Spot On Social Studies

Reading Maps

by Victoria Sherrow



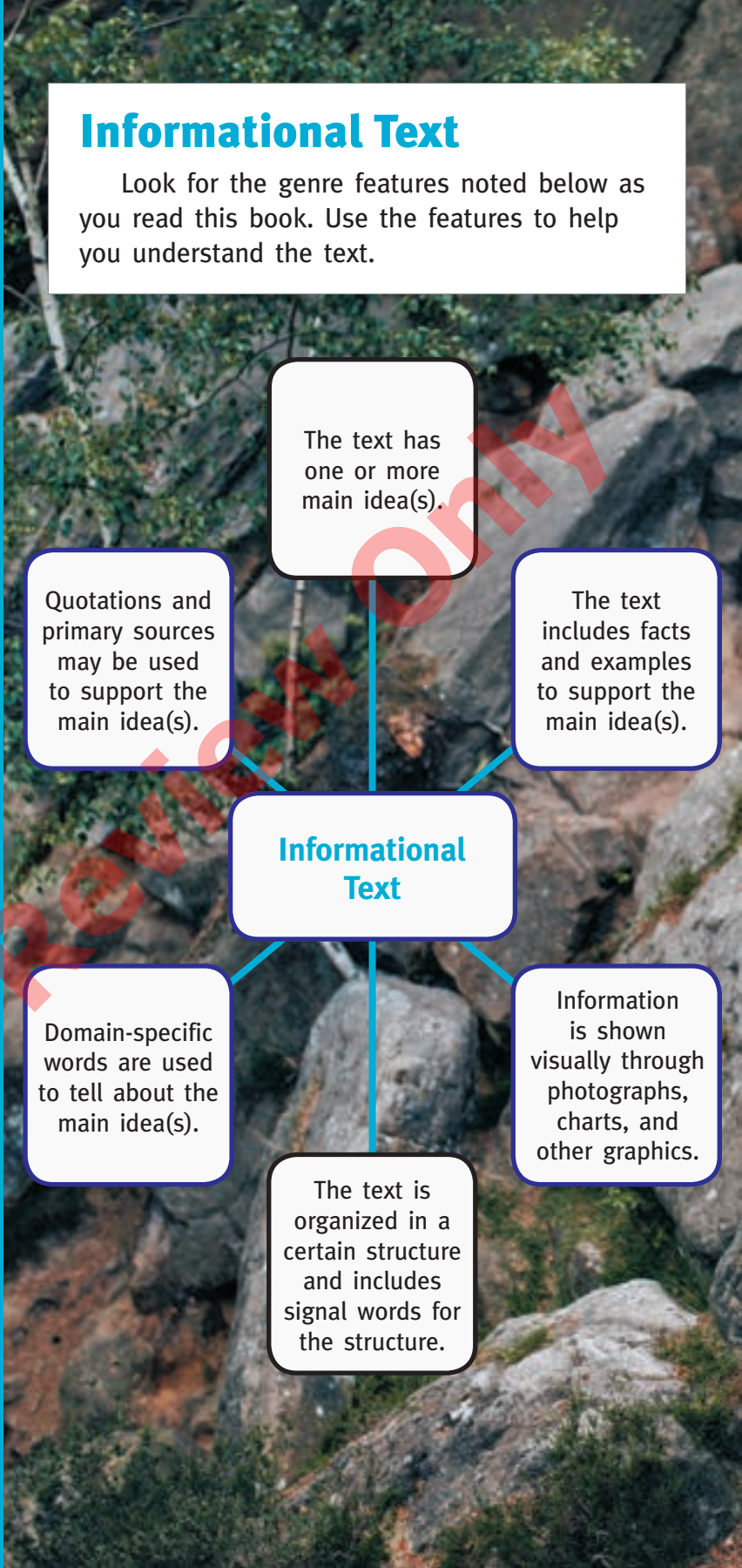
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CHAPTER 1

Looking at Maps

How do people find their way from place to place? Maps can help. A map is a drawing of a place. Maps can show towns, cities, states, and countries. Some maps show the whole world. Maps can show something as small as a room or as large as the universe. Maps help people get around by foot, car, or other forms of transportation. They help people learn more about the world around them.

▼ This map shows the San Francisco Bay Area of California.



▼ People read maps to find their way around new places.



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Maps show things as they would look if someone flew over them. This is called a birds-eye view.



▲ This photo shows a birds-eye view of an amusement park.



▲ People can use this birds-eye view of an amusement park. They can follow the paths so they do not get lost.

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Parts of a Map

Maps show people how to find places. A map of a city or town can show where important buildings are located.

A map title tells what the map shows. The title is usually found at the top or bottom of the map.

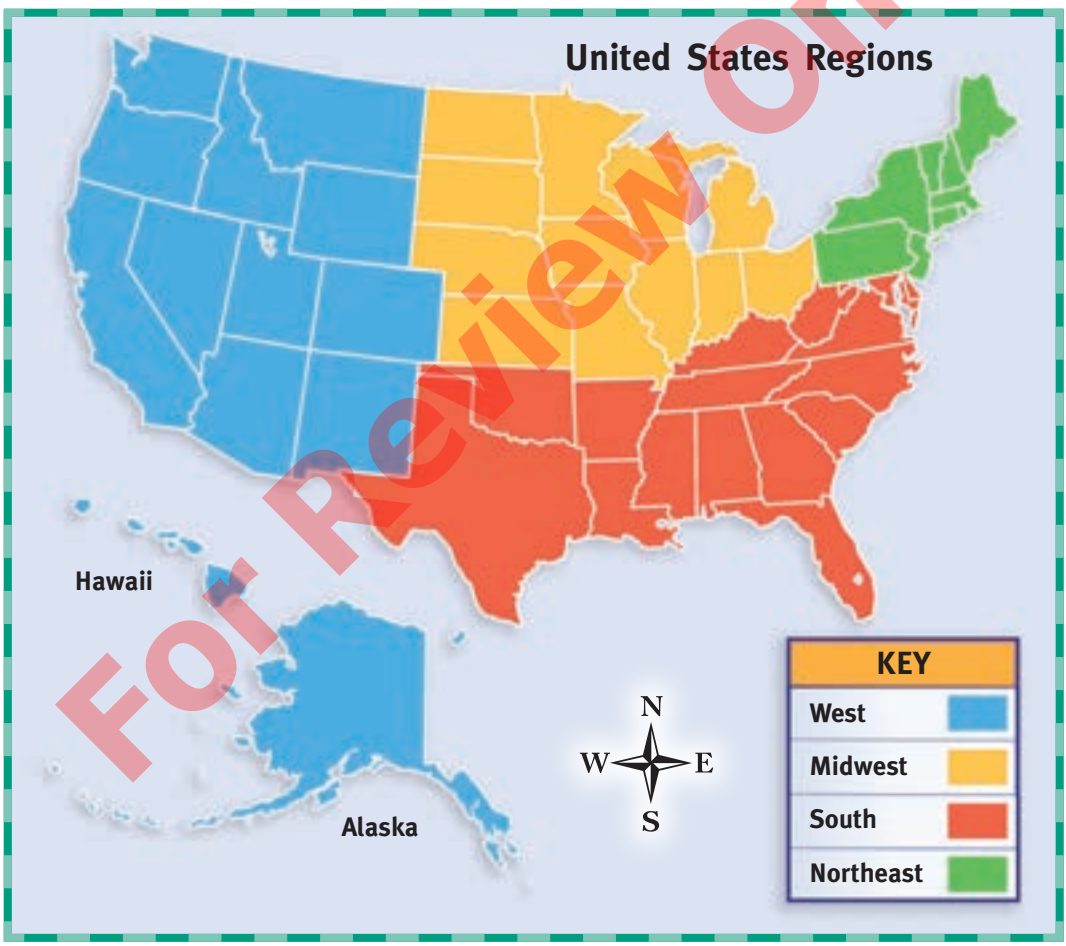


▲ This map can help people find their way around downtown Dallas, Texas.

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A **map key** uses pictures to show places on a map. For example, people might need to go to a post office or a hospital. They might want to visit a museum, ballpark, or library. They can use a map key to help them get there.

Map keys also show the meaning of different colors on a map.



▲ **Color coding on this map shows different areas of the United States.**

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▲ **People use symbols on maps to help them find places such as airports and hospitals.**

People who make maps save space on a map by using words and pictures. The words and pictures are called **symbols**. A symbol can be a number, letter, line, dot, or any picture that represents a place.

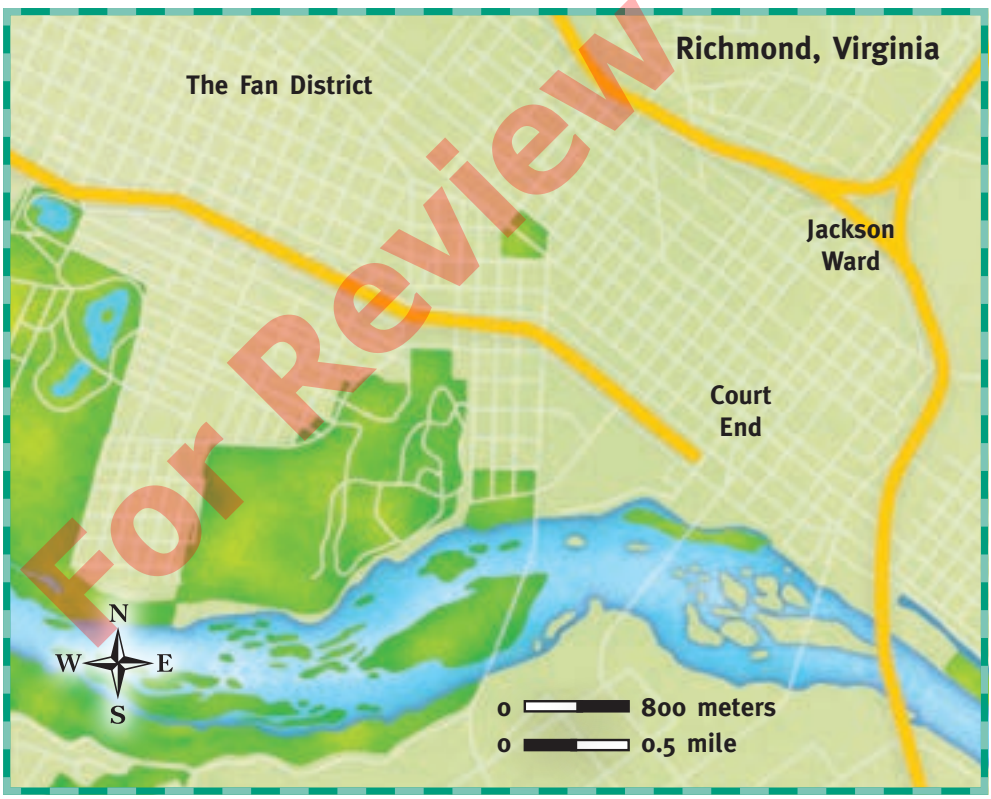
Places on a map are much smaller than the real places they show.

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A **map scale** helps people understand the distance of things on a map. Places may appear to be very close together on a map. But the scale will show that they are actually miles apart.

To use a map scale, a person can use the edge of a piece of paper to measure, or cut a piece of string as long as the scale bar. Then place the string on the map to measure the actual distance from one place to another.

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▲ **This map shows part of Richmond, Virginia. The scale bar represents 800 meters, or 0.5 mile.**