



EDUCATION KIT

Ptolemy's *Geography* and Renaissance Mapmakers
Mapping Manifest Destiny: Chicago and the American West
Newberry Library Exhibitions Nov. 3, 2007—Feb. 16, 2008

CRITICAL MAP READING GUIDE

The following questions can be used as a guide to analyze historic and contemporary maps.

CONTEXT AND BASIC SIGNS

- What part of the world does the map depict and what is the subject or theme (start with the title and legend)?
- How are spatial features symbolized (as points, lines, areas, volumes)?
- How is the map oriented? How are the boundaries identified?
- How are spatial relationships represented (e.g., is the map drawn to scale, is it a view)?
- Who made the map and for whom?
- What is the apparent purpose of the map?

CONTENT

- What types of information are included on the map?
- What is excluded that might otherwise have been included? Why?
- What features are represented differently or variably across the map?
- Which features are apparently more important?

TEXT AND TEXTUAL LOCATION

- What does the text on the map tell us about the map?
- What additional meaning can we infer from the inclusion of the map in a text or book?

ALLEGORICAL MEANING

- What symbolic meanings are embedded in allegorical components of the map (if any)?

USING THE MAP AS A HISTORICAL RESOURCE

- In what ways does the map enlighten our understanding of the history, culture, and/or historical geography of the area and period depicted?
- What does the map tell us about current geographical patterns?