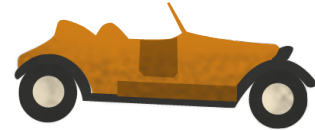


Teachers and Leaders Guide: Reading Maps Try it yourself: Identifying symbols



Identifying Symbols

This activity helps learners to understand what map symbols are and how they are used on maps. This in turn will help them to read historic maps more easily.

Symbols are used to represent different types of buildings, sites and features, for example, roads, rivers and railways. In this activity, learners are asked to identify different symbols and then to make up their own.

Creating map symbols and keys

This activity introduces learners to the idea that symbols are used on maps as it is easier to use a symbol than to label every feature on a map. You can begin by asking learners to look out of the window and to create their own symbols of what they see using the record sheets provided. This will then become their key. You can then move on to a group discussion or ask learners to work in pairs to describe what a key is.

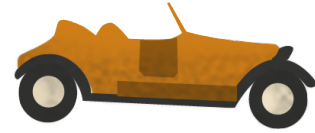
Once your group have completed the activity, they can then use the key to add symbols to the map which they drew in the 'What is a map' activity. Learners might need to add extra symbols if want to add something which wasn't in the original key they created of features they could see out of the window.

Learners can then swap the map (without the key) with a partner and ask them to create a key of the symbols. They can then look back at the original key and see how well they understood the symbols on the map.

Discussion point!

- Why are symbols used on maps?
- Do they make maps easier or harder to read?
- How easy or hard was it to understand the symbols that the other person had made up?
- Were they all roughly the same?
- Was it easier to understand once you had been given the key?

Teachers and Leaders Guide: Reading maps
Try it yourself: Identifying symbols



Reading historic map symbols and keys

Historic maps also had their own keys or characteristics, although a lot of explanation was written on the maps themselves. William Roy created the first comprehensive survey of Scotland in the eighteenth century and some of the colours and symbols used on that map set the standard for the subsequent surveys of Britain and Ireland undertaken by the Ordnance Survey. This activity helps learners to explore the symbols used in historic maps and how to identify various features.

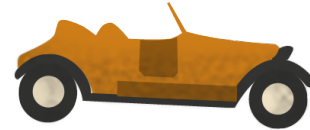
Two historic maps have been provided.

- Ask learners to look carefully at the maps and then to note down all the symbols they can see.
- The key has been lost – can they create their own just by looking at the landscape?
- At the end of the activity, you can say that you have found the key and learners can look at it to see if they managed to guess it correctly.

MAPPING HISTORY

• a guide to using historical maps •

Teachers and Leaders Guide: Reading maps
Try it yourself: Identifying symbols



Symbols Key

Buildings



Carmine colour =
Brick or stone



Grey colour =
Iron or wood



Blue and/or cross-hatched = glass



Roofed archway/
alleyway/passageway/
vennel/wynd



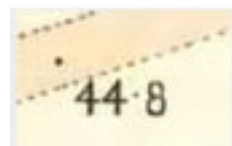
Interior layout and
seating for public
buildings



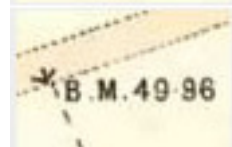
Brick or stone wall

Heights

(in feet, above mean sea level, Liverpool)



Spot height/Surface
level of ground

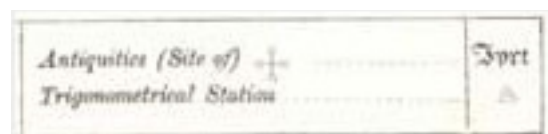


Benchmark (OS mark
on building, wall, etc.)

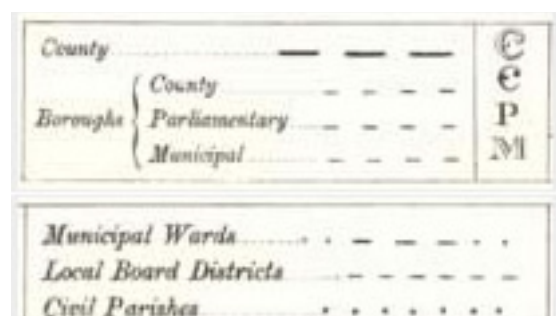


Arrow to show direction
of flowing water

Antiquities and Trigonometrical Points



Boundaries



Land



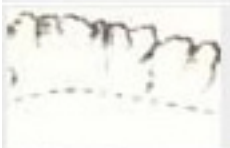
Shingle/
pebbles



Sand



Moor



Clif/Escarpment
/Quarry



Flat rocks



sloping masonry



Cutting - Sloping
downwards to water



Embankment -
Sloping upwards to
central path

Woodland



Single tree -
Various styles



Mixed woodland



Mixed woodland -
Different style



Mixed woodland -
Different style



Fir trees



Oak trees



Birch trees



Brushwood and bushes



Furze



Osiers