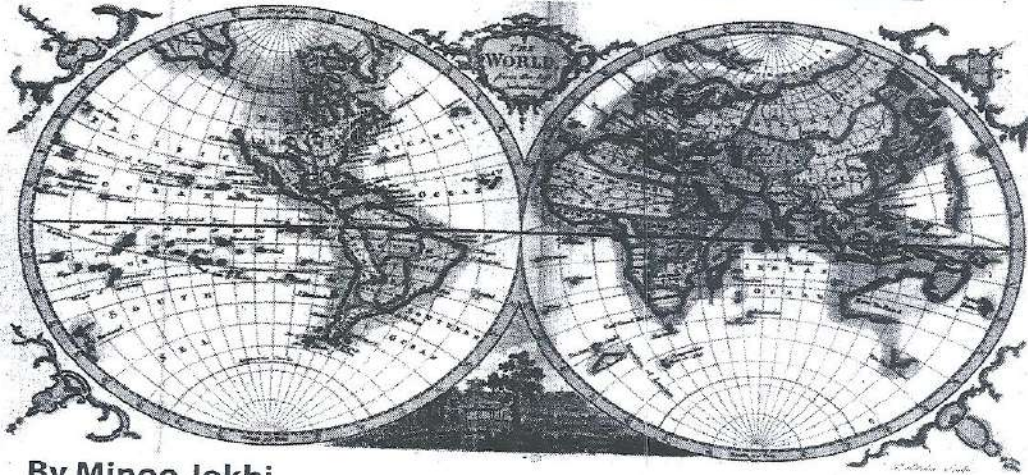


Tips & tricks for learning & understanding maps



By Minoo Jokhi

Have we ever wondered how we can remember geography maps with ease and how this can help us in our lives? Learning maps can be a fun process. Students must understand properly the four main directions and sub-directions for reading a map. Memorizing various locations of countries on a world map can be quite challenging, but there are many ways to make the process easier. The individual has to use an up-to-date map and review it continent by continent to make remembering easier. Have fun by downloading geography apps, visiting geography related websites and hanging up a map at home. Surround yourself with map print-outs and try solving a world map jigsaw puzzle more regularly.



Some useful tips

Always fill up the index in the map. Make it a habit to use appropriate sign codes and marks. Before doing anything always read the map graph thoroughly and then gives an accurate solution.

Don't partake in guess work, you will be wrong many times and lose marks. Always write down the places you can't remember on paper so that they get reinforced in your mind. Once you have started learning the map focus on it fully without giving in to any distractions.

Fun activities

Keep the headlines of that place; see the geographical features and try to co-relate them; make this a habit; it surely aids to remember the map better.

Go through the political map of the country well. See where the mountains and the terrains are and where the major rivers are. Always focus on the major locations of the map like big rivers and major terrains.

To memorize the map; print out copies of a world map to colour or use for memorizing. Colour coding different continents and countries can help to build visual associations, and be a fun cum learning activity.

Blank maps can also be very useful for studying and testing self on the location of countries.

Memorizing the Map

There are seven continents; but while learning learn only tackle one continent at a time. Trying to cover the entire map in one go will disturb your concentration and make memorization more tedious. If necessary, cover the parts of the map you are not concentrating on to keep your eyes focused. Do keep in mind that concentration involves maintaining a good attention span. Long attention span which ranges between 30-50 minutes which leads to an optimum level of concentration.

One should study the map and then keep testing oneself by filling all the major features of the map, on a practice map. Another effective technique is to have a world

zoom out to any level. Buying a globe or an atlas is imperative as it will arouse your interest in the subject and engage you. As William Morris had correctly said: "The true secret of happiness is taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life."

Indian Map

India has 28 States and 8 Union Territories. It is truly amazing learning the Indian map. Students should be trained to draw a rough map of India with all the states and territories and see how much they remember.

Note the north states, which are at the footfalls of Himalayas which is the world's tallest mountain range. Also mark the cluster of North Eastern States of India which border China and Myanmar.

Basic Features

Always keep the basic map skills in mind. It includes the map title which informs what the map shows; the compass rose which shows cardinal directions; the key which informs what symbols, colours and shapes mean and the Scale which shows the distance from a particular destination to another on the map. Also know the important map elements which include Map Scale Bar, North Arrow, Border, Locator, etc and also the 3 components of the map which are the Distance, Direction and Symbol.

Maps are an interesting and vivid subject and the skill to read them effectively is an important one. Everyone should engage with and