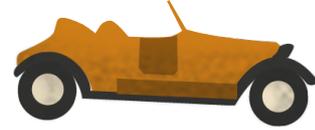


Go Further: Reading Maps Identifying symbols



Using colour

Maps often use colour to help make it easier to understand a landscape. For example, lower ground may be coloured differently, water is coloured blue and map symbols are given different colours. A good example of this is the Bartholomew maps, which are very colourful, making it easier to read and understand the landscape.

Use the map which learners have already drawn, or ask them to draw a new map. Ask them to add colour to it to make it easier to understand the features on their map and to help people see symbols more clearly.

Adding height

One of the problems which faced early map makers was how to represent height. When you are drawing from a bird's eye view, everything looks two dimensional and it is difficult to show the level of the ground. In early maps, such as Roy's Military Map and some of the early editions of the Ordnance Survey maps, a technique called hachuring was used. This was a way of shading in the sides of hills and mountains with varying types of shading to represent height. You can find examples of these maps on the NLS maps website.

Eventually, it became accepted practice to use contour lines on maps to show the height and steepness of hills. Contour lines join levels of equal height (usually above sea level). The closer together the lines are, the steeper the elevation.

Learners can experiment with both techniques by first researching what each one is and then drawing hilly or mountainous landscapes using both techniques.

1. Which is easier to read and which give a more accurate representation of the land?
2. Can learners make up their own way to represent height and how effective are their techniques?
3. If there are changes in height on the maps which they have already drawn, they could add either hachuring, contour lines or their own method to their maps.