
7. A map shows Mountain Peak at coordinates E-3 on the grid. If you travel two grid squares west and one square south from Mountain Peak, what are the new coordinates?
8. The map legend shows triangle symbols for mountain ranges. The Rocky Range runs along the western edge of State X, and the Blue Range runs through the center. Which mountain range would a traveler cross first when entering State X from the west?

9. A physical map shows that the Great River flows from the mountains in the northwest corner of the region toward the southeast. Three cities sit along this river. If City M is upstream from City N, and City N is upstream from City P, which city is closest to where the river begins?

10. A map shows five states in a region. State J borders three other states and has its capital marked with a star at coordinates F-5. State K borders State J on the north and has a longer border with State J than any other neighboring state. If you travel directly north from State J's capital using the compass rose, which state would you enter first?

Answer Key — Reading U.S. Maps

For the teacher / parent. Do not distribute with the worksheet.

1. north (*North and south are opposite directions on a compass rose.*)
2. a city (*A plain dot typically shows a regular city, while special symbols show capitals.*)
3. rivers (*Blue lines on maps represent rivers or other bodies of water.*)
4. dark green (*Dark green represents elevations above 5,000 feet, which is higher than below 1,000 feet.*)
5. 100 miles (*2 inches times 50 miles per inch equals 100 miles.*)
6. a county boundary (*The legend says a dotted line means a county boundary.*)
7. C-4 (*Two squares west from E goes to C (E to D to C), and one square south from 3 goes to 4.*)
8. Rocky Range (*The Rocky Range is on the western edge, so it would be crossed first when entering from the west.*)
9. City M (*Upstream means closer to the source; City M is upstream from the others, so it is closest to where the river begins in the mountains.*)
10. State K (*State K borders State J on the north and has the longest border with it, so traveling north from the capital would most likely enter State K first.*)