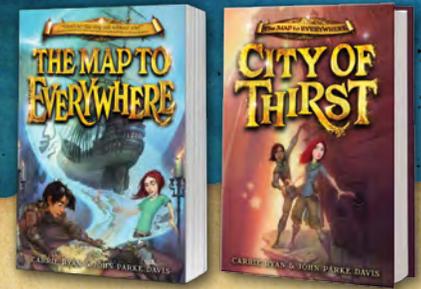


10 ALMOST CERTAINLY TRUE AND DEFINITELY INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT MAPS



FUN MAP FACTS

Impress your friends!

Wow your teachers!

Awe your parents!

1. **Cartography** is the study of maps and map making. Someone who makes maps is called a **cartographer**.
2. **North** may be at the top of maps today, but that wasn't always the case. During the middle ages, most Western maps put **east** at the top instead. In Latin, the word for east is *oriens*, so to hold the map correctly, you had to "**orient**" it—that is, make sure East was on top. This is where we get the word "**orientation**" today.
3. Modern mapmakers often incorporate fake towns into their maps, known as "**paper towns**," "**phantom settlements**," or (for some reason) "**bunnies**." If they come across another map with the same fake town, they know it is a copy!
4. In 1798, cartographer James Rennell drew the first map of Africa featuring the massive **Mountains of Kong**, an enormous mountain range that stretched thousands of miles east to west across Africa. The only problem was that the Mountains of Kong didn't exist; Rennell had made a mistake. Even so, the Mountains of Kong would be placed on maps of Africa for the next 100 years.
5. The first map to use the name "**America**" was created by the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller in 1507. It's also one of the most expensive maps in the world—the US Library of Congress bought it in 2003 for \$10 million!
6. In 44 CE, ancient Roman thinker Pliny the Elder wrote that every creature on land has a counterpart in the ocean. Because of that, ancient mapmakers would draw **sea monsters** on their maps to look like aquatic versions of familiar land animals: sea cows, sea serpents, sea pigs, marine pig-dogs, etc. If you've ever seen a sea lion or a seahorse, this is how they got their names!
7. During medieval times in Europe most maps of the world, called *mappae mundi*, were used by royals and nobles as displays of their wealth rather than as tools for navigation. Only around 1,100 *mappae mundi* still survive from that time period.
8. There are two Norths: **true north** and **magnetic north**. True north is the direction of the geographic North Pole. Magnetic north is the direction the north end of a needle in a compass points. The magnetic North Pole can actually move up to 25 miles a year and has even been known to swap places with the magnetic South Pole (don't worry, the last time this happened was 780,000 years ago).
9. During World War II, the British game company Waddington PLC altered several **Monopoly** games by sealing silk maps into the game boards, shuffling real money in with the fake, and adding new playing pieces such as a working compass. These special games were then shipped to prisoner-of-war camps to help prisoners escape!
10. The oldest globe on record dates back to around 1,500 and is carved on the surface of an ostrich egg. It's also the first time the phrase "**here be dragons**" appears on a map (in Latin: *hic sunt dracones*).

