

Lecture Notes: A GEOGRAPHER'S TOOLS

TOOLS

1. Globes
2. Maps
3. Data

All tools can be displayed in a bunch of different ways.

Globe – Three dimensional version of the earth (because it is round)

A. Pro of globes

- The landforms on the globe are accurately proportioned (i.e., the correct size).

B. Cons of globes

- Since a globe is round, we can only see one side of it at a time.
- Globes are not easy to cart around.

Maps – Two dimensional versions of the earth (because they are flat on a single sheet of paper)

A. Pros of maps (the benefits)

- Easy to cart around
- Can be drawn to any scale needed (i.e., really focus in on a place or really pull out to show the whole world).
 - Large-scale = really close up to show a large amount of detail
 - Small-scale = really pulled out to show a small amount detail.

B. Cons of maps (the disadvantages)

- The map can be distorted in a small-scale format in order to fit everything on a page (i.e. Greenland is HUGE!!!)
 - Map projections are ways to draw the earth in order to reduce the distortion.

Types of maps

1. Physical (see p. A2) – dominated by natural, physical features of the earth
2. Political (see p. A4) – dominated by man-made features of the earth like country/state boundaries
3. Thematic maps (see p. A10) – dominated by specific informational themes

Data – Geographers use data to make conclusions about the earth and the humans on it.

1. Satellites – aerial photographs
2. GIS (Geographic Information Systems) – database that has collected information about the world
3. GPS (Global Positioning System) – used to find absolute location
4. Pictures
5. Scale models
6. Cartograms (example on p.22)
7. Charts (example on p. 47)
8. Graphs (example on p. 76 & 78)
9. Population pyramids (example on p. 79)