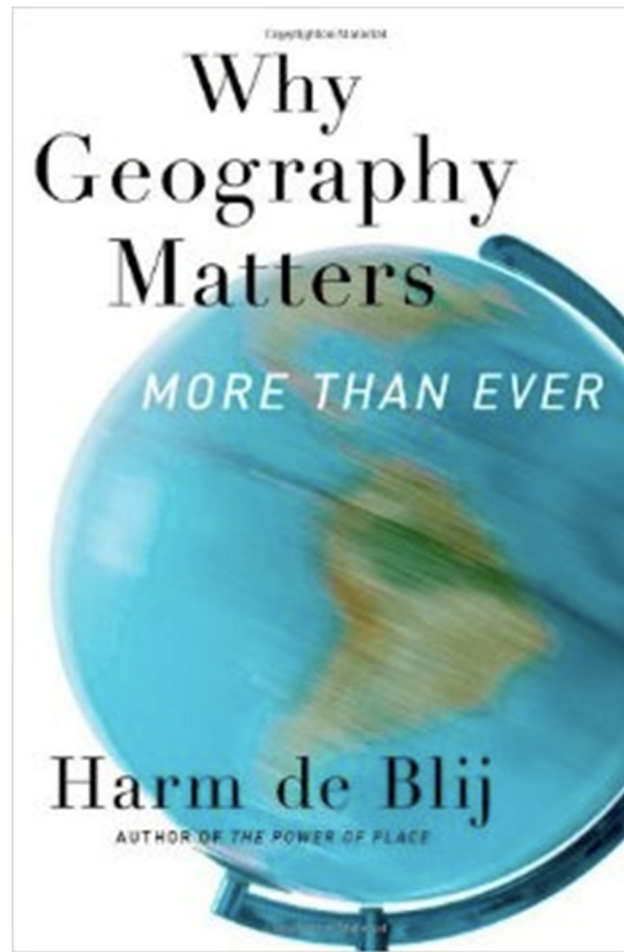


# How to Read for Comprehension

(or How to Read de Blij Without Tears)



**Reading Comprehension Strategies for  
Pre-AP World Geography at HSPVA**

## Reading for Comprehension Methods

Reading for comprehension with a book such as de Blij's *Why Geography Matters More Than Ever* is a daunting task. Most likely, you've not had to read such a dense and difficult text with such a high level of comprehension before Pre-AP World Geography. This packet will provide several resources and techniques that you will be able to try out. I discuss three of my favorite and most proven methods; SQW3R, Mind Mapping, and Outlining. Eventually, you should find the method that works best for you. I will not check your notes – because no one in college is going to check your notes. However, I will assess you (reading check and open ended summatives) on the content that is in your book, as will Mr. Bingham in AP World History. You CAN do this!

While there are several different techniques to approach reading for comprehension, there are some basic rules and tips that apply to all three. In order to successfully read and comprehend de Blij, make sure you are doing these 5 things:

1. DO NOT read an entire chapter at once! You can't do it! This book is way too hard for that, and it will make you miserable. Count how many sections there are in a chapter, when the next reading check is, and plan accordingly (this is called backward planning). You should be able to get by with two sections a night most chapters, which is only 3-5 pages. The goal would be to have the entire chapter read (with notes) two nights before a reading check. The night before the reading check you should review your notes.
2. You must interact with the text! This means taking some version of notes. Annotation may work for you, but my most successful students keep notes outside their book. Highlighting alone is NOT interacting with the text.
3. Your notes MUST BE IN YOUR OWN WORDS and preferably hand written (many, many studies show that typing notes is far less effective than hand writing). Just copying phrases from the book does not require you to grapple with the material. If you don't grapple with the material, you won't "own" the material.
4. Pay attention to structure and signal words.
5. If you don't know what a word means, LOOK IT UP!

Finding a group of students to review and talk about de Blij is very helpful. Find a group at lunch with which to discuss the book. Swindle a parent into reading the book and discuss it with them. The more you TALK about the book after you read it (or while you are reading it), the more you will remember it.

This Reading Comprehension Packet includes a list of signal words, as well as three note taking techniques. All are available on my website under Learning Tools. Choose one that works best for you (you might need to experiment) but choose one and follow through on it!

## SIGNAL WORDS

Signal words work just like a traffic signal. They tell you to pay attention and they direct your focus in specific ways. When you see these words, you should pay particular attention to what is coming next.

### 1. Continuation Signals (Warning—there are more ideas to come.)

and	again	a final reason	secondly	in addition
last of all	moreover	other	with	more
too	also	and finally	another	one reason
furthermore	likewise	next	first of all	similarly

### 2. Change-of-Direction Signals (Watch out—we're doubling back.)

although	despite	however	in spite of	the opposite rather
while	but	different from	in contrast	nevertheless
on the contrary	still though	conversely	even though	instead of
otherwise	on the other hand	yet		

### 3. Sequence Signals (There is an order to these ideas.)

first, second, third	in the first place	then	before	after
into (far into the night)	last	since	o'clock	later
A, B, C	for one thing	next	now	while
until	during	always	on time	earlier

### 4. Time Signals (When is it happening?)

when	lately	at the same time	once	immediately
now	already	little by little	final	after
awhile	during			

### 5. Illustration Signals (Here's what that principle means in reality.)

for example	for instance	such as	in the same way as	specifically
to illustrate	much like	similar to		

## 6. Emphasis Signals (This is important.)

a major development	a significant factor	a primary concern	a key feature	a major event
a vital force	a central issue	a distinctive quality	above all	by the way
especially important	especially relevant	especially valuable	important to note	it all boils down to
most of all	most noteworthy	more than anything else		of course
pay particular attention to	remember that should be noted	the most substantial issue		the main value
the basic concept	the crux of the matter	the chief outcome	the principle item	

## 7. Cause, Condition, or Result Signals (Condition or modification is coming up.)

because	if	for	from	while
then	that	until	as	whether
so that	therefore	yet	thus	resulting from
consequently	if so	but	since	in order that
unless	due to	without		

## 8. Spatial Signals (This answers the “where” question.)

between	below	here	outside	right
over	near	in	middle	next to
east	on	south	there	under
these	across	this	toward	west
about	left	alongside	around	close to
far	away	side	near	into
beside	beyond	north	opposite	over
inside	in front of	out	behind	adjacent
above	by	upon		

### 9. Comparison-Contrast Signals (We will now compare idea A with idea B.)

and	too	either	more than	even
much	as	but	yet	opposite
though	or	best	less	same
then	like	different	from	however
rather	also	most	less	than
better	half	analogous to	still	although
while				

### 10. Conclusion Signals (This ends the discussion and may have special importance.)

as a result	from this we see	hence	consequently	in conclusion
last of all	finally	in summary	therefore	

### 11. Fuzz Signals (Idea is not exact, or author is not positive and wishes to qualify a statement.)

almost	maybe	except	nearly	seems like
sort of	if	could	should?	might
was reported	probably	looks like	some	alleged
reputed	purported			

### 12. Nonword Emphasis Signals

exclamation point (!)	underline	italics	bold type
subheads, like The Conclusion		indentation of paragraph	graphic illustrations
numbered points (1, 2, 3)		very short sentence: Stop war.	“quotation marks”

Fry, E. B., Kress, J. E., & Fountoukidis, D.L. *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists, 3rd edition*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 185-187), 1993.

### **SQW3R (Scan, Question, Write, Read, Recite, Review)**

SQW3R is a reading strategy that was developed in the 1970s for university students. The College Board (the Advanced Placement people, along with the PSAT and SAT) recommend this strategy for students facing a great deal of reading for content. If you follow this strategy with fidelity, you will find occasionally predicting my test questions.

Implementing the SQW3R.

S	Survey the Chapter
Q	Question while you are surveying
W	Write our your questions (for de Blij, 2-3 per subheading, perhaps more
3 Rs	Read the chapter and answer your questions Recite the main ideas and answers to your questions out loud without referring to notes Review your questions and answers

**Survey the chapter** – before you even begin reading, survey the chapter. Pay attention to:

- the title, headings, and subheadings
- captions under pictures, charts, graphs or maps
- review questions or teacher-made study guides
- introductory and concluding paragraphs
- summary

**Question while you are surveying** – as you survey the chapter, begin to form questions

- Turn the title, headings, and/or subheadings into questions (without even reading the section!)
- Read questions at the end of the chapters or after each subheading
- Ask yourself, "What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject when it was assigned?"
- Ask yourself, "What do I already know about this subject?"

**Write your questions down.**

- For de Blij, I recommend creating at 2-3 questions based on the subtitles alone, before you read. This helps you focus your reading.

**Read the chapter. When you begin to read:**

- Look for answers to the questions you first raised
- Answer questions at the beginning or end of chapters or study guides
- Reread captions under pictures, graphs, etc.
- Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases
- Study graphic aids
- Reduce your speed for difficult passages
- Stop and reread parts which are not clear
- *Read only a section at a time and recite after each section.* In de Blij, you may need to recite after each paragraph.

**Recite after you've read a section.**

- Orally ask yourself questions about what you have just read, or summarize, in your own words what you read
- Take notes from the text but write the information in your own words
- Underline or highlight important points you've just read

**Reciting:**

- The more senses you use the more likely you are to remember what you read
- Triple strength learning: Seeing, saying, hearing
- Quadruple strength learning: Seeing , saying , hearing, writing!!!

**Review – an ongoing process**

Day 1 of review (hopefully two days before a summative, or one day before a reading check)

- Page through the text and/or your notebook to re-acquaint yourself with the important points.
- Ask yourself the questions you posed earlier
- Orally recite or write the answers from memory.
- Develop mnemonic devices for material which need to be memorized.
- Make flash cards for those questions which give you difficulty.

Day 2 of review

- Alternate between your flash cards and notes and test yourself (orally or in writing) on the questions you formulated.
- Make additional flash cards if necessary.
- Using the text and notebook, make a Table of Contents - list all the topics and sub-topics you need to know from the chapter.
- From the Table of Contents, make a Study Sheet/ Spatial Map.
- Recite the information orally and in your own words as you put the Study Sheet/Map together.
- As you have consolidated all the information you need for this chapter, periodically review the Sheet/Map so that at test time you will not have to cram.

The following page includes some of my notes using the SQW3R strategies for Chapter 1 of de Blij

Based upon Robinson, Francis Pleasant. *Effective Study*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

## Becoming a Geographer?

*How do most people become a geographer?*

Got interested in geography while taking a geography undergraduate class in college

*How did de Blij get interested in Geography?*

Watching the Nazis firebomb Rotterdam, his home town in The Netherlands, he moved to small village and lived in the library all day, had a great geography teacher (like you guys at HSPVA, right?! ;)

## What is Geography?

*What is geography?*

Its hard to define, no single answer

Has four traditions:

1. Geography deals with the natural as well as the human world.
2. It assesses the complicated relationships between human societies and natural environments
3. Research and study of foreign cultures and distant regions
  - a. Parochialism
  - b. Provincialism
4. The location tradition, a human-geographic convention

Traditions unite and divide geography and geographers.

UMBRELLA (glaciations to urban structure, from soil distribution to economic models)

Specialization has a way of eroding the common ground but technology brings geographers together by creating an ease of information

## Looking at the World Spatially

*How do we look at the world spatially?*

Earthly space is the thing that ties all geography together – its traditions, methods, and technology all revolve around earthly space.

Geographers look at the world spatially, Historians look at the world temporally, economists structurally

- That means geographers look at the relationships of the space that things occur in – how humans in history have reacted to their particular location

Can mean flaws, however (energy of midlatitudes, and lethargy of tropical peoples)

*What is the caveat about thinking of the world only spatially without other pieces?*

WE can generalize such comment that only successful countries live outside the tropics...

Spatial umbrella ties geographers together, but it is a discipline of diversity – but all have an interest in patterns, distributions, diffusions, circulations, interactions, juxtapositions – the ways in which the physical and human world interconnect and interact.

*What does spatial mean?*

Space – how things interact with the space around them

Allows geography to be very broad

## The Spatial Specializers

*Who are the spatial specializers?*

Everybody, and the first geographers were simply humans who drew maps and interpreted landscapes – where the good food grew, and where the best woolly mammoths lived

European nationalism created “schools” of geography that were more about colonialism, and to justify political and strategic aspirations.

Geography is synthesis and the people who try to find ways to link disparate information to answer questions

Today is the age of specialization, scholars are afraid to make generalizations

*What is the problem with specialization?*

People get too focused on their one area, and do not see the “big picture”



## Mind Maps

Mind Maps were popularized by author and consultant, Tony Buzan. They use a two-dimensional structure, instead of the list format conventionally used to take notes. Mind Maps are more compact than conventional notes, often taking up one side of paper. This helps you to make associations easily. If you find out more information after you have drawn a Mind Map, then you can easily integrate it with little disruption.

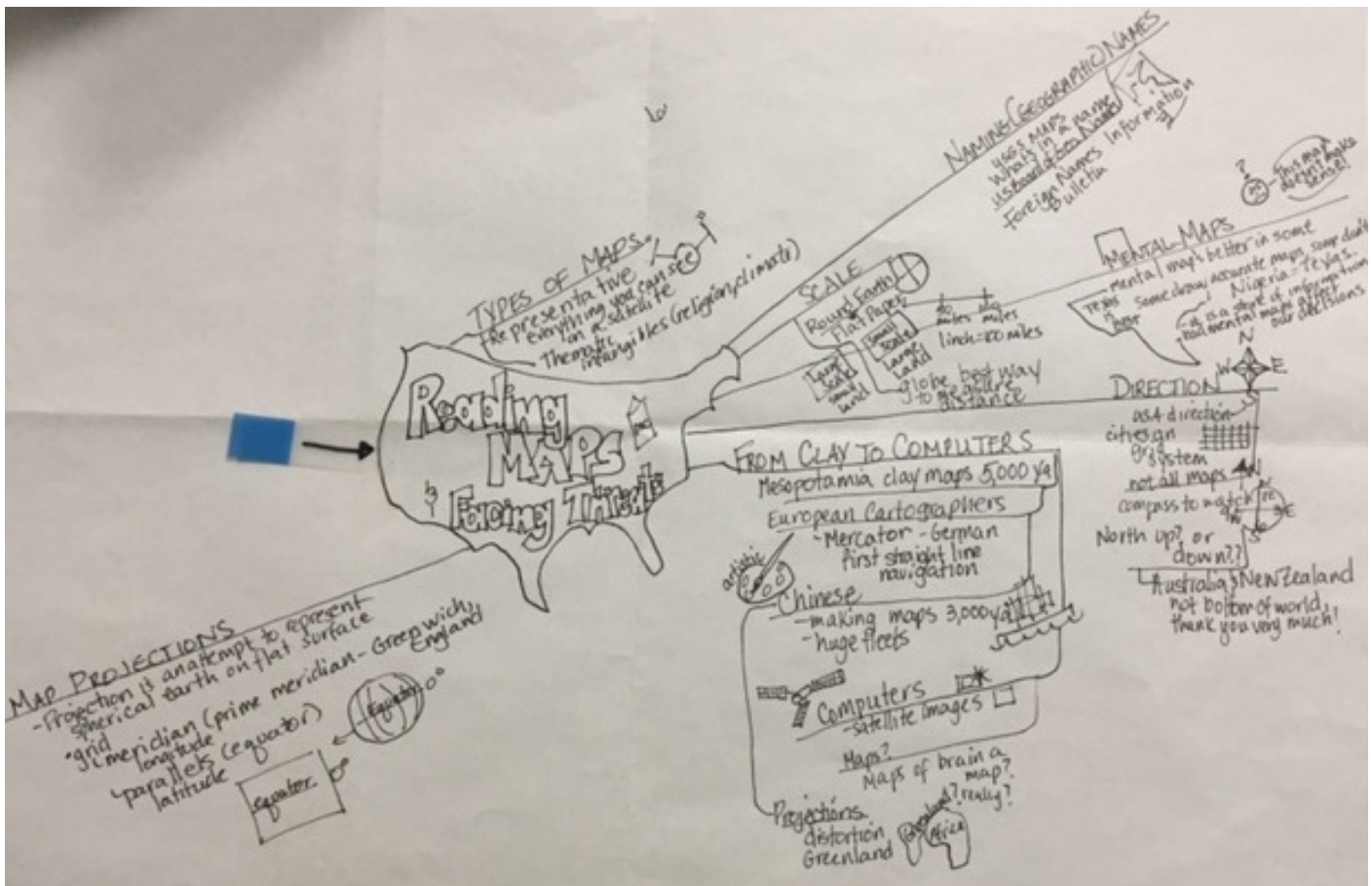
More than this, Mind Mapping helps you break large projects or topics down into manageable chunks, so that you can plan effectively without getting overwhelmed and without forgetting something important.

A good Mind Map shows the "shape" of the subject, the relative importance of individual points, and the way in which facts relate to one another. This means that they're very quick to review, as you can often refresh information in your mind just by glancing at one. In this way, they can be effective mnemonics – remembering the shape and structure of a Mind Map can give you the cues you need to remember the information within it.

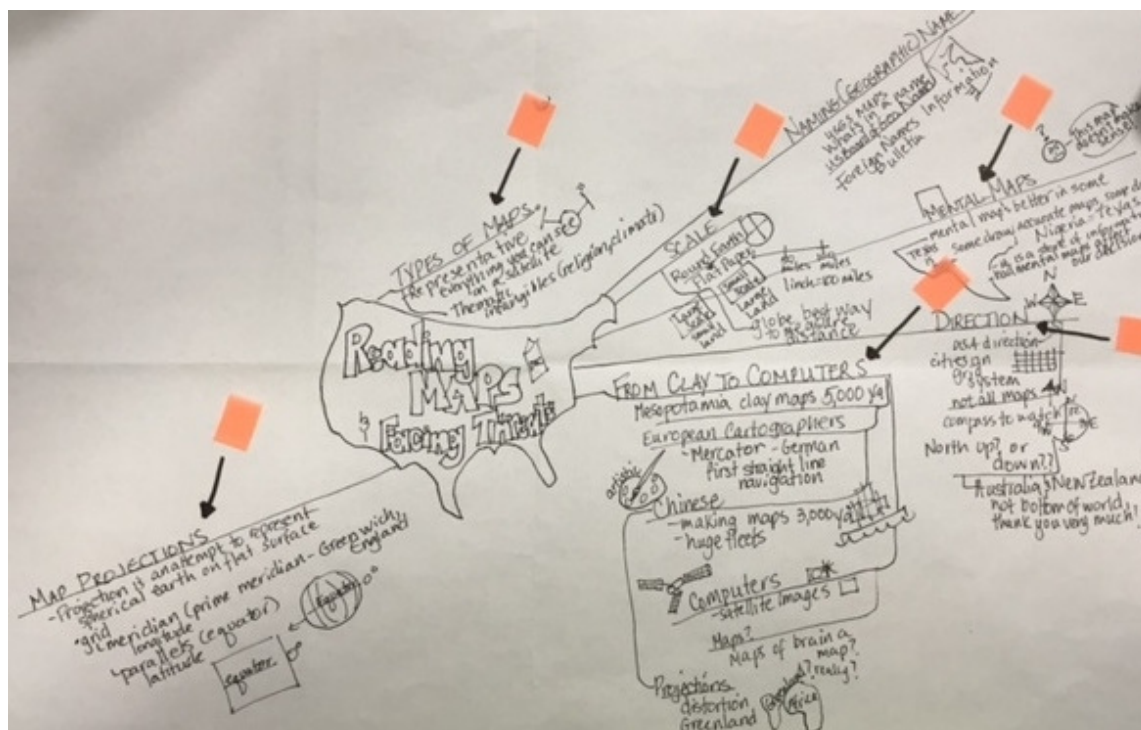
When created using colors and images or drawings, a Mind Map can even resemble a work of art. While mind maps may not work for everybody, I have had students whose reading comprehension and retention was positively transformed through the use of this method. Try it! While I always advocate hand written notes, as it forces your brain to interact with the material in a different way,

For an illustration and instructions, I've started a mind map of Ch. 2. No, Ms. Chase would not have been at HSPVA for visual. Clearly. Hopefully you can look past my lack of artistry ☺

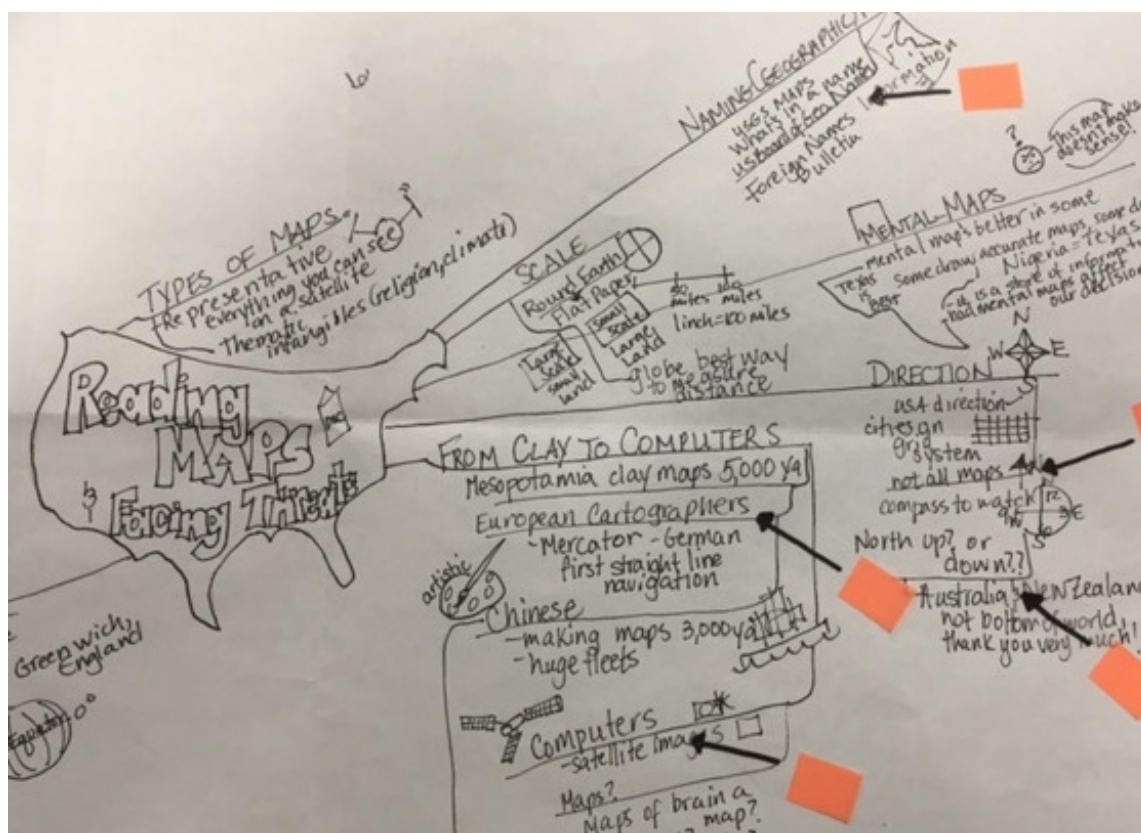
1. Write the title of the subject you're exploring in the center of the page, and draw a circle or illustration around it.



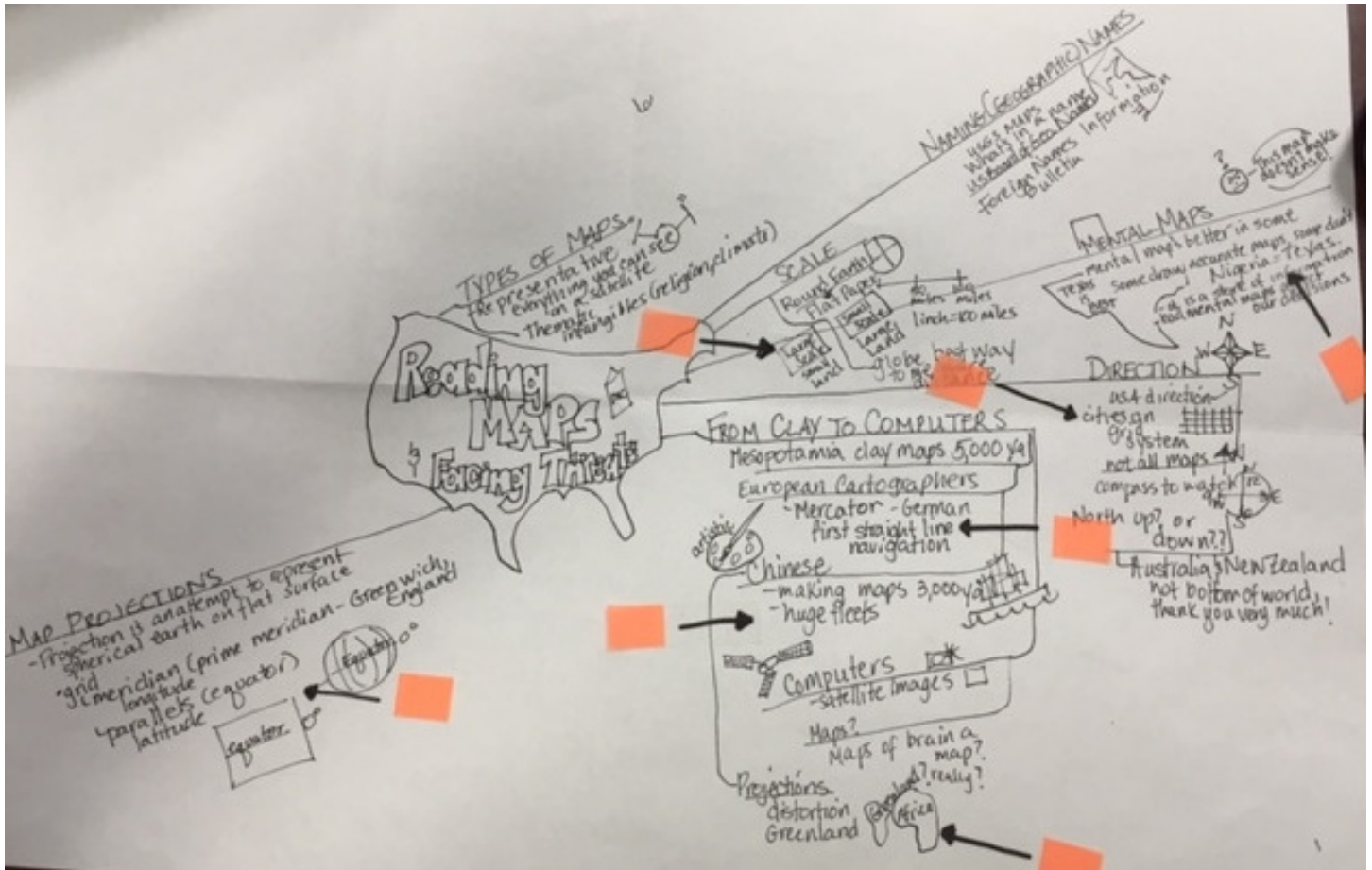
2. As you come across major subdivisions or subheadings of the topic (or important facts that relate to the subject) draw lines out from this circle. You might wish to have the de Blij subtitles here, underlined. Label these lines with these subdivisions or subheadings.



3. As you "burrow" into the subject and uncover another level of information (further subheadings, or individual facts) belonging to the subheadings, draw these as lines linked to the subheading lines. These would be de Blij's main ideas of the subsection.



4. Then, for individual facts or ideas, draw lines out from the appropriate heading line and label them. For de Blij these are often specific examples he gives to prove his point.



5. As you come across new information, link it in to the Mind Map appropriately.



[illegible]

While drawing Mind Maps by hand is appropriate in many cases, software tools and apps like **Coggle**, **Bubbl.us**, **Mindmeister**, **MindGenius**, **iMindMap**, and **Mindjet** can improve the process by helping you to produce high quality Mind Maps, which you can then easily edit or redraft.

### Using Mind Maps Effectively

Once you understand how to take notes in Mind Map format, you can develop your own conventions for taking them further. The following suggestions can help you draw impactful Mind Maps:

- **Use Single Words or Simple Phrases** – Many words in normal writing are padding, as they ensure that facts are conveyed in the correct context, and in a format that is pleasant to read.

In Mind Maps, single strong words and short, meaningful phrases can convey the same meaning more potently. Excess words just clutter the Mind Map.

- **Print Words** – Joined up or indistinct writing is more difficult to read.
- **Use Color to Separate Different Ideas** – This will help you to separate ideas where necessary. It also helps you to visualize the Mind Map for recall. Color can help to show the organization of the subject.
- **Use Symbols and Images** – Pictures can help you to remember information more effectively than words, so, where a symbol or picture means something to you, use it. (You can use photo libraries like iStockPhoto to source images inexpensively.)
- **Using Cross-Linkages** – Information in one part of a Mind Map may relate to another part. Here you can draw lines to show the cross-linkages. This helps you to see how one part of the subject affects another.

Based on Eyre, Elizabeth. "Mind Maps: A Powerful Approach to Note-Taking." *Mind Tools*. Accessed 10 July 2015.  
[https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS\\_01.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm)

## Outlining

Reading for study is harder than reading for pleasure. Outlining helps you understand difficult textbook chapters, and enables you to think deeply about what you have read. After outlining a chapter, you have a guide for future study. Creating an outline of a chapter is also an effective tool for organizing information from de Blij. While it seems as if it takes a great deal of time, after you become proficient, you will find it goes more quickly. The key, as it is in any reading comprehension note strategy, is writing in your own words. I know this seems BORING and super old school, and it might be for you, but guys, I'm not kidding – this is what got me through school. For those of you who find mind mapping too visually busy and crazy...try an outline!

Use outlines to help you:

- Figure out how the author organized the chapter
- Develop a system for comprehension
- Organize the information
- Understand how ideas fit together
- Think while reading the chapter
- Study for an exam at a later date

*You must condense the information into a short, simple outline that you can use for your own future study.*

To do this you:

- Group similar ideas together
- Rearrange the ideas into your own words
- Look for the relationships among different ideas

In creating an outline, there is a standard procedure and marking system. Large ideas (in de Blij these would be the chapter subtitles) are marked with a Roman Numeral. Then large ideas in that same subsection are given capital Latin letters (A, B, C, etc). Smaller ideas/evidence are then numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3), and smaller evidentiary information is given lower case Latin letters. Each time you add information and use a progressively “smaller” identification, you should indent your line. This is more clear in an example, so I have created an example of two subsections of Chapter 1 on the following page.

Outlining rules specific that you cannot have a Arabic numeral by itself; if you have a 1, there should at least be a 2. This is also true of the lower case Latin letters (an a must at least be followed by a b). HOWEVER, as the goal of outlining is to help you manage the material in de Blij, you are not beholden to these rules. I merely mention them for any future outlining endeavors. However, if you just do bullet points underneath your large Roman Numerals, you are not organizing your information and outlining will not be successful.

Pro-Tip: DO NOT TRY TO OUTLINE on your computer in Word. You will go bonkers with autoformatting. I always suggest handwriting your notes, but especially outlines.

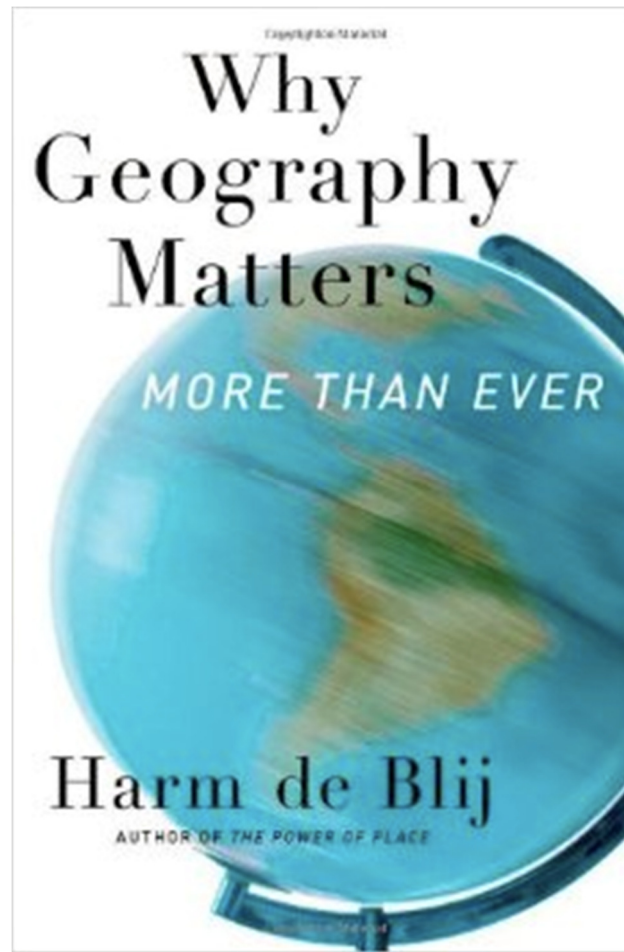
On the following page, I have provided an example of how I outlined the introduction and first section of Ch. 1 “Why Geography Matters More than Ever”.

## Why Geography Matters More Than Ever (Chapter 1)

- I. Knowledge is Power (*this is the introductory passage before the first subsection in Ch. 1*)
  - A. Those with knowledge have the advantage
    - 1. World is more competitive
    - 2. World changes rapidly
      - a. Governments and companies need to make quick decisions
      - b. Arab Spring highlights need to know as much as possible – quickly to determine who to help
  - B. Things move too quickly
    - 1. 20<sup>th</sup> Century alone has seen incredible change
      - a. Climate changes and natural disasters
      - b. China's growth
    - 2. 20<sup>th</sup> Century is also a tumultuous period of history
      - a. Soviet Union
      - b. Change of maps/ UN
  - C. Geography is the framework
    - 1. Geography helps us understand
      - a. Transformations and connections
      - b. Informs our thoughts and discussions
    - 2. Geography itself has had several transformations
- II. Becoming a Geographer
  - A. Why do people become geographers?
    - 1. Take an undergraduate course and fall in love
    - 2. Personal experiences – de Blij in Rotterdam during WWII
      - a. escaping to his town library during WWII
      - b. a dynamic geography teacher
  - B. Geographers are enthusiastic and attract new geography students
    - 1. teachers believe in the great value of geography education
      - a. makes life easier
      - b. makes life more meaningful in complex and changing world

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furthermore	likewise	next	first of all	similarly

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these	across	this	toward	west
about	left	alongside	around	close to
far	away	side	near	into
beside	beyond	north	opposite	over
inside	in front of	out	behind	adjacent
above	by	upon		

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- Reduce your speed for difficult passages
- Stop and reread parts which are not clear
- *Read only a section at a time and recite after each section.* In de Blij, you may need to recite after each paragraph.

**Recite after you've read a section.**

- Orally ask yourself questions about what you have just read, or summarize, in your own words what you read
- Take notes from the text but write the information in your own words
- Underline or highlight important points you've just read

**Reciting:**

- The more senses you use the more likely you are to remember what you read
- Triple strength learning: Seeing, saying, hearing
- Quadruple strength learning: Seeing , saying , hearing, writing!!!

**Review – an ongoing process**

Day 1 of review (hopefully two days before a summative, or one day before a reading check)

- Page through the text and/or your notebook to re-acquaint yourself with the important points.
- Ask yourself the questions you posed earlier
- Orally recite or write the answers from memory.
- Develop mnemonic devices for material which need to be memorized.
- Make flash cards for those questions which give you difficulty.

Day 2 of review

- Alternate between your flash cards and notes and test yourself (orally or in writing) on the questions you formulated.
- Make additional flash cards if necessary.
- Using the text and notebook, make a Table of Contents - list all the topics and sub-topics you need to know from the chapter.
- From the Table of Contents, make a Study Sheet/ Spatial Map.
- Recite the information orally and in your own words as you put the Study Sheet/Map together.
- As you have consolidated all the information you need for this chapter, periodically review the Sheet/Map so that at test time you will not have to cram.

The following page includes some of my notes using the SQW3R strategies for Chapter 1 of de Blij

Based upon Robinson, Francis Pleasant. *Effective Study*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

## Becoming a Geographer?

*How do most people become a geographer?*

Got interested in geography while taking a geography undergraduate class in college

*How did de Blij get interested in Geography?*

Watching the Nazis firebomb Rotterdam, his home town in The Netherlands, he moved to small village and lived in the library all day, had a great geography teacher (like you guys at HSPVA, right?! ;)

## What is Geography?

*What is geography?*

Its hard to define, no single answer

Has four traditions:

1. Geography deals with the natural as well as the human world.
2. It assesses the complicated relationships between human societies and natural environments
3. Research and study of foreign cultures and distant regions
  - a. Parochialism
  - b. Provincialism
4. The location tradition, a human-geographic convention

Traditions unite and divide geography and geographers.

UMBRELLA (glaciations to urban structure, from soil distribution to economic models)

Specialization has a way of eroding the common ground but technology brings geographers together by creating an ease of information

## Looking at the World Spatially

*How do we look at the world spatially?*

Earthly space is the thing that ties all geography together – its traditions, methods, and technology all revolve around earthly space.

Geographers look at the world spatially, Historians look at the world temporally, economists structurally

- That means geographers look at the relationships of the space that things occur in – how humans in history have reacted to their particular location

Can mean flaws, however (energy of midlatitudes, and lethargy of tropical peoples)

*What is the caveat about thinking of the world only spatially without other pieces?*

WE can generalize such comment that only successful countries live outside the tropics...

Spatial umbrella ties geographers together, but it is a discipline of diversity – but all have an interest in patterns, distributions, diffusions, circulations, interactions, juxtapositions – the ways in which the physical and human world interconnect and interact.

*What does spatial mean?*

Space – how things interact with the space around them

Allows geography to be very broad

## The Spatial Specializers

*Who are the spatial specializers?*

Everybody, and the first geographers were simply humans who drew maps and interpreted landscapes – where the good food grew, and where the best woolly mammoths lived

European nationalism created “schools” of geography that were more about colonialism, and to justify political and strategic aspirations.

Geography is synthesis and the people who try to find ways to link disparate information to answer questions

Today is the age of specialization, scholars are afraid to make generalizations

*What is the problem with specialization?*

People get too focused on their one area, and do not see the “big picture”

## Mind Maps

Mind Maps were popularized by author and consultant, Tony Buzan. They use a two-dimensional structure, instead of the list format conventionally used to take notes. Mind Maps are more compact than conventional notes, often taking up one side of paper. This helps you to make associations easily. If you find out more information after you have drawn a Mind Map, then you can easily integrate it with little disruption.

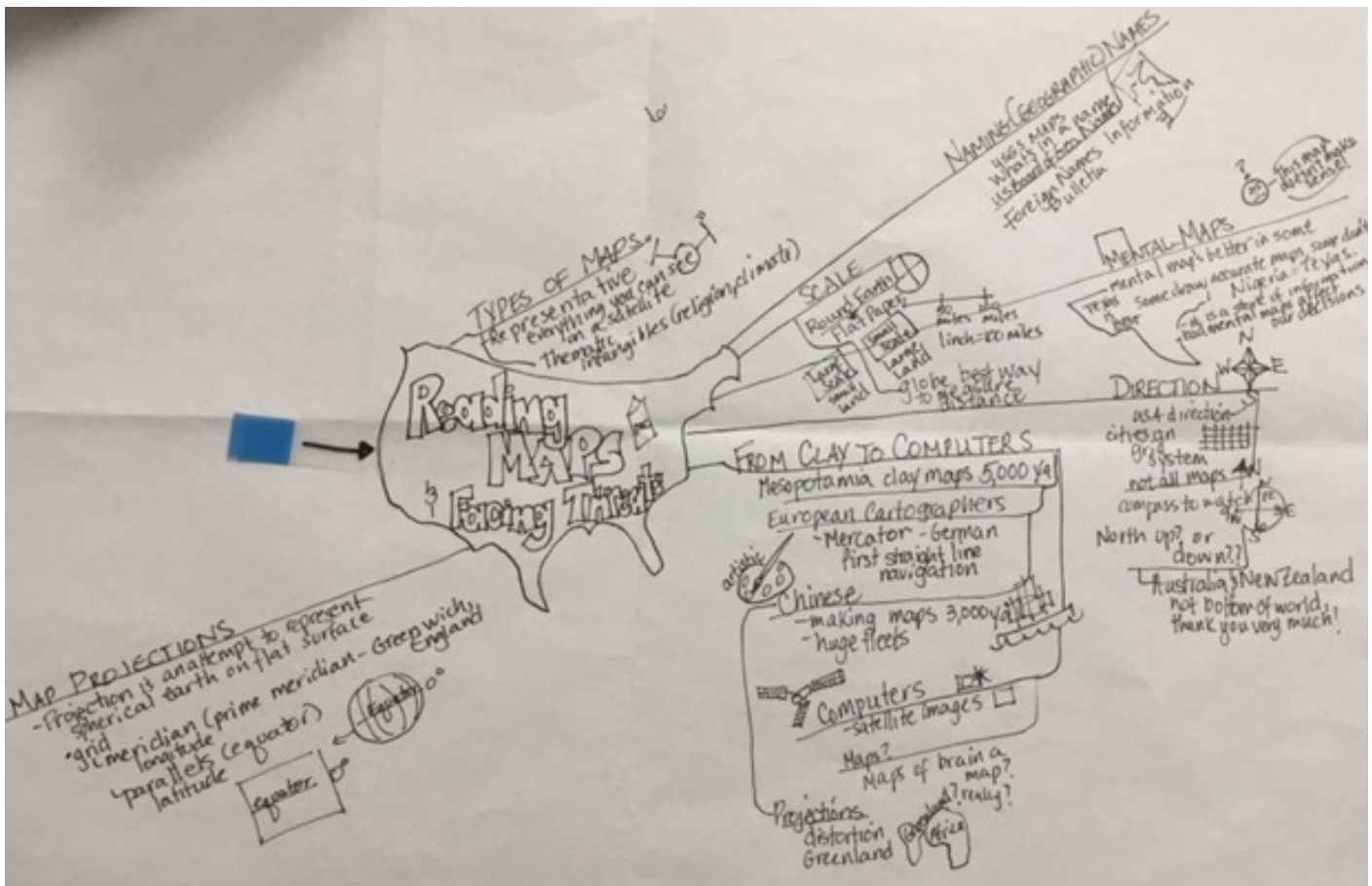
More than this, Mind Mapping helps you break large projects or topics down into manageable chunks, so that you can plan effectively without getting overwhelmed and without forgetting something important.

A good Mind Map shows the "shape" of the subject, the relative importance of individual points, and the way in which facts relate to one another. This means that they're very quick to review, as you can often refresh information in your mind just by glancing at one. In this way, they can be effective mnemonics – remembering the shape and structure of a Mind Map can give you the cues you need to remember the information within it.

When created using colors and images or drawings, a Mind Map can even resemble a work of art. While mind maps may not work for everybody, I have had students whose reading comprehension and retention was positively transformed through the use of this method. Try it! While I always advocate hand written notes, as it forces your brain to interact with the material in a different way,

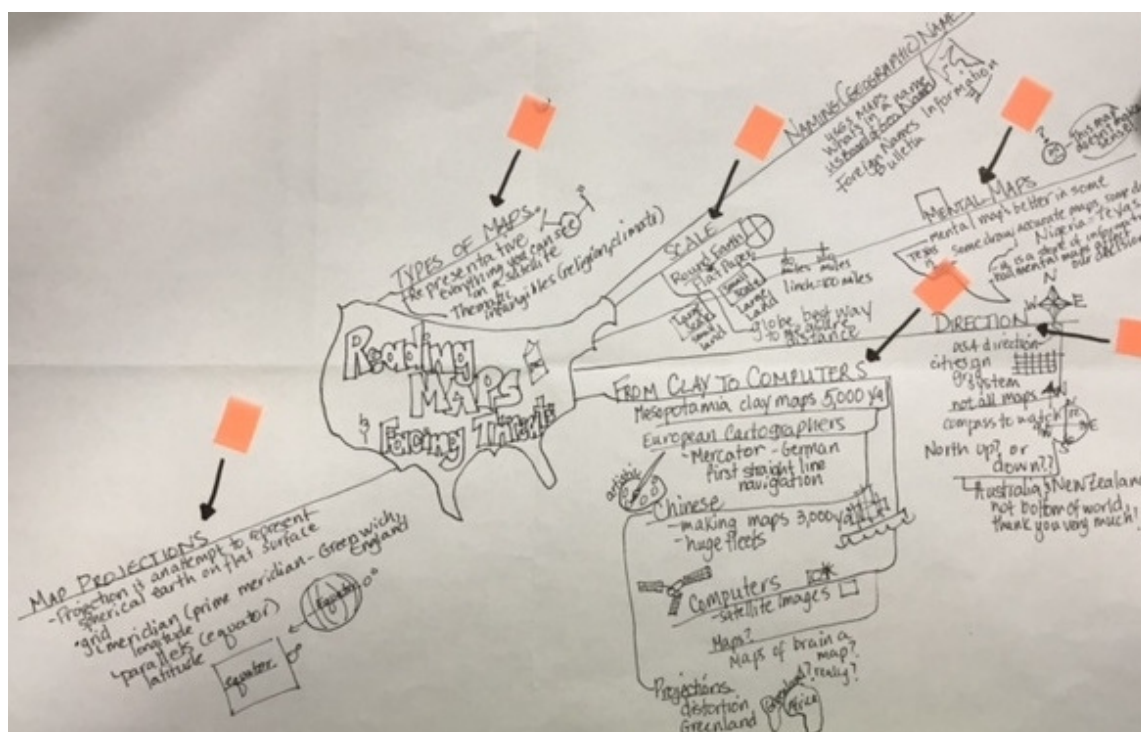
For an illustration and instructions, I've started a mind map of Ch. 2. No, Ms. Chase would not have been at HSPVA for visual. Clearly. Hopefully you can look past my lack of artistry ☺

1. Write the title of the subject you're exploring in the center of the page, and draw a circle or illustration around it.

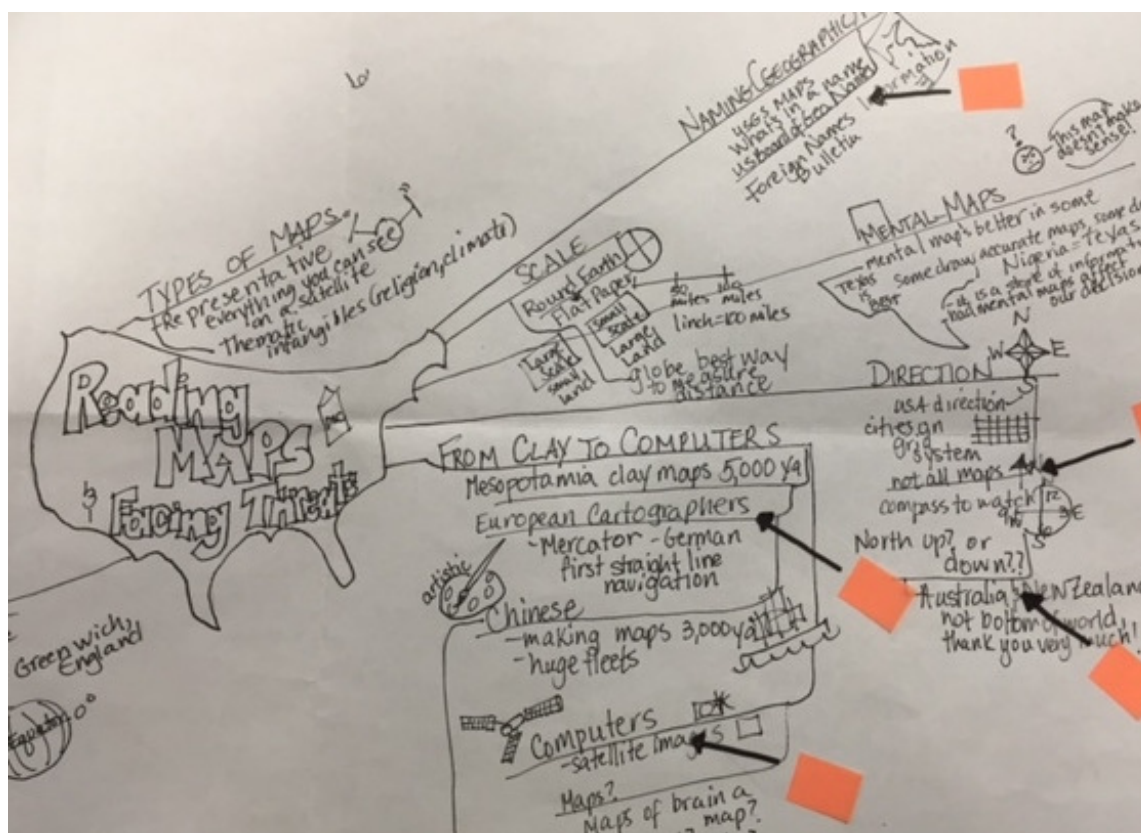




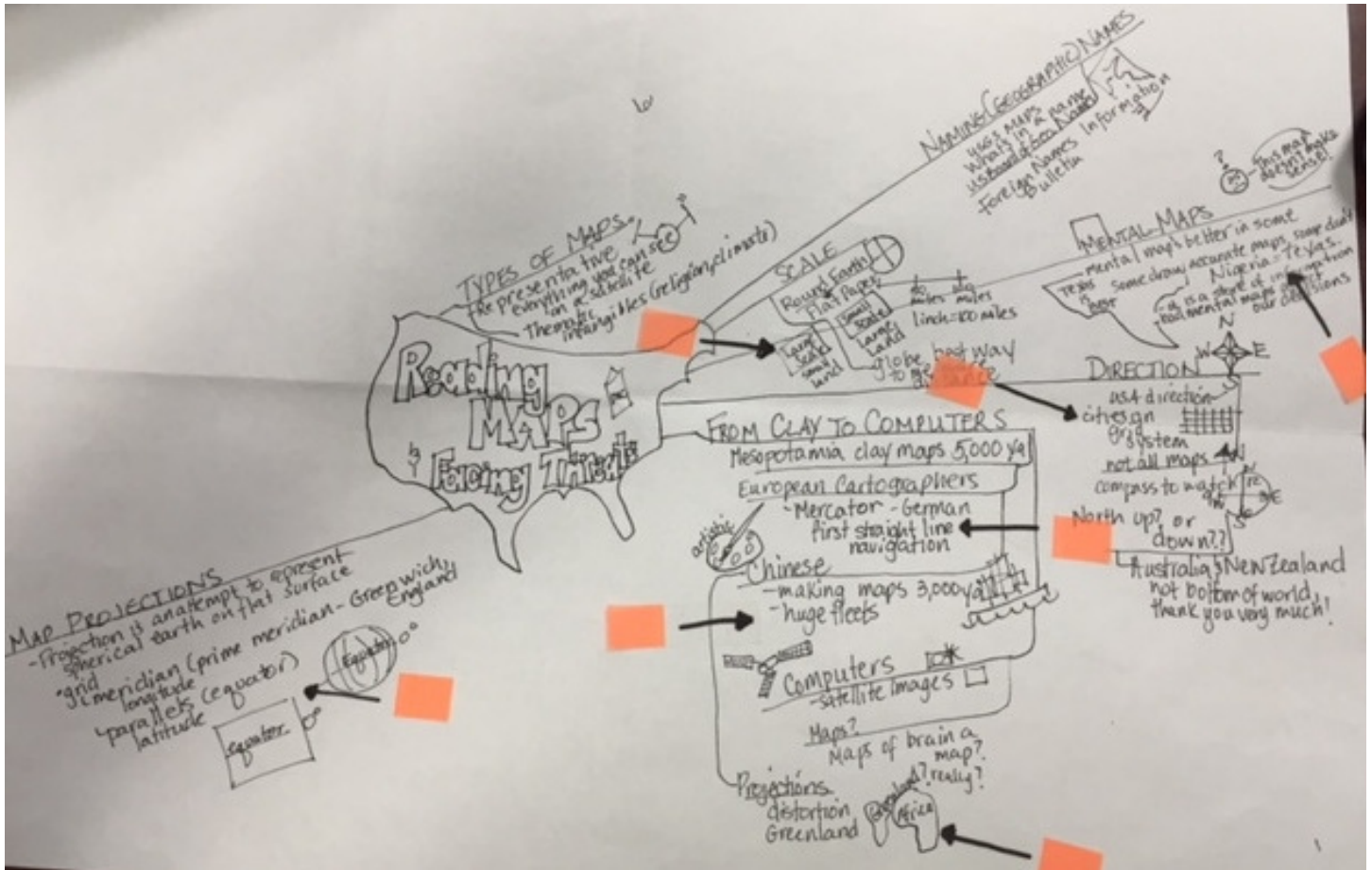
2. As you come across major subdivisions or subheadings of the topic (or important facts that relate to the subject) draw lines out from this circle. You might wish to have the de Blij subtitles here, underlined. Label these lines with these subdivisions or subheadings.



3. As you "burrow" into the subject and uncover another level of information (further subheadings, or individual facts) belonging to the subheadings, draw these as lines linked to the subheading lines. These would be de Blij's main ideas of the subsection.



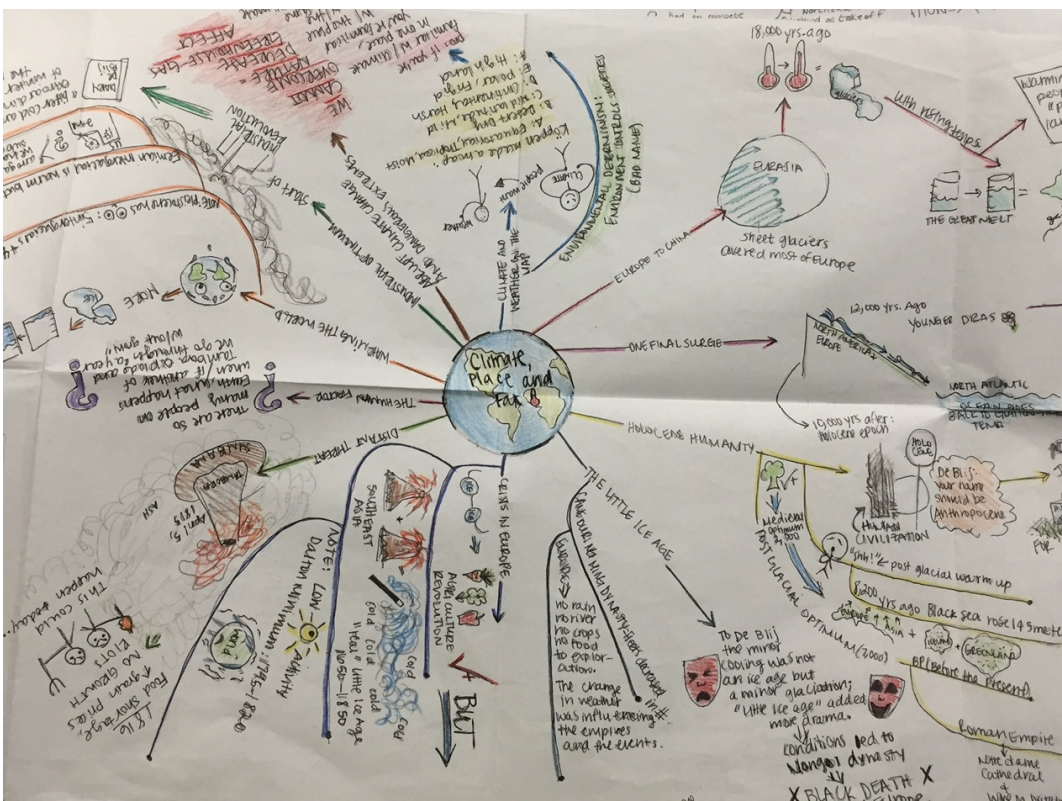
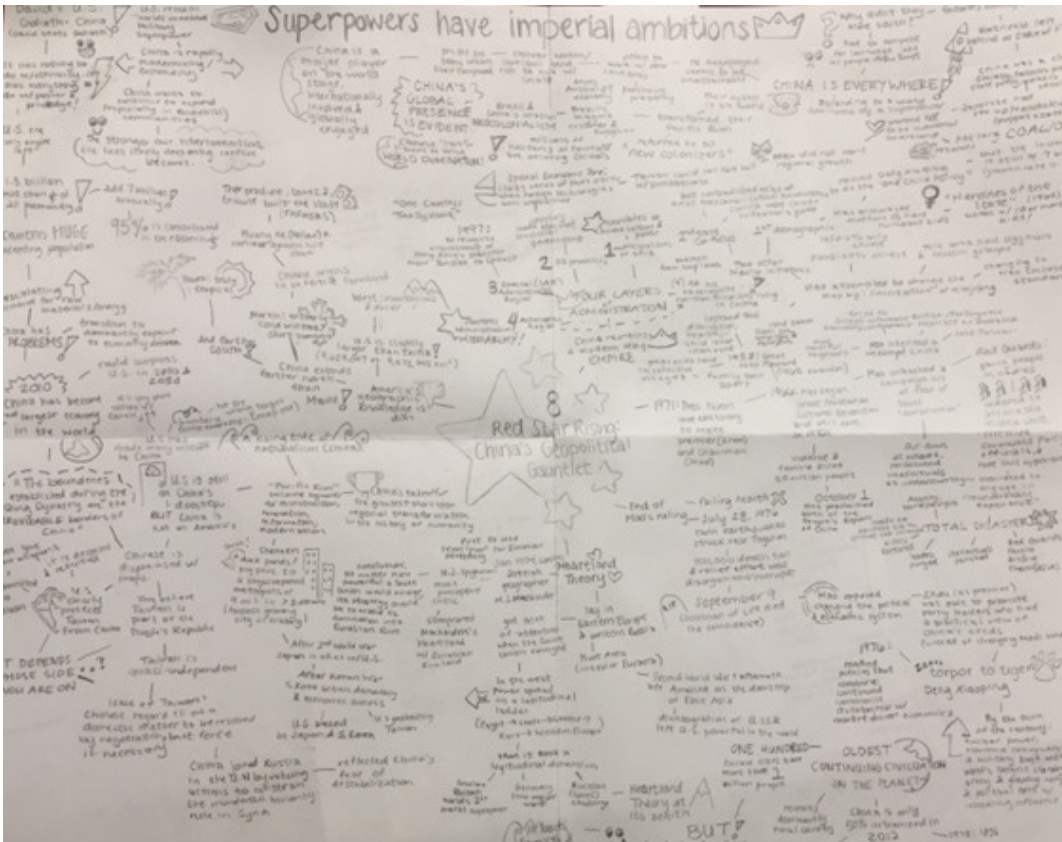
4. Then, for individual facts or ideas, draw lines out from the appropriate heading line and label them. For de Blij these are often specific examples he gives to prove his point.



5. As you come across new information, link it in to the Mind Map appropriately.



A complete Mind Map may have main topic lines radiating in all directions from the center. Sub-topics and facts will branch off these, like branches and twigs from the trunk of a tree. You don't need to worry about the structure you produce, as this will evolve of its own accord. These are two photos from students. The first is a photo of one of my most successful student's mind map for the chapter on China. The second is of the Climate, Fate, and Place chapter.



While drawing Mind Maps by hand is appropriate in many cases, software tools and apps like **Coggle**, **Bubbl.us**, **Mindmeister**, **MindGenius**, **iMindMap**, and **Mindjet** can improve the process by helping you to produce high quality Mind Maps, which you can then easily edit or redraft.

### Using Mind Maps Effectively

Once you understand how to take notes in Mind Map format, you can develop your own conventions for taking them further. The following suggestions can help you draw impactful Mind Maps:

- **Use Single Words or Simple Phrases** – Many words in normal writing are padding, as they ensure that facts are conveyed in the correct context, and in a format that is pleasant to read.

In Mind Maps, single strong words and short, meaningful phrases can convey the same meaning more potently. Excess words just clutter the Mind Map.

- **Print Words** – Joined up or indistinct writing is more difficult to read.
- **Use Color to Separate Different Ideas** – This will help you to separate ideas where necessary. It also helps you to visualize the Mind Map for recall. Color can help to show the organization of the subject.
- **Use Symbols and Images** – Pictures can help you to remember information more effectively than words, so, where a symbol or picture means something to you, use it. (You can use photo libraries like iStockPhoto to source images inexpensively.)
- **Using Cross-Linkages** – Information in one part of a Mind Map may relate to another part. Here you can draw lines to show the cross-linkages. This helps you to see how one part of the subject affects another.

Based on Eyre, Elizabeth. "Mind Maps: A Powerful Approach to Note-Taking." *Mind Tools*. Accessed 10 July 2015.  
[https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS\\_01.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm)

## Outlining

Reading for study is harder than reading for pleasure. Outlining helps you understand difficult textbook chapters, and enables you to think deeply about what you have read. After outlining a chapter, you have a guide for future study. Creating an outline of a chapter is also an effective tool for organizing information from de Blij. While it seems as if it takes a great deal of time, after you become proficient, you will find it goes more quickly. The key, as it is in any reading comprehension note strategy, is writing in your own words. I know this seems BORING and super old school, and it might be for you, but guys, I'm not kidding – this is what got me through school. For those of you who find mind mapping too visually busy and crazy...try an outline!

Use outlines to help you:

- Figure out how the author organized the chapter
- Develop a system for comprehension
- Organize the information
- Understand how ideas fit together
- Think while reading the chapter
- Study for an exam at a later date

*You must condense the information into a short, simple outline that you can use for your own future study.*

To do this you:

- Group similar ideas together
- Rearrange the ideas into your own words
- Look for the relationships among different ideas

In creating an outline, there is a standard procedure and marking system. Large ideas (in de Blij these would be the chapter subtitles) are marked with a Roman Numeral. Then large ideas in that same subsection are given capital Latin letters (A, B, C, etc). Smaller ideas/evidence are then numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3), and smaller evidentiary information is given lower case Latin letters. Each time you add information and use a progressively “smaller” identification, you should indent your line. This is more clear in an example, so I have created an example of two subsections of Chapter 1 on the following page.

Outlining rules specific that you cannot have a Arabic numeral by itself; if you have a 1, there should at least be a 2. This is also true of the lower case Latin letters (an a must at least be followed by a b). HOWEVER, as the goal of outlining is to help you manage the material in de Blij, you are not beholden to these rules. I merely mention them for any future outlining endeavors. However, if you just do bullet points underneath your large Roman Numerals, you are not organizing your information and outlining will not be successful.

Pro-Tip: DO NOT TRY TO OUTLINE on your computer in Word. You will go bonkers with autoformatting. I always suggest handwriting your notes, but especially outlines.

On the following page, I have provided an example of how I outlined the introduction and first section of Ch. 1 “Why Geography Matters More than Ever”.

## Why Geography Matters More Than Ever (Chapter 1)

- I. Knowledge is Power (*this is the introductory passage before the first subsection in Ch. 1*)
  - A. Those with knowledge have the advantage
    - 1. World is more competitive
    - 2. World changes rapidly
      - a. Governments and companies need to make quick decisions
      - b. Arab Spring highlights need to know as much as possible – quickly to determine who to help
  - B. Things move too quickly
    - 1. 20<sup>th</sup> Century alone has seen incredible change
      - a. Climate changes and natural disasters
      - b. China's growth
    - 2. 20<sup>th</sup> Century is also a tumultuous period of history
      - a. Soviet Union
      - b. Change of maps/ UN
  - C. Geography is the framework
    - 1. Geography helps us understand
      - a. Transformations and connections
      - b. Informs our thoughts and discussions
    - 2. Geography itself has had several transformations
- II. Becoming a Geographer
  - A. Why do people become geographers?
    - 1. Take an undergraduate course and fall in love
    - 2. Personal experiences – de Blij in Rotterdam during WWII
      - a. escaping to his town library during WWII
      - b. a dynamic geography teacher
  - B. Geographers are enthusiastic and attract new geography students
    - 1. teachers believe in the great value of geography education
      - a. makes life easier
      - b. makes life more meaningful in complex and changing world