

2.2 Map Scale

TECHTREK

myNGconnect.com For online maps and photos at different scales

Maps and Graphs

Digital Library

Main Idea Maps use different scales for different purposes.

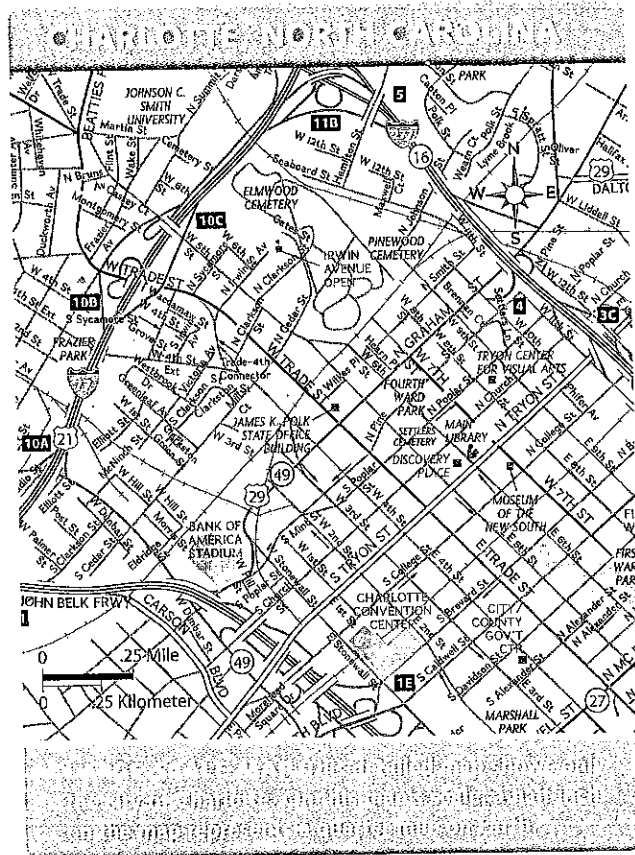
On a walk through a city, such as Charlotte, North Carolina, you might use a highly-detailed map that shows only the downtown area. To drive up the Atlantic coast, however, you would use a map that covers a large area, including several states. These maps have different scales.

Interpreting a Scale

A map's **scale** shows how much distance on Earth is shown on the map. A large-scale map covers a small area but shows many details. A small-scale map covers a large area but includes few details.

A scale is usually shown in both inches and centimeters. One inch or centimeter on the map represents a much larger distance on Earth, such as a number of miles or kilometers.

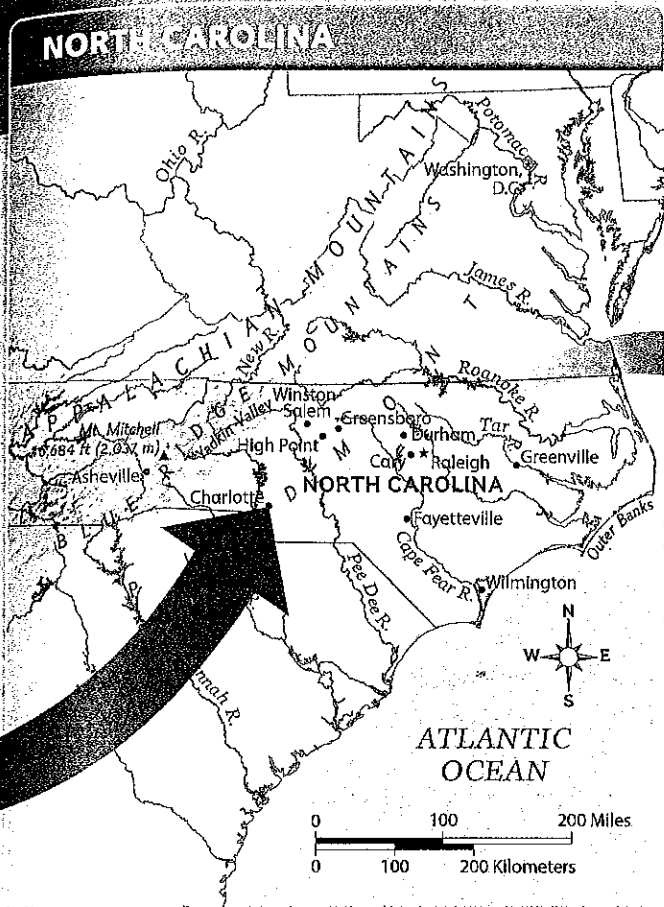
To use a map scale, mark off the length of the scale several times on the edge of a sheet of paper. Then hold the paper between two points to see how many times the scale falls between them. Add up the distance.



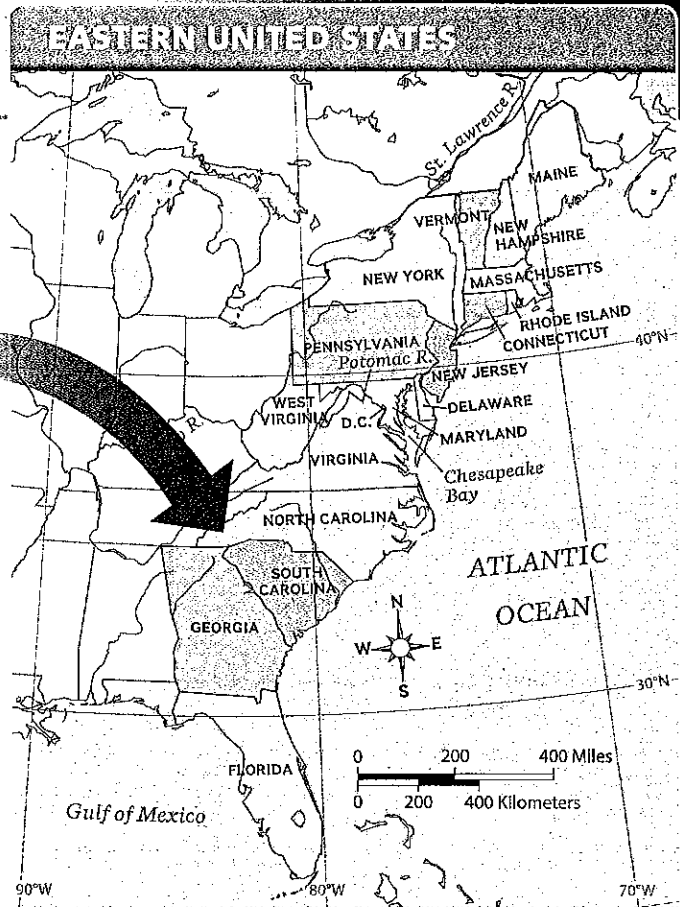
Purposes of a Scale

The scale of a map should be appropriate for its purpose. For example, a tourist map of Washington, D.C., should be large-scale, showing every street name, monument, and museum.

Critical Viewing The Atlantic Ocean rolls in along the dunes on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Which map labels the location of the Outer Banks?



MEDIUM-SCALE MAP This map shows the entire state of North Carolina. It includes fewer details, and covers a larger area.



SMALL-SCALE MAP This map shows the Atlantic coast states, from Florida to Maine. It covers a large area and shows even fewer details than a medium-scale map.

Maps of any scale show geographic patterns. The map of Washington, D.C., for instance, would show that many government buildings are in one area.

Before You Move On

Summarize What are the purposes of a small-scale map and a large-scale map?

ONGOING ASSESSMENT
MAP LAB

- 1. Interpret Maps** On the map of North Carolina, approximately how many inches represent 200 miles? On the map of the eastern United States, how many miles does one inch represent?
- 2. Location** How far is Washington, D.C., from the southwestern border of Maine? Which map did you use to find the distance? Why?
- 3. Synthesize** What geographic pattern do you see in the location of cities in North Carolina? How might you explain this pattern?