

2. Introduction

As we get a better understanding of maps, we also need to understand the objects drawn on the map i.e. map features and the use of map symbols to allow us to differentiate between map features. Features on the earth are represented or captured in the form of points, lines and polygons. Depending on your map scale some buildings might be represented by points and sometimes as polygons.

Colours also play an important role in differentiating between the symbols of different features e.g. a blue polygon would represent a water feature and a green polygon would represent woodlands. The symbols also tell us about the quality or quantity of the feature. The meanings of the symbols used in a map are always explained in the key or map legend to be discussed in the map elements topic later in the lesson.

In this topic we will discuss the map features, symbols and how different symbols, as well as how the properties of these symbols like colour and shape are used to accurately represent various features on maps. This lesson also looks at the importance of standardizing symbols to make maps easier to read. Lastly, we look at defining and differentiating between qualitative and quantitative map symbols.