Characteristics of Maps:

The word ‘Map’ is derived from the Latin word ‘Mappe’ which means Napkin of cloth cover. The whole or part of the earth can be represented on a map.

1. A map is much smaller than the earth that it represents. Altitudes, Longitudes and Scales are very essential to draw maps.

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2. Every map should have a bold title on the top. There is an arrow mark in one corner of the map showing north. With the help of this mark other directions are known.

3. Index or legend is necessary for every map. Universally accepted conventional symbols are used on every map like RF (Reserved Forest), etc.

4. Maps are shaded with different colours also. White indicates ice caps, Blue for water, Green for forest, Yellow for agricultural belt, etc.

Types of Maps:

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Types of maps are classified on the basis of two characteristics:

(i) Large scale and Small scale maps.

(ii) Thematic maps.

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(i) Large Scale Maps:

Fields, gardens, estates, tanks, wells and buildings are shown on large-scale maps. These maps are very useful. The local administrations like city survey, taxation, management of estates, etc., are done on large-scale maps. These maps cover less area and give more details. The scale may be 1 cm = 1 km or so.

Small Scale Maps:

These maps cover vast area and represents broad features. Large mountains appear as spots. Rivers are shown as black or blue lines. Towns appear as black dots. While small villages, streams and roads are not shown. These maps are very useful for Atlas and wall maps are prepared on small scale.

(ii) Thematic Maps:

These maps are used for different purposes. Relief, drainage climate, population distribution and land use patterns are shown on thematic maps.

Globes:

Globes are representation of features of the earth’s surface. Latitudes and longitudes, axis of the earth, land and water distribution, season and world timing can be easily understood from the globes.