

MAP SKILLS

HOW TO READ A MAP

Maps are used to organize and present many different kinds of information. This United States Political Map uses a **map legend** to help you understand the symbols used.

A **map grid** is used to help you locate places. A **map scale** is used when you want to measure distance between places and a **compass rose** is used to help determine direction.

STEP 1. Check the map title. What area is being mapped?

STEP 2. Look at the map legend. Always study the legend to see what the symbols on the map mean.

STEP 3. Check the locator. It will show you where the area being mapped is located on the earth.

STEP 4. Look at the grid system. This map uses a letter and number grid system.

STEP 5. Use the **compass rose** to find where north, south, east, and west are on the map.

STEP 6. Check the map scale that is used. Is the scale used on the Alaska and Hawaii maps different from the scale used on the big map?

