Sketch Maps?!?!?!?

Maps are important tools for geographers, who use them to understand the world spatially. But you may occasionally find it useful to make your own maps. Sketching your own map can be a valuable study aid, giving you a better grasp of where places are located. You can study a map in a book or atlas for hours and still not know where things are. If you draw your own map based on what you see in the book, however, you will probably have a better understanding of the subject of the map. You will also be able to remember it better.

Of course, you will not always have access to other people’s maps, and sometimes you will have to draw your own map truly “from scratch.” You might be having a discussion with a friend about geographical area during which it will be helpful for you to sketch a map quickly. Drawing your own maps might help you understand events you read about in the newspaper or learn about on television.

How To … Draw a Sketch Map

1. Decide what region your map will show. Choose boundaries so that you do not sketch more than you need to.
2. Determine how much space you will need for your map. Things that are the same size as each other in reality should be about the same size as each other on your map.
3. Decide on and note the orientation of your map. Most maps use a directional indicator. On most maps, north is “up.”
4. Select reference points so that viewers of your map can quickly and easily figure out what they are looking for. For a sketch map of the world, reference points might be the equator and prime meridian. For a map of your community, a major street or river might be your reference point, or you might include a grid labeled by numbers and letters. Even maps of shopping malls indicate reference points, usually by showing “you are here” next to a dot or an asterisk.
5. Decide how much detail your map will show. The larger the area you want to represent, the less detail you will need. For example, a map of the world will not need names of streets, but a map of your community will.
6. You are ready to begin sketching. First, sketch general shapes, such as the continents if you are drawing a world map. If you do not know or cannot remember exact shapes, you can use general shapes.
7. Now, fill in more details, as they occur to you—names of places, major land features, and so on.
How to Make an “A” on Your Map

The Nitty Gritty

A. Include TODAL (from TODAL)
   T= title
   O= orientation (compass)
   D= date
   A= author (your name)
   L= legend (key)
   S= scale

B. Use NEAT lettering
   1. Always PRINT. ALL labels must be in PEN
   2. Use appropriate colored pencils
   3. Letter straight across- except rivers & mountain ranges which follow the contour of the feature or if the book map is curving, you can curve it, too
   4. Check your spelling

C. Only WATER is colored and labeled BLUE.
   1. Rivers are shown with a blue line- Using Blue Map Pencil, trace the line and make it BOLD!

D. Labeling-
   1. Use BLACK pen for all labels, titles, name, compass rose, etc. EXCEPT WATER Features, Use BLUE Pen
   2. STATES are labeled in ALL CAPITAL Letters and Horizontal
   3. OCEANS are labeled in ALL CAPITAL Letters and Horizontal
   4. Rivers and Mountains have the first letter capitalized and follow the contour of the river or mountain

E. Other Helpful Hints
   1. Print small- As a general rule the bigger the name the smaller the place is to write it.
   2. Do not write over another word or symbol or color over another color
   3. Do not color so dark that you hide what is labeled. If I cannot read it, it is wrong.
   1. Color in one direction
   2. Do not use any shade of blue to color a land area. ONLY WATER & water labels should be colored blue.
   3. Start in Pencil, complete by going over in Pen.
4. LABEL FIRST!
5. COLOR LAST!!