Map Criteria


In general:
- Map’s subject? (e.g., general reference or thematic; focus on one purpose/theme per map)
- Audience and purpose? (more/less sophisticated audience; your principal purpose for presenting the map to the audience)
- Geographic context? (location in relation to local and wider geographic networks, features, landmarks, and locations)
  - Sans serif fonts are conventionally used to label “human features,” serif fonts to label natural features.
- Size, scale, & media?
- Design focus? E.g., cool colors (blues, greens, & light gray) for background, warm colors (red, yellow, & black) to capture attention.
  - Three basic approaches to analytic color schemes: sequential, diverging, categorical (see Brewer).
- Designing for the color-blind (a significant percentage of the population)? Use degrees of lightness in descriptive and analytic color schemes (see Brewer).
- Design balance? (e.g., proper alignment, avoidance of large open spaces, effective use of borders)
- Integrity? (i.e. sources; relevant explanations)
- Completeness? (title, legend, scale bar, North arrow [unless there’a a graticle], sources, authorship [including affiliation/contact information])

Map elements: the map should be crafted so that it is self-explanatory (i.e. no additional information should be necessary to explain the map’s theme and purpose).
- Map body
- Title
- Legend
- Scale
- Projection
- Direction
- Data source(s)
- Others: e.g., dates, pictures, graticules or grids, reports, tables, additional text, neatlines, authorship (including affiliation/contact information).

Don’t forget to proofread, & ideally to have other persons critique the map, including persons with differing levels of knowledge about the subject matter.