

United States Map - Lesson 3 (K-3)

Map Legend/City Symbols

Objectives The students will learn the definition of a map legend.
The students will learn to identify the symbols for cities.
The students will locate specific cities on the United States Map.

Vocabulary map legend, city symbols

Materials Needed United States Political Map, map marker, blank post-it-notes

Lesson

Ask the students to describe a city they either live in or have visited. Write the names of these cities on the board. Describe the features of the city compared to their own city or town. Ask the students if all the cities they have visited are the same size. Explain that one of the differences between a city and a town is their size.

Explain to the students that it is impossible on a map of the United States to show the streets and buildings in each town. Mapmakers use symbols to show the location of the cities and towns shown on the map. The size of the symbol tells us about how many people live in the city.

Circle the political map legend. A map legend is used to explain the meaning of the symbols.

Introduce the city symbols found in the map legend. Discuss the meaning and size of each symbol. Emphasize that even though all cities are not the same size, many of the same type of human activities take place in all cities. Examples would be schools, playgrounds, streets, traffic, etc.

Now find examples of each size city symbol on the United States Map. Have a student find a very large city and another student write the name of the city on the post-it-note. Put the post-it-note near the city on the map. Do the same for the other city sizes.

If your city or town is not shown on the map, label it with a post-it-note. Discuss the size of the symbol that should be used to represent your city or town. Draw that symbol on the post-it-note with the symbol and name of the city. Place the post-it-note on the map where your city or town is located. Use other post-it-notes for other cities or towns you have discussed which are not shown on the map.