

Maps can be general, thematic, or topographic sheet maps

Thematic maps cover a specific subject or themes. Includes physical, political, historical, human, cultural and economic geography, agriculture, natural resources, vegetation, transportation, climate, biogeography, etc.

Topographic maps provide extensive information on relief, vegetation, roads, railways, buildings, and other physical and cultural features

Atlases are bound collection of maps, tables, charts, or plates illustrating any subject. Can be general, national, regional, or subject.

Gazetteers are geographical indexes or dictionaries giving locations of physical features and places such as towns, rivers, mountains, etc. Geographic coordinates of latitude and longitude indicate locations.

Primary Mapping Agencies of the U.S.

- Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Mines
- Defense Mapping Agency
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Forest Service
- Geological Survey
- National Ocean Survey
- Soil Conservation Service

Map Series

US Geological Survey (USGS) formed in 1879 and was concerned with geological mapping
Geologic mapping is based on topographic maps

Topographic Division formed in 1882; mapping country in topographic quadrangles began:

- WEST (undeveloped) 1:250,000 = 60 minute quad
- EAST 1:125,000 = 30 minute quad
- EAST (dense popⁿ areas) 1:62,500 = 15 minute quad

Later other scales of coverage developed:

- Urbanized areas 1:31,680 (early 20th century)
- US, all areas 1:24,000 = 7.5 minute series

At a scale of 1:24,000, it takes 55,000 sheets to cover the entire United States.

In the 1930s, the US Army Map Service (AMS) began a series:

- 1:250,000 = 2 degree sheets (1 degree latitude x 2 degrees longitude)
- Currently distributed by the USGS and are called DMA sheets

In the 1970s, the USGS began converting to metric measurements:

- New series, 1:25,000 = 7.5 minutes x 15 minutes
- 1:100,000 = 30 minutes x 60 minutes

Map Finding Strategies

First, know what kind of map you'd like to find!

City Maps

SUBJECT search [city name], [state or country] - Maps

Example: Delaware, Ohio – Maps

[state or country] – description and travel

[state or country] – guidebooks

Atlases can include city maps:

Rand McNally 1996 commercial atlas & marketing guide

Goode's world atlas

Rand McNally road atlas : United States, Canada, Mexico

Land Ownership Maps

SUBJECT search land use - [state] or land use - [state] - maps

[state] – public lands or [state] - public lands - maps

County Boundary Maps

SUBJECT search [state] – maps, topographic

Atlases can indicate county boundaries:

Rand McNally 1996 commercial atlas & marketing guide

Hammond atlas of the world

The national atlas of the United States of America, 1970

Township atlas of the United States : named townships

County Seats

County seats can be found in atlases and gazetteers:

Rand McNally 1996 commercial atlas & marketing guide

The Columbia gazetteer of the world

Township and Range Maps

SUBJECT search [name] county, [state] – maps

[state] – road maps

[name] county, [state] – maps, topographic

Townships may also be indicated in a thematic atlas:

Township atlas of the United States : named townships

Highest and Lowest Points by State and County

This kind of information is found in encyclopedias, atlases, and “fact books”

The national atlas of the United States of America, 1970

Latitude and Longitude

For the latitude and longitude of specific places, use individual gazetteers by state or country, or check gazetteers in atlases

SUBJECT search [state or country] – gazetteers

names, geographical – [state or country]

Other Ways To Find Maps

Finding just the right map, is often a matter of trial and error. Maps are located in many different locations in a library and are cataloged in a variety of ways. There is often no one way to catalog a map and there is no one right way to find a map. In general, you need to find your key words in the bibliographic record. If your terms are listed in the subject heading, you must use a subject search. Relevant terms may also be found in titles and in the note fields of bibliographic records. To search for terms that appear in the title field, the notes field, or the subject field (or any combination of these fields) use a keyword search.

Once you find records for maps that look close to what you want, pay attention to the subject heading. It may be a subject heading you haven't tried yet that will provide good results.

Subject Search maps – [state]

Example: maps - ohio

Compared to [state] – maps, this retrieves more hits

[state or country] – description and travel

[state or country] – guidebooks

Keyword Search [state] and maps

[state] and map

[state] and (map or maps)

Examples: ohio and maps

(ohio or s:ohio) and (map* or s:map*) and (delaware or s:delaware)

Examples: atlas and [state]

atlas and ohio

atlas and ohio and clinton

map* and ohio and franklin

Example: [topic] [state] [source]

birds ohio maps

Retrieves “Birds -- Ohio -- Geographical distribution -- Maps “