Maps, Symbols and Legends - Lesson 1 - U.S. Political Map
Grade 4-5

Objectives: To interpret maps by using symbols found in the map legend. Symbols are the dots, lines and patterns used to represent natural and people-made features on maps.

Materials Needed: A pencil and your map.

Lesson

Maps Represent the World

A **map** is a drawing created to represent the world or a part of the world's surface. Maps show where physical or natural features, such as lakes and mountains, are found. They also show where human or political features, such as cities and country boundaries, are located.

Symbols are used to represent the features shown on maps.

Map makers do not want people to guess about the meaning of symbols used on maps. For this reason most maps include a key or **legend**. The map legend lists the symbols used on the map and tells us what the symbols represent. Examining the map legend will help you understand the meaning of the symbols used on that map.

Look at the map of the United States. Find the legend. The legend lists some of the symbols used on the map. It also explains what these symbols mean.

Dot Symbols

The United States map legend shows that four dot-like symbols are used to represent the locations and population of cities.

Use the four dot population symbols found in the United States map legend to answer the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Are there any cities in <u>Mississippi</u>, <u>Alabama</u>, <u>Arkansas</u>, or <u>Oklahoma</u> with a population of over 1,000,000? _____

2. What is the largest city in <u>Arizona</u>?
    _____

3. What <u>Texas</u> cities have more than 1,000,000 people?
    _____

    What <u>Texas</u> city has a population of 500,000 to 1,000,000 people?
    _____

4. What are the two largest cities in <u>Arkansas</u>? _____ and
    _____

5. What are the two largest cities in <u>South Carolina</u>? _____ and
    _____

6. What are the three largest cities in <u>New Mexico</u>? _____

_____ _____

7. What are the two largest cities in <u>Idaho</u>? _____ and
   _____

8. List the three cities in <u>Washington</u> with populations of more that 50,000 people?
   _____ _____ _____

Line Symbols

The United States legend shows that several different line symbols are used to represent canals, dams, country boundaries and state boundaries. For example, country boundaries are represented by red lines made up of one long dash and two short dashes. State boundaries are represented by red lines made up of one long dash and one short dash.

Use the state boundary symbol in the United States map legend to answer the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

9. What eight states share a common boundary with <u>Tennessee</u>? List them in alphabetical order. _____ _____
   _____ _____ _____
   _____ _____ _____

10. Six states share a common boundary with Iowa. List them in alphabetical order.
    _____ _____ _____
    _____ _____ _____

11. List in alphabetical order the six states that share a common boundary with Idaho. _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

12. What two states do not touch any other state? _____

_____

State Capitals

The United States map legend shows that a city with its name underlined and a star in the population symbol. The example used in the legend is shown below.

*<u>Indianapolis</u>

Use the state capital symbol found in the United States desk map legend to answer the following questions. Write the name of the state capital in the space next to the name of the state.

13. <u>North Dakota</u> _____	18. <u>Illinois</u> _____
14. <u>South Dakota</u> _____	19. <u>Kansas</u> _____
15. <u>Georgia</u> _____	20. <u>Oregon</u> _____
16. <u>Pennsylvania</u> _____	21. <u>Hawaii</u> _____
17. <u>Vermont</u> _____	22. <u>California</u> _____