

Symbols, Maps, and Art: Read to Learn

Common Core Anchor Reading Standard 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Mapmakers use symbols. A mapmaker uses lines to show things. 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 that divide the states. Those are borders. Usually they are black. 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.

Many artists use symbols. 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.

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. Art that is on cloth is called textile. 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. It would be a map. And it would be art, too.

Which of these is the better main idea of this passage?

Maps use symbols Symbols can show many things.

Underline five details that support your choice.

Write a Comparison/Contrast Extended Response

Answer these questions. Include information from the passage and your own ideas. How are maps and paintings alike? How are they different?