

# 8

## COMPARING MAPS

### Summary

In this activity students look at maps from different times and places as a way to explore how the science of cartography and our understanding and interpretation of geography have changed over time.

### Preparation for the activity

Have students work alone or in small groups. Students should understand what cartography means and should have a reasonably good sense of when European explorers discovered different lands so they can put the origin and date of each map within a historical context. They may need to research some dates in the history of world exploration as they start to compare the maps.

### Presenting their findings

Have students present their work in the form of a table comparing their impressions about the different maps. If possible, have students make brief presentations of their work to other groups of students or to the entire class at the conclusion of the assignment. Next, have students use a blank sheet of paper to make a map of their own. Make sure they pick an area that they are familiar with and have them think about the level of detail they should include in the map.

### Student-facing materials

In the following pages we provide detailed instructions, a group of map images, and a graphic organizer to help students compare the different maps in this activity.

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### Introduction

Cartography is the science of mapmaking. Maps come in all types and can represent any scale. Think about mapping your house or even your room and then imagine mapping your neighborhood, your city or town, or even your entire state or region. When people started to learn about foreign lands and the geography of Earth, cartographers started to map the whole world.

In the early days of cartography, maps often depicted unknown regions with fanciful images and some maps guessed at the shape of lands beyond what was known. As people began to learn more about the world, the details in maps became more precise.

Your goal in this activity is to compare a selection of maps from different times and places. Afterwards, you'll make your own map! Pick a place you are familiar with, such as your school or your neighborhood. Think about the level of detail you should include in your map and think about the different ways that your map will portray the things you know about the places shown.

### Directions

Do some preliminary research on cartography and the history of mapmaking

Familiarize yourself with some of the rough dates when people in Afro-Eurasia learned about other regions in the world (e.g., when did the first Europeans land in the Americas?)

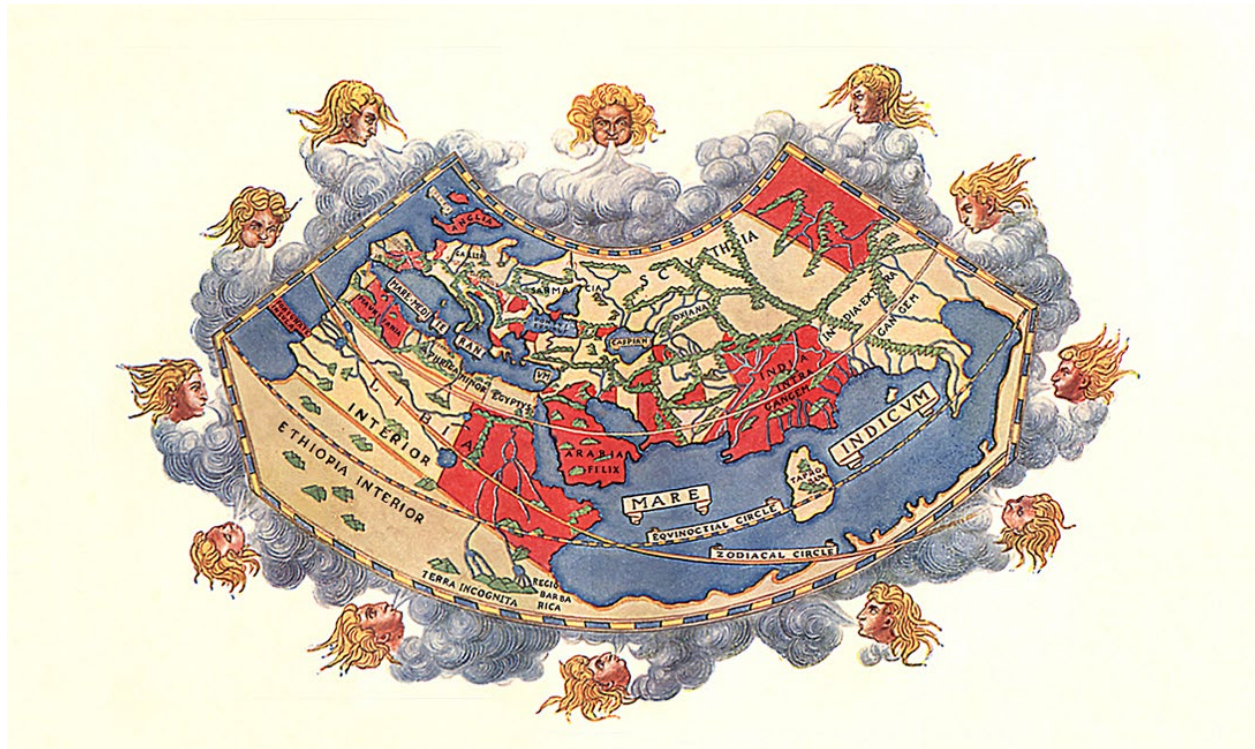
Look closely at the maps and use the table provided to compare them

Discuss your findings with your group or your class

Use a blank sheet of paper to draw and label your own map

Compare your map with those of your classmates and explain some of the choices you had to make while drawing your map

Ptolemy's World Map



Al-Idrisi's World Map

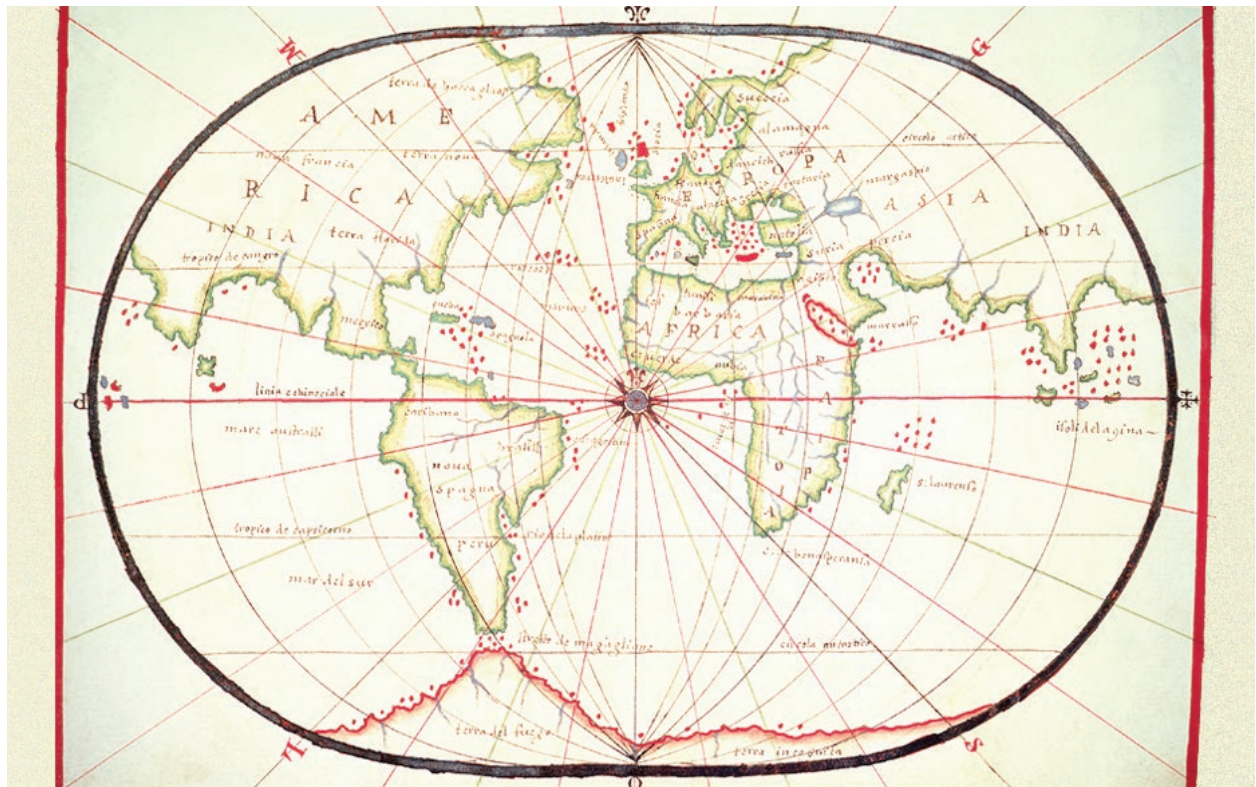




1546 World Map



1562 World Map



## Modern World Map



## Comparing Maps

	Ptolemy's world map	Al-Idrisi's world map	1546 world map	1562 world map	Modern world map
How are these maps similar?					
How are these maps different?					
What is the historical context of these maps?					
What do you think the cartographer was trying to accomplish? What clues on the map suggest this?					