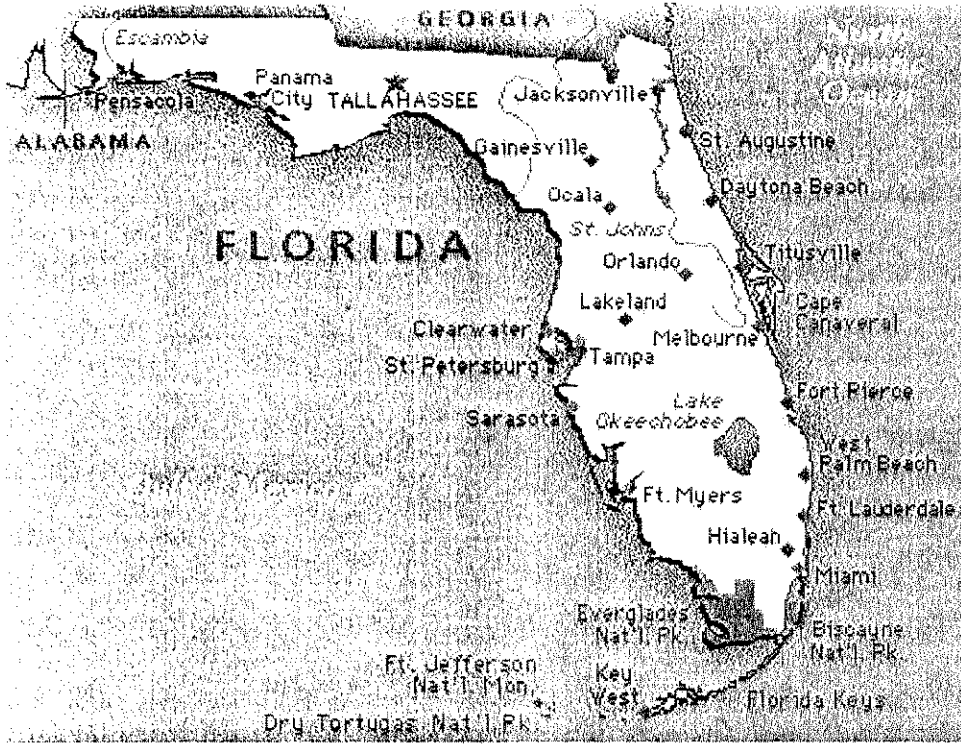


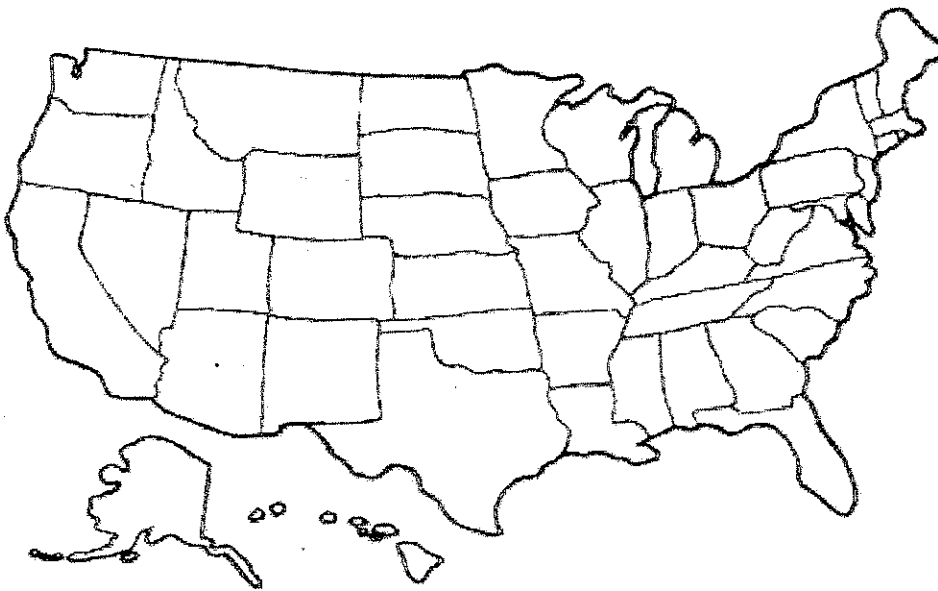
Learning to look at maps
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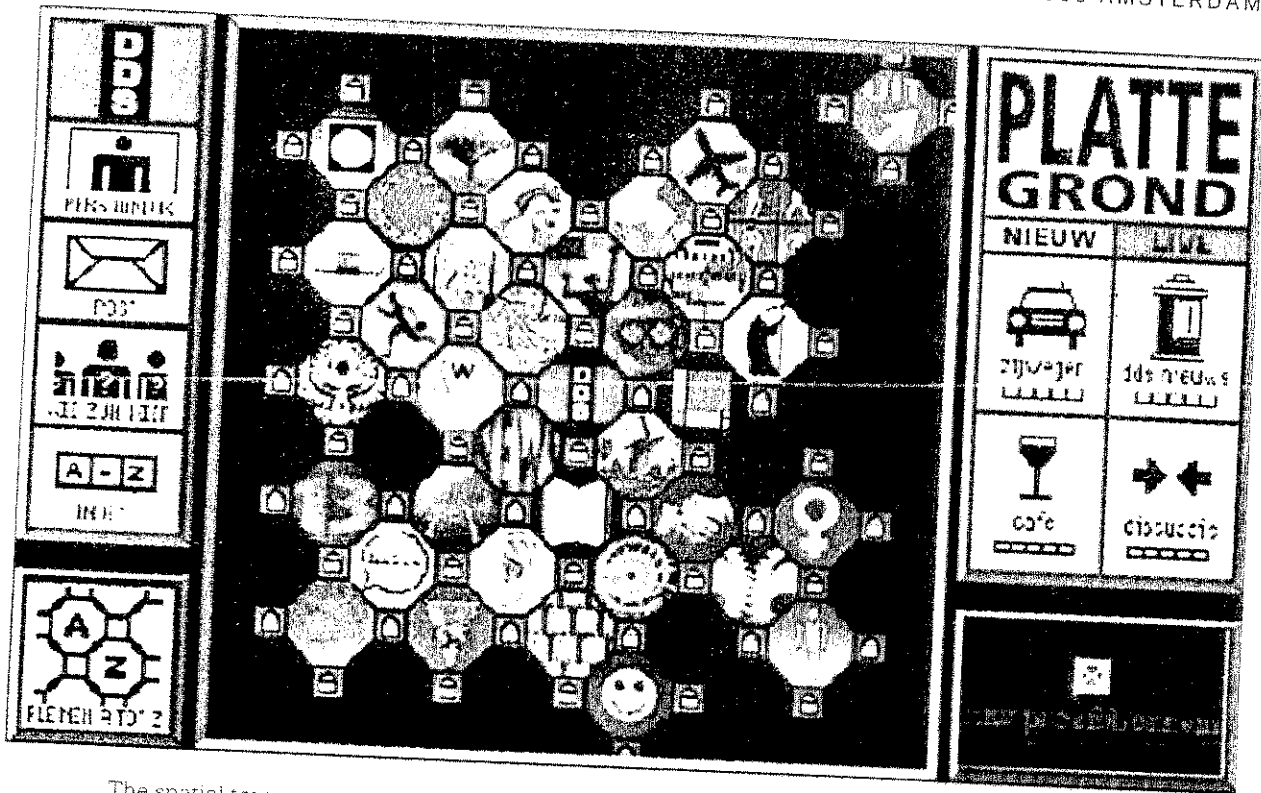
Print attached maps onto transparencies and show in order
You need an online connection to show the examples for 5

- Maps are not 100% precise
- Who made the map, when, and for what purpose influences how map appears (as with any other communication message)
- The viewer has certain assumptions that may or may not apply
- Examples:
 1. **Where is the United States?**
 - Ask students to close their eyes, imagine a map of the world, and then (with their eyes closed) point to the US. While still pointing, ask them to open their eyes. Most students will point directly in front of them. If you have foreign students, they will point to the right or left. Point: What's considered important is usually in the middle of the map, but that judgment is different in different countries (people, cultures, situations, etc.)
 2. **That transparency is upside-down**
 - Today we take for granted that the top of the map and paper is North. That standard was not always so, and people put north wherever they wanted. So, the transparency is not upside-down. Our expectations are.
 3. **A detailed map**
 - In order to explain "scale" refer to the level of detail. Whether we need a map of Florida only or of the US that includes Florida depends on the point we are trying to make. Sometimes, too much detail can be just as distracting as too little detail.
 4. **Cyberspace**
 - Maps of cyberspace create a visual, 2-dimensional display of something that is hyper-dimensional. While we are used to city maps, this map of De Digital Stad (The Digital City, an early online community of the citizens of Amsterdam, the Netherlands) provides a quite different example of a city map.
 5. **Perspective**
 - **A. Visual perspective**
 - Go to <http://mapmaker.rutgers.edu/355/artist%20landscape16th%20cen.jpg> to show a map from the 16th century; explain how colors of roofs point to Germany or France, how view is limited by mountains, distances are distorted, etc. Ask students to compare this map in their minds to the normal omni-vision city maps they are familiar with.
 - **B. Who won the 2004 US election?**
 - Go to <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~7emejn/election/> and show how different kinds of display ("normal" map of US vs. map depending on number of registered voters per state, for example) can give a very different visual message as to which color is dominating; what message are the news media sending when they are only printing the "normal" map?



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The spatial town square metaphor as used to structure content on Amsterdam Digital City.
(Source: Geert Lovink.)