

Maps With a Mission

Match each map and projection to the job it can do.

SS.6.G.1.2 "Analyze the purposes of map projections (e.g., political, physical, special purpose) and explain the applications of various types of maps."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every map type or projection named in the passage, and circle the nearby words that tell what it shows or when it is useful.

Choosing the Right Map

- ① A globe shows Earth's round shape, but a paper map is flat. A map projection is a method for transferring locations from a globe to a flat surface. Every projection changes something, such as shape, area, distance, or direction. A political map uses boundaries, countries, states, and cities. It helps people locate places and understand which government controls an area. A physical map shows landforms and water features, such as mountains, rivers, deserts, and oceans. It helps people study Earth's natural features.
- ② Special-purpose maps focus on one topic. Instead of showing every kind of information, a climate map can show average temperature or rainfall patterns. A population map may use colors or symbols to show where many or few people live. A resource map can show where coal, forests, or farmland are found. These maps help planners, scientists, and businesses compare patterns and make decisions. For example, emergency workers might use a special-purpose map of flood risk to plan safer routes and prepare communities.
- ③ Some projections are chosen for a particular job. A Mercator projection keeps local directions accurate, so sailors can plan routes with a compass. However, it makes areas near the poles look larger than they are. An equal-area projection keeps the relative sizes of regions accurate, so it is useful for comparing the land area of countries or continents. A compromise projection balances several distortions. It is useful for a general world reference map, when no single measurement must be exact.

2

ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1

A county official needs to see which state borders another state. Which map type should the official use, and what information makes it useful?

2

Why would emergency workers use a special-purpose map of flood risk?

3

A class wants to compare the actual land areas of continents. Which projection should the class use, and why?

4

State one advantage and one limitation of a Mercator projection.

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Create four real-world situations that need map information. Complete the table with one political map, one physical map, one special-purpose map, and one named projection. Explain why each choice fits the situation.

SITUATION	BEST MAP OR PROJECTION	WHY IT FITS

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every map type or projection named in the passage, and circle the nearby words that tell what it shows or when it is useful. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	A county official needs to see which state borders another state. Which map type should the official use, and what information makes it useful?	A political map. It shows boundaries, states, countries, and cities.
2	Why would emergency workers use a special-purpose map of flood risk?	It focuses on flood risk, helping workers plan safer routes and prepare communities.
3	A class wants to compare the actual land areas of continents. Which projection should the class use, and why?	An equal-area projection, because it keeps the relative sizes of regions accurate.
4	State one advantage and one limitation of a Mercator projection.	It keeps local directions accurate for compass routes. It makes areas near the poles look larger than they are.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

SITUATION	BEST MAP OR PROJECTION	WHY IT FITS
A traveler checks which countries share a border	Political map	It shows country boundaries.
A park ranger studies rivers and mountains	Physical map	It shows landforms and water features.
An emergency manager plans for flooding	Special-purpose flood-risk map	It shows where floods may be dangerous.
A ship captain plans a compass route	Mercator projection	It keeps local directions accurate.

Accept equivalent explanations that correctly connect a map or projection to its purpose. For the table, accept varied situations if the student includes all four required choices and gives an accurate reason for each.