Elements of a “Good” Map

TODALSIGS
Making Good Maps

• Maps need to be made, and include certain bits of information to help the reader
  – Makes it easier for the reader to understand what they are looking at
  – Can find information easier
  – Establishes the credibility of the map
    • Lets reader know the information on the map is accurate
TODALSIGS

T - Title
O – Orientation
D – Date
A – Author
L – Legend
S – Scale
I – Index
G – Grid
S – Source
Title

• Explains what information the map is displaying
  – Helps reader understand what they are looking at
Orientation

• A way of figuring out how to orient the map
  – Typically a compass rose that shows north, south, east, west
  – Helps reader quickly understand directions
Date

• This tells you when the map was made
  – Helps the reader get a frame of reference to the information being shown
  • Ex. Maps before 1991 have the Soviet Union
Author

• The person and/or organization who made the map
  – To help prove the authenticity/accuracy of the map
Legend

• This tells you what the symbols used on the map mean
  – Sometimes called a Key
Scale

• This tells you the distance a unit of measure represents in the area shown on the map.
  – Large scale shows a small amount of detail, a small scale shows a large amount of detail
Index

• A collection of major sites and their location on the map
  – Can help the reader quickly find locations
  – Ex. Saigon (F3)
Grid

- This is the series of lines on a map that match the index. Sometimes these are line of latitude and longitude.
Source

- Explains where the author got the information to make the map
  - Helps establish credibility of map

Adapted from Muir's Historical Atlas: Medieval and Modern, (London: 1911)