

## IDENTIFY TOPOGRAPHIC SYMBOLS ON A MILITARY MAP

**CONDITIONS:** Given a standard 1:50,000-scale military map.

**STANDARDS:** Identify topographic symbols, colors, and marginal information on a military map with 100 percent accuracy.

### PERFORMANCE STEPS

1. Identify the colors on a military map.

COLORS	SYMBOLS
Black	Cultural (man-made) features other than roads
Blue	Water
Brown	All relief features - contour lines on old maps - outlived land on red-light readable maps
Green	Vegetation
Red	Major roads, built-up areas, special features on old maps
Red-brown	All relief features and main roads on red-light readable maps

**Table 1.** Colors on topographic maps.

**NOTE:** Ideally, every feature on the part of the earth mapped could be shown on the map in its true shape and size. Unfortunately, that is impossible. The amount of detail shown on a map increases or decreases depending on its scale, for example, a map with a scale of 1:250,000 would show a larger area than one with a scale of 1:50,000, but far less detail. Details are shown by topographic symbols. These symbols are shown using six basic colors as shown in Table 1.

2. Identify the symbols on the map that represent physical features, such as physical surroundings or objects, as shown in Table 2.

FEATURES	COLORS	DESCRIPTION
Drainage	Blue	These symbols include lakes, streams, rivers, marshes, swamps, and coastal waters.
Relief	Brown	These features are normally shown by contour lines, intermediate contour lines, and form lines. In addition to contour lines, there are relief symbols to show cuts, levees, sand, sand dunes, ice fields, strip mines, and glaciers.
Vegetation	Green	These symbols include woods, scrub, orchards, vineyards, tropical grass, mangrove and marshy areas, or tundra.
Roads	Red, Black, or Red-brown	These symbols show hard-surface, heavy-duty roads; hard surface, medium-duty roads; improved light-duty roads; unimproved dirt roads; and trails. On foreign road maps, symbols may differ slightly; check the map legend for proper identification of roads.
Railroads	Black	These symbols show single-track railroads in operation; single-track railroads not in operation; double- or multiple-track railroads.
Buildings	Black, Yellow, Red, or Pink	These symbols show built-up areas, schools, churches, ruins, lighthouses, windmills, and cemeteries.

**Table 2.** Features on topographic maps.

a. Identify each object by its shape on the map. For example, a black, solid square represents a building or a house; a round or irregular blue item is a lake or pond.

b. Use logic and color to identify each map feature. For example, blue represents water. If you see a symbol that is blue and has clumps of grass, this would be a swamp.

c. The size of the symbol shows the relative size of the object. Most symbols are enlarged 6 to 10 times so that you can see them under dim light.

d. Use the legend, which should identify most of the symbols used on the map.

3. Identify the marginal information found in the legend.

a. Top of map sheet:

(1) Top left corner--the geographic location covered by the map and the scale of the map.

(2) Top center--the name of the map sheet.

(3) Top right corner--the map edition, the map series, and the map sheet number.

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**b.** Bottom of map sheet:

- (1) Lower left corner--the legend, the name of the agency that prepared the map, the map sheet number, and the map sheet name.
- (2) Bottom center--the bar scales in meters, yards, miles, and nautical miles; the contour interval of the contour lines; the grid reference box; the declination diagram; and the G-M angle (mils or degrees).
- (3) Lower right corner--the elevation guide, the adjoining map sheet diagram, and the boundaries box, which shows any boundaries that might be on the map.

**EVALUATION PREPARATION: SETUP:** On a 1:50,000-scale military map, circle each item of marginal information found on the map. Randomly letter the circled items A through J. Circle an item or feature shown on the map by color. Randomly number each colored item 1 through 10. The items are listed in the TIO. For each Soldier tested, provide a sheet of paper, two pencils, and a duplicate map.

**BRIEF SOLDIER:** Tell the Soldier to letter the paper A through J, and then 1 through 10. Tell the Soldier to write the name of the item contained in each lettered and numbered circle on the map.

**REFERENCES**

**REQUIRED**

**RELATED**

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