

Learn about Symbols, Maps, and Art

CCSSR2. Figure out ideas when you read.

Mapmakers use symbols to represent information about areas. A mapmaker uses lines to communicate. Those lines may represent streets. They could stand for borders. A border divides two places. On a map of the United States you see lines marking the boundaries of the states. Usually they are black lines that show historic divisions set up long ago. Mapmakers use color as symbols. They use blue to show water. They use pictures as symbols. The mapmaker may put a picture of an airplane. That would show an airport. They could put a train. That would show a train station. The mapmaker is like an artist. The map illuminates the place the mapmaker shows.

Many artists use symbols to help people understand places. A painter may put a dark cloud in a painting. That dark cloud stands for a problem. A painter may use color as a symbol. The painter may use yellow to show happiness. A painter may use gold to show a person is rich. The painter may put a rainbow in a painting. That rainbow is a symbol. It shows that the storm is over. It is an image that has been part of art for centuries.

There are some maps that are art. They show places. They are special maps. Artists make them. About 100 years ago an artist made a bedcover. It was made for people to use. It was special. It was not like most bedcovers. The artist sewed it as a big map. It showed the United States. The artist used black thread to show borders. The artist used brown thread to show routes. Routes are ways people travel between places. You have a route you take to school. The bedcover map showed routes people travel across the United States.

There is another cloth map called Map of the Middle West. This textile shows some states. It uses blue to show water. It uses black to show borders. It uses pictures to show what is special about states. It has a corn plant on Illinois. Illinois farms grow corn. That plant is a symbol. It shows that corn is important. It has other symbols. It shows many things. People learned from it. It shows what is important in the states.

When you paint a picture, you can use symbols. You can use colors to show feelings. You can use symbols to show ideas. You could paint a dove. A dove is a bird. When people see a dove they think about peace. You could paint a rainbow. That would show happiness. You could put a big sun. That could show happiness, too.

You could paint a map of the United States. You could use color to show climate. You could paint states with cold climates gray. You could paint warm states red. People could learn from your map. You could add more symbols. You could show many facts with pictures. And you could show facets of this country. You could show the kinds of resources we have. You could show the ways people use the land. It would be a map. And it would be art, too.

EXPLAIN WHAT YOU LEARNED

1. Underline the most important information in each paragraph.
2. Write a short summary that tells what the passage explains. Include only the most important information.

Start your summary this way:

The main idea of the passage is _____.

Here is information that helps you understand that idea.

Then finish the summary. Include the information that helps explain the main idea.