TEACHER’S GUIDE
ANALYZING MAPS

OBSERVE
Ask students to identify and note details.
Sample Questions:
- Describe what you see.
- What do you notice first?
- What size and shape is the map?
- What graphical elements do you see?
- What on the map looks strange or unfamiliar?
- Describe anything that looks like it does not belong on a map.
- What place or places does the map show?
- What, if any, words do you see?

REFLECT
Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.
Why do you think this map was made?
- Who do you think the audience was for this map?
- How do you think this map was made?
- How does it compare to current maps of this place?
- What does this map tell you about what the people who made it knew and what they didn’t?
- If this map was made today, what would be different?
- What would be the same?

QUESTION
Invite students to ask questions that lead to more observations and reflections.
What do you wonder about...
- who?
- what?
- when?
- where?
- why?
- how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION
Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.
Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

Beginning
Have students write a brief description of the map in their own words.

Intermediate
Study three or more maps of a city or state at different time periods. Arrange them in chronological order. Discuss clues to the correct sequence.

Advanced
Search for maps of a city or state from different time periods, then compile a list of changes over time and other differences and similarities between the maps.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to
http://www.loc.gov/teachers