

# HOW TO DRAW FANTASY ART & RPG MAPS

STEP BY STEP CARTOGRAPHY FOR GAMERS AND FANS



JARED BLANDO



# **How to Draw Fantasy Art and RPG Maps**

Step-By-Step Cartography for Gamers and Fans

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# Introduction

The world of fantasy is flooded with the images of characters, castles and epic battles, yet cartography has a particularly intrinsic place amongst these other works of art. Maps have the magical ability to create a world for a viewer without the need for text, visually illustrating entire domains, cities and kingdoms with the stroke of a brush. Along with the ability to link people to the stories they read by placing the reader into the world of the storyteller's imagination, maps add an extra layer of depth and plausibility to the imagined world and its peoples. Though there are a great number of different types of maps, from world and regional to cities or even specific buildings, this book is a (modest) attempt to give the reader the ability to create their own world maps in an easy and effective manner. Starting with techniques that gradually move from basic into the more advanced, I will act as your guide through the extensive, but rewarding process of mapmaking. From tall mountains and rolling plains to the great seas, the power of creation is at your fingertips!



# Basic Materials



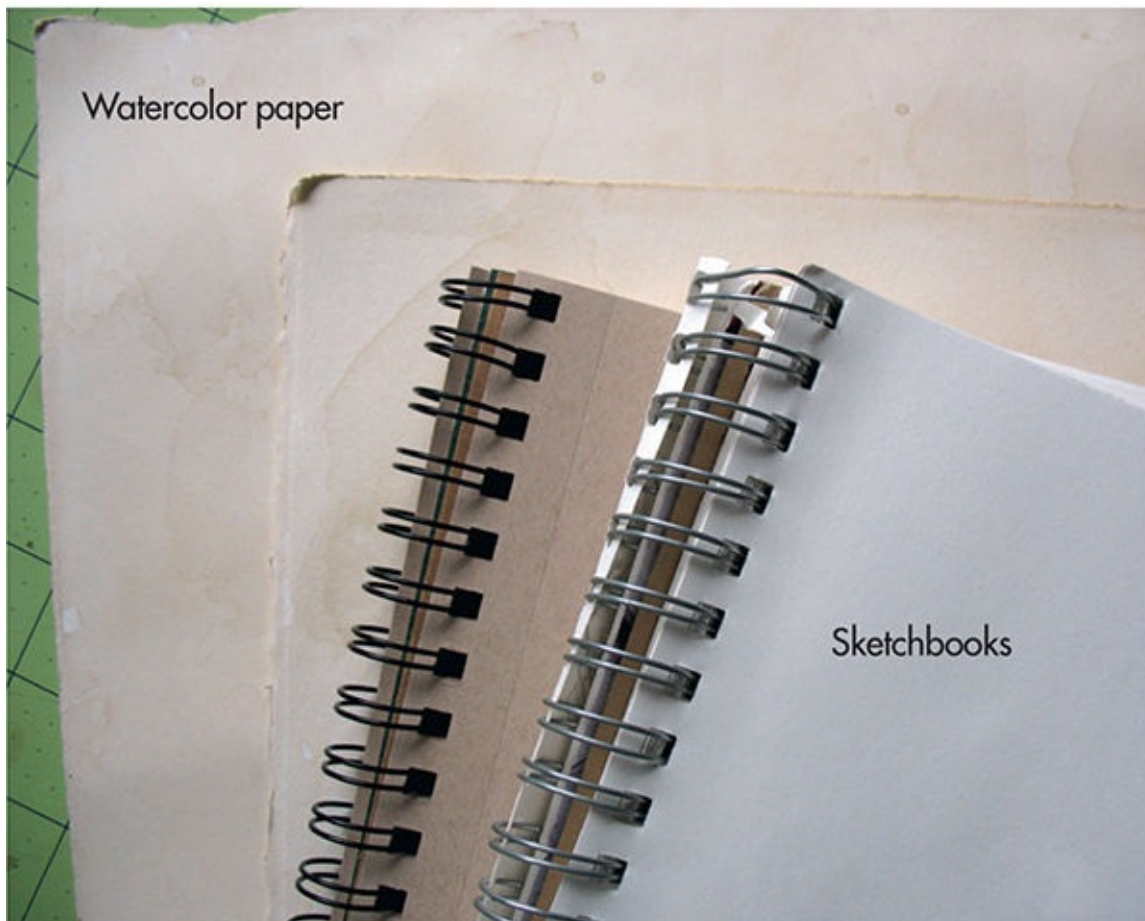
## ***Drawing Implements***

*For map work, it's best to have the right tools of the trade with you. Having a few different types of pencils is best, namely a 2H, an HB and a 2B, as well as a*

*kneaded eraser and a pencil sharpener. I also use a mechanical pencil that takes .05mm lead for detail work.*

### **A Note on Pencils**

Drawing pencils range from 9H (lightest line color and the most clay) to 9B (darkest and richest color, containing more graphite). For our use, a 2H pencil produces a light line and is excellent for light sketching and delicate shading. The HB pencil is a great all-purpose tool and is very much in the middle of the pencil spectrum, making it quite useful for drawing in mountains and hills. A 2B is suitable to darken up boundaries, giving lighter pencils a heavier line weight. A mechanical pencil is a bit advanced, but it also gives an excellent range of line weight and density with some practice.



## ***Drawing Surfaces***

*After you have picked up your pencils, it's time to think about what surface you will be drawing on. The paper your map is on is just as important as what you use for rendering. Drawing pads come in a great many sizes and weights, and are up to a person's preference, though ideally you will want one with enough room to draw and not be cramped. Watercolor or parchment paper are both ideal for mapmaking as well. I personally use Arches watercolor paper for mapmaking, since it holds pencil and ink nicely and it's quite durable.*

*Papers are categorized by poundage level (65-lbs [175gsm], 90-lbs [190gsm], etc.), which essentially is how stiff and thick they are. The higher the poundage, the stiffer the paper is. For mapmaking, it's best to have a paper that is at least 65-lbs (175gsm) as this will give you a sturdy base. Watercolor papers also have a "press" rating, either hot or cold. Hot-pressed paper is smoother and has less tooth to it, while cold-pressed paper is rougher and has more texture.*

### **Aging Paper**

To get that nice old parchment look, try soaking your paper in dark roast coffee. You can either use a large pan to lay the paper in, or dampen the papers and then brush on the coffee with a folded piece of paper towel. It will yellow your paper beautifully.

# Advanced Materials

When you are ready to move on from pencil work, there are some tools that you will require. For traditional work, a variety of brushes is essential for painting and detail work, while inking requires specific inks or ink pens. When working digitally, you will need a tablet, stylus and Adobe Photoshop or GIMP.



## *Inks*



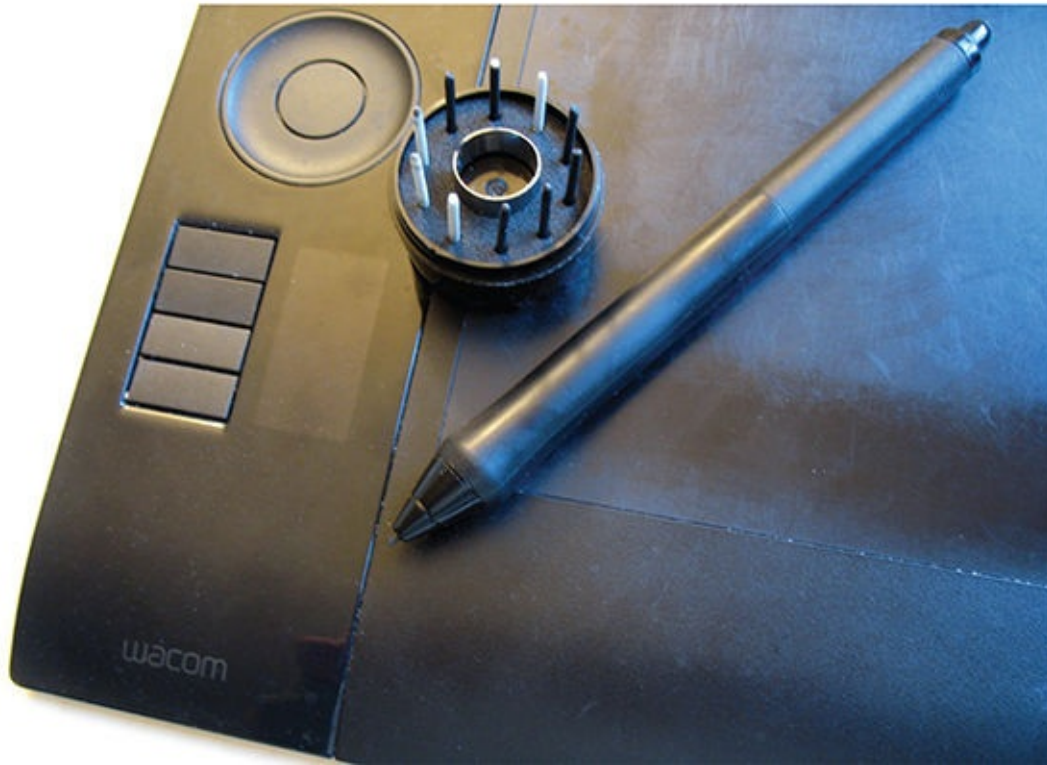
*After your pencil work, inking will give permanence and boldness to your map. Though most people think of inks as just bold thick lines, and indeed this is one of the techniques that can be used, inks also work well as light washes that can be brushed on to give gentle tonality. Inks come in a baffling variety of colors, though it's best to stick with black, brown and red inks to start. You will need a small selection of brushes for your ink work, including nos. 00, 0 and 1 round, a no. 2 flat as well as a large 1-inch (25mm) flat watercolor brush. Calligraphy pens with interchangeable head tips, as well as Copic Multiliner brown or black ink pens are also useful, and each come in a variety of sets. Inking and its various tools are covered in a more detailed fashion in chapter 10.*



### ***Traditional Brushes***

*Brushes come in a bewildering variety of shapes and sizes, but you will need only a select few to get started. The most common brush shapes are round or flat, and most are numbered from 00 (the smallest) to 10 (the largest). Brushes also fall into three different groups: watercolor, acrylics and oils, and are grouped by bristle makeup: synthetic, natural or mixed. For adding color in*

*mapmaking, it's best to use watercolor brushes in a mixture of flats and rounds. This will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.*



## ***Digital Tools***

*When working digitally, you will need a tablet and stylus. A stylus is the pen tool that has built-in pressure sensitivity to help simulate light or heavy strokes depending on how hard or soft you press. There are a few tablets that are cheap and easy to get at your local electronics shop or online, though I personally use a Wacom tablet. With multiple interchangeable nibs to simulate different surfaces, it's an excellent tool for working digitally. As for software, Adobe Photoshop or GIMP (a freeware program very similar to Photoshop) are both excellent and function very similarly.*

## CHAPTER ONE

# Building Your World

Whether you are partial to deep dark forests, tall mountains or vast plains, this chapter will teach you the techniques to bring your vision of a fictional world to the page using your pencils and imagination. We will cover some of the basic methods of laying in the various elements that will make up your fantastical world. Maps often consist of a multitude of elements that convey information to an onlooker. Rivers, hills, mountains, cities and such are all parts of a successful and interesting map, though a balance of these elements is always a good thing.

Having a strong idea of the lands you wish to draw is great, but don't be afraid to look at the many historical maps that exist to give you further inspiration for your own map. Most maps are based on functionality, so keep this in mind when laying out yours. A functional fantasy map is more believable and therefore more exciting and inspiring. Using various pencils to sketch and draw, soon you will have a world of your own coming to life!

## **Coastlines and Boundaries**

The first thing we need to do when starting a new map is to lay in the coastlines. Coastlines are essentially the boundaries of your fantasy map, serving to both differentiate between land and sea and to define the parameters of the type of world you are creating. Before laying in your boundaries, try to think of the type of lands that you want to portray, as well as the people who will inhabit them. Maps based on real places and locations are often some of the best because they are grounded in our reality, and are thus more believable. Do you want a landlocked mountainous area full of lakes and rivers, a sprawling archipelago of many islands or something in between? However you want them, your coastlines are a very important part of your fantasy map.





### ***Ocean-Heavy Map Sample***

*An ocean-heavy map will have only 20–30 percent of the land mass showing, and the rest is water. Having a large central island or two surrounded by smaller distant islands works well. A map such as this would have vastly different cultures (most would be seafarers) than a normal map.*



### ***Balanced Map Sample***

*Balanced maps are divided 50/50 or 60/40, usually in favor of the land. This would be more representative of our own earth, mostly because maps of these types don't include whole seas and oceans, just parts of them.*

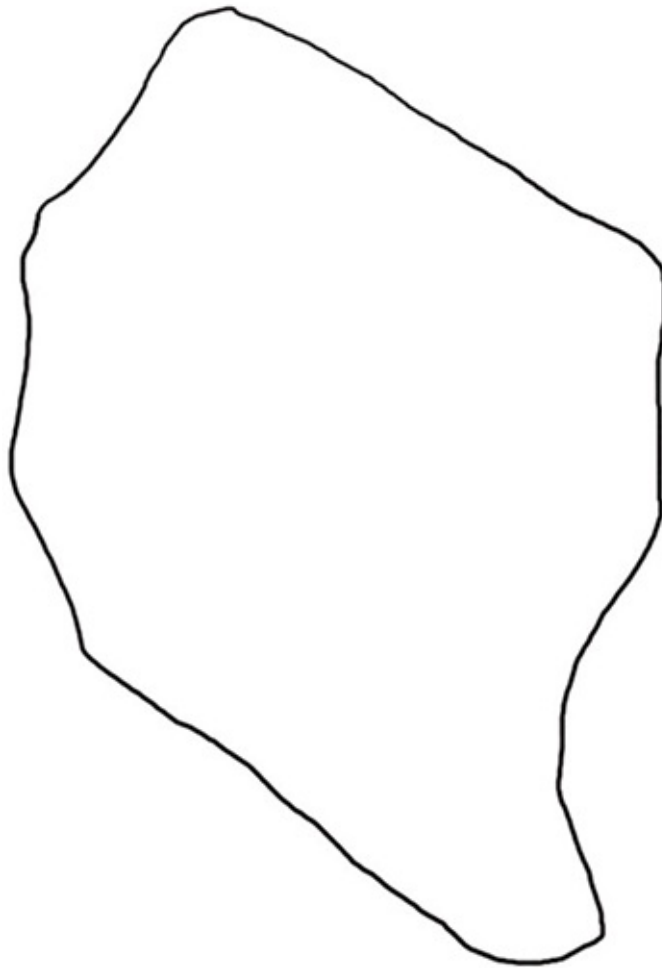


### ***Land-Heavy Map Sample***

*Coastlines and boundaries are often depicted as being very broad and dark, with clear definition between oceans and landmasses so that there is no confusion between the two. Coastlines will most likely be the boldest lines on your map, and with good reason. A 2H pencil is best for laying out your initial sketch lines, while a 2B pencil is best for making dark, heavy lines*

# Define Your World

We'll start with a single continent for now, move on to islands and then finish with some coastline details and refinements. When drawing in your coastline boundaries, you will start with a light pencil framework of all the major continents and geographical areas, including any islands and major lakes. After the light sketch comes the darker pencil to further define and solidify the boundaries, making them nice and clear. When the boundaries look dark and defined, the light pencil line can be erased, leaving only the broad and dark final coastlines. Once you know these basic steps, you can move on to adding in multiple continents to form a large map.



### **STEP 1: Draw a Simple Shape**

To begin, lightly draw a very simple continent shape, roughing in the basic outline that you can detail further in the next step. Be general and don't press too hard; you just want a light pencil line that you can erase or modify in the next step.



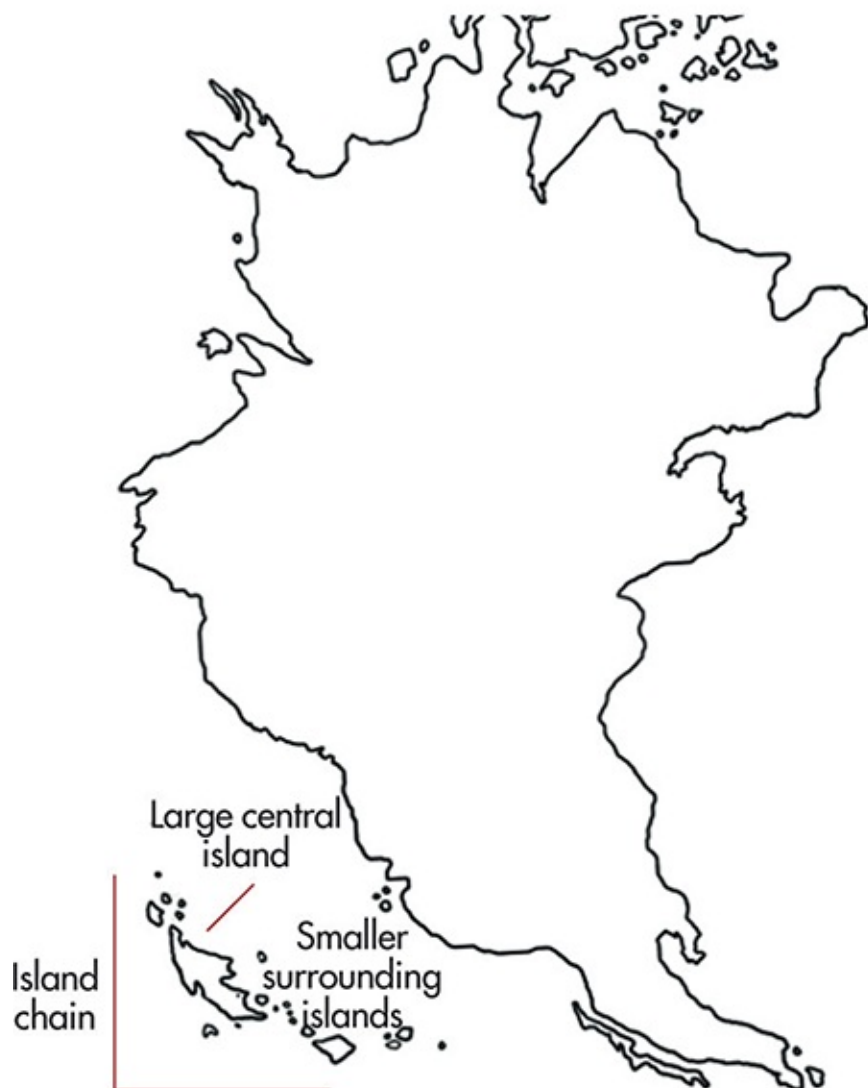
## **STEP 2: Refine the Coastline**

Once your general shape is done, go back in with an HB pencil and refine your original line so it's more detailed. Don't be afraid to be creative or stray radically from your original line. Try to make your coastlines fun and interesting. When you have finished your darker and more detailed line, erase the light sketch.



## Balancing the Map

Your light sketch will be the framework that you build upon and is very important for composition of the map as a whole. It is essential to try to strike a good balance between the amount of land and water. A map with too much water may look too sparse or uninteresting, while a map that is completely landlocked may look just as strange with no, or very few, bodies of water.



### STEP 3: Add Islands

Once your basic continent is drawn, look for areas to draw in any islands that may fit the framework of your map. Islands are often grouped together in bunches of irregular shapes, forming chains that stretch between continental masses. Some are so large that they may form their own small landmass that is totally separate from the mainland. Experiment with shapes and sizes, from short and stout to long and thin. Just remember that islands are almost always accompanied by other smaller islands to form an island grouping.





#### **STEP 4: Add Lakes**

Once your islands are laid in, you should start thinking about laying in some lakes on the mainland, or even on your new islands if they are big enough. Lakes are often long and fingerlike since they are depressions that lie in between

mountains and hills. Just as with islands, don't be afraid to try all shapes and sizes or to have multiple lakes grouped near each other.



### **STEP 5: Create Inlets and Bays**

Inlets and bays are a good way of making your coastline very unique. Create some bays by drawing into the interior of your sketch, forming half bowl-like

shapes along your coastlines. Bays can also be quite irregular, or even contain some small islands to help define them. Don't be afraid to make them a bit more angular or jagged. Inlets are easier, and you can include some by drawing wedges or small pockets that face into your landmasses. Be sure to erase the original sketch lines as you form your new coastlines.

### **Lake Shapes**

Tree leaves are a good source of shape inspiration for modeling your lakes, especially maple leaves. Lakes often lie in between mountains and hills because water is lazy and will always run downhill. So, remember to draw some lakes around them when you get a chance.



### **STEP 6: Solidify Your Coastlines**

Once you have completely laid out your framework in pencil, it's time to go back in to solidify your coastlines. Using a 2B pencil, trace over your lines, wiggling the pencil a bit to give more detail and character to the original line. Don't be afraid to stray from your original line or to add in more bays, inlets and islands. After you have darkened up your framework, carefully go back in and

erase any parts of the original framework that might be showing. Try and leave only your darkened coastlines behind.



### **STEP 7: Finished Coastlines**

When you have finished cleaning up your original light framework, your coastlines should look a bit like this, and you'll have completed the first part of your fantasy map.

## CHAPTER TWO

# **Mountains, Forests, Rivers and Water**

Tall mountains and rugged foothills often dominate fantasy realms of all shapes and sizes. Mountains seem to add a sense of vastness and awe to a fantasy world's settings and surroundings. Mountains not only serve as physical boundaries between cultures and races, they often form political boundaries as well, dividing various nations and people.

Your fantasy map will also need forests. They are an instant area of mystery and wonder that serve as boundaries, obstacles or refuges for the inhabitants of your world. Forests can range from dense groupings of trees forming an untamed wilderness, to small bodies of trees that represent quiet and peaceful woodlands. Geologically, forests are often located in and around mountains due to the immense watery runoff, though anything goes in a fantasy map! Don't be afraid to include haunted woods, sparse or dead trees or larger-than-life magical woodlands.

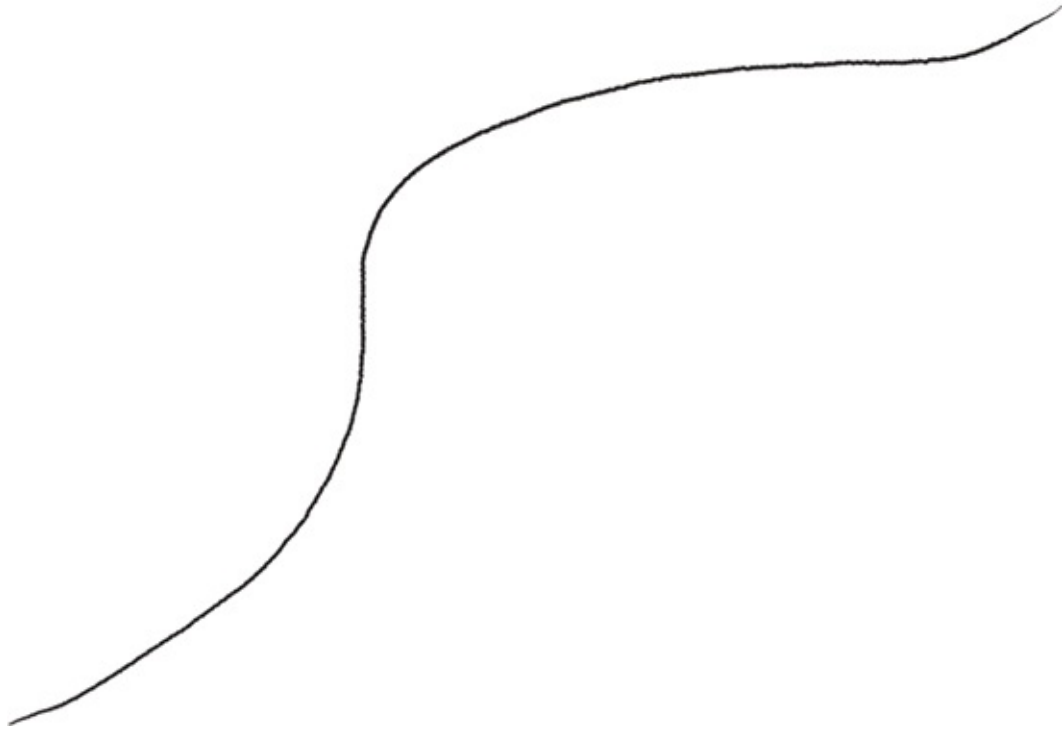
Bodies of water have a big impact on maps and how they are laid out. Seas are usually massive bodies of water that are larger than lakes, but are still connected to the larger ocean. Rivers are freshwater runoff from mountains and excessive rainfall that form into paths that

flow down into the seas and oceans. Rivers are one of the most important land features within a map (and a country!), though they can be tricky to place correctly. A good idea to keep in mind for river placement is that water is generally lazy and will take the path of least resistance downhill. Thus, many major rivers start as a combination of smaller tributaries that come down out of the tall mountain valleys and hill ranges that are overflowing with melting snow and rainfall.



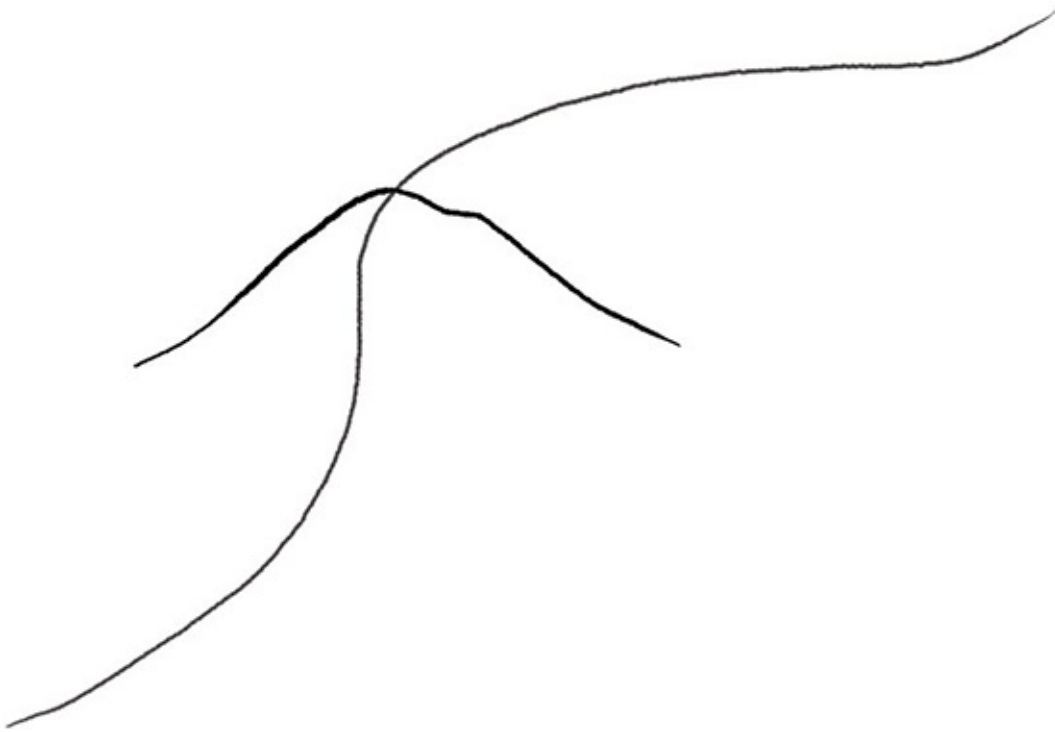
## High Peaks...

When drawing mountains, begin with a light pencil line to sketch the basic mountain shapes you want to draw. It's a good idea to have a light general outline of where you would like to place your ranges and solitary mountains. After your sketch is complete, draw in the mountains one by one, following your light sketch. After your mountains have been drawn, feel free to sketch groups of hills that may lie around or near the mountain ranges, or form separate and independent chains of their own. Drawing hills is much the same as drawing mountains though they are much smaller and more bowl shaped. Finally, go over your light sketch lines with a darker pencil to add definition and detail.



### **STEP 1: Lay Out a Mountain Range**

To start, take your 2H pencil and lightly draw lines where you would like your mountain ranges to be. These guiding lines are useful for you to follow, and allow you an idea of where your mountains will be grouped. Once you are happy with the general placement, move on to the next step.

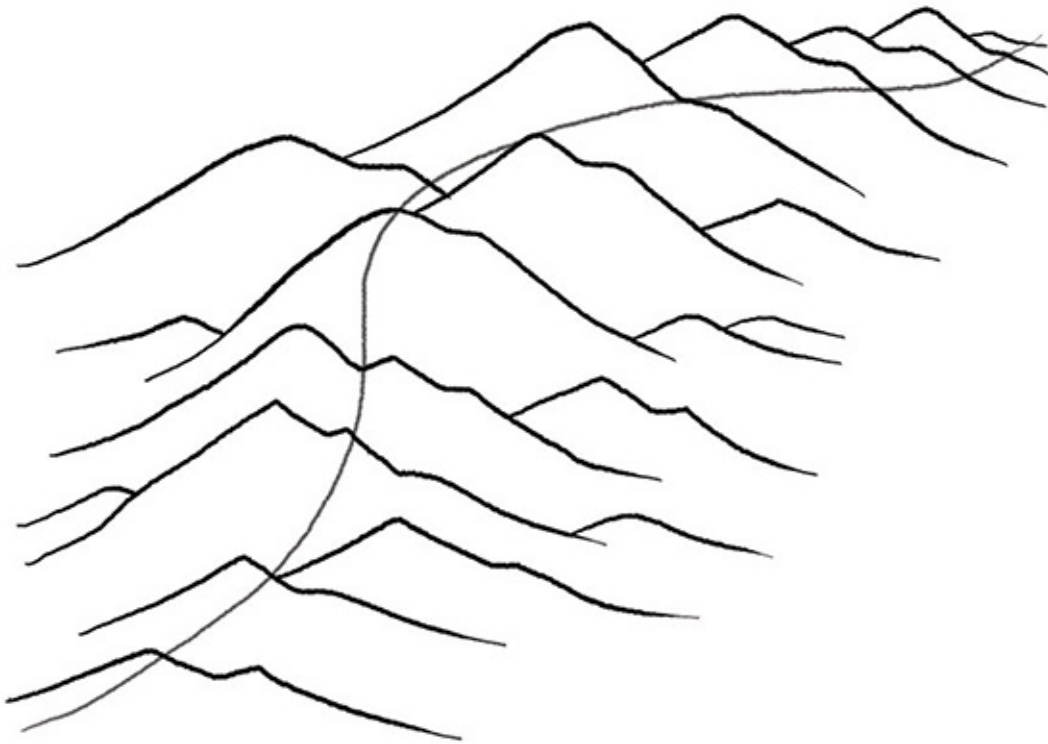


## **STEP 2: Draw a Mountain**

Take your HB pencil and slowly draw your first mountain shape, making an upside-down V or W. Try and draw this first mountain in the middle part of your initial light sketch line.

### **Mountain Placement**

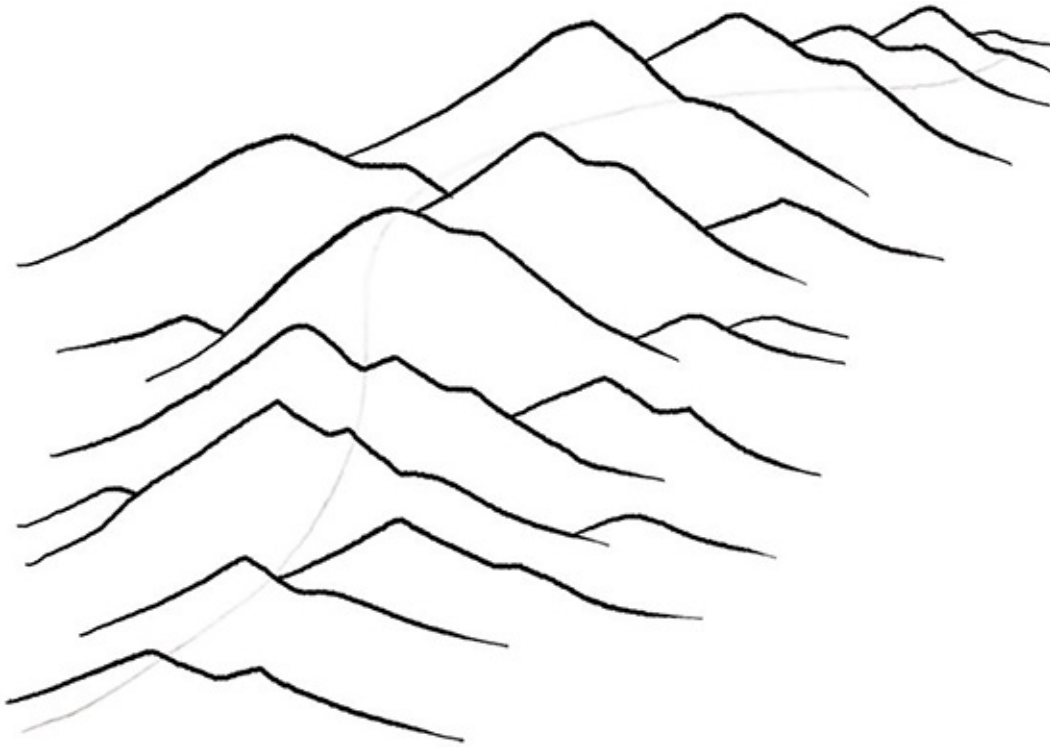
When drawing in mountains, it's a good idea to think about where you'd like to place them, how mountainous you'd like your world to be in general and how your mountains will affect the world as a whole. Mountains serve as excellent country boundaries, so keep this in mind before you start sketching them in. Of course, you could just start placing mountains in random spots and see where it takes you as well. It's your world after all!



### **STEP 3: Create a Mountain Chain**

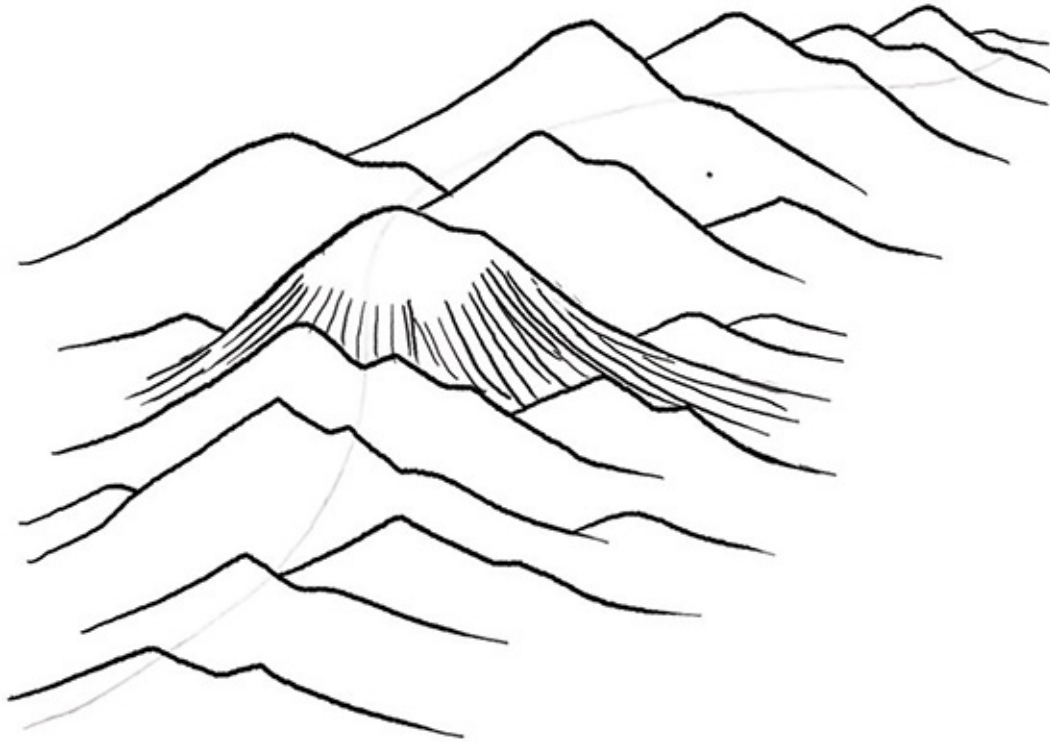
Now that your first mountain is complete, it's time to give him some friends and make a whole mountain chain. Continue by adding a mountain to the right and left of your first mountain until your whole chain is complete. Mountains drawn in the middle of the chain should be the largest, while those toward the end

should gradually reduce in size. Mountains are far from regular in shape and size, so feel free to experiment with different looking mountaintops, from the more jagged to the more rounded.



#### **STEP 4: Erase Guidelines**

Take your kneaded eraser and gently erase your starting guidelines.



### **STEP 5: Define Your Mountains**

Once your basic mountain chain has been completed, it's time to flesh them out and give them some definition. Take your HB pencil and draw thin lines that run down each side of the mountain, with each mountain having five to ten lines each. Do this for each of your mountains and watch how they come to life!



### **STEP 6: Finish Your Mountain Range**

Once you are happy with your first mountain range, repeat steps 2–5 everywhere on your map that you have placed your light mountain guidelines.

## ...and Rugged Hills

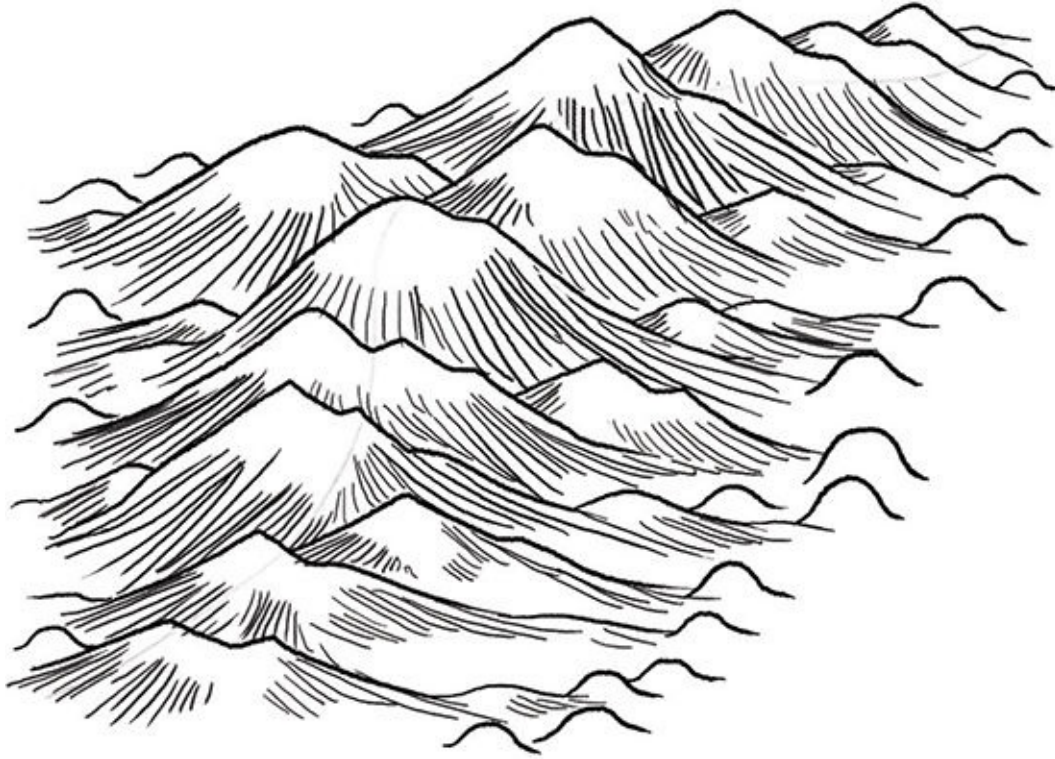
Hills are the smaller cousins of mountains, but are just as important to a map's geography. Hills also serve as physical and political boundaries, as well as rough terrain for various nefarious or evil creatures to lurk within. Hills are usually located next to or very near mountains, though they will often form their own distinct ranges as well.



### STEP 1: Add Your First Hill

Next to the bottom of one of your mountains, take your HB pencil and draw a small upside-down U, about half or quarter the size of a mountain.





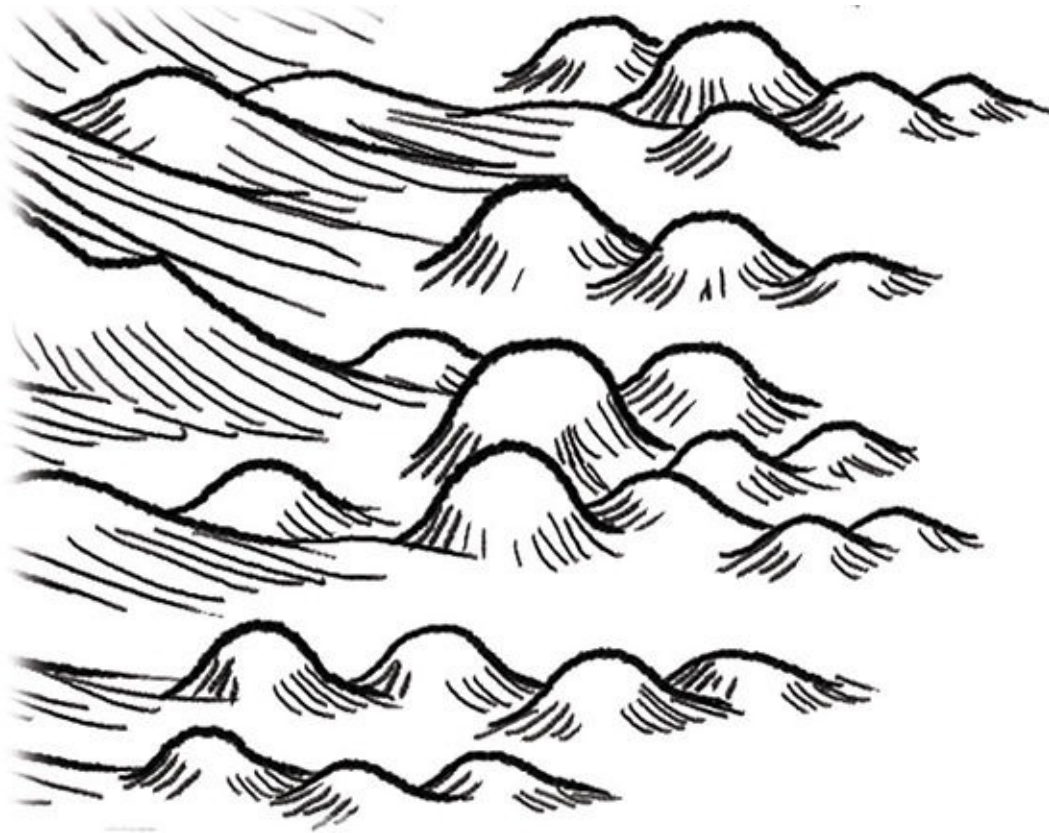
## **STEP 2: Lay In More Hills**

After that, draw a few more upside-down U shapes along the mountain's lower edges, and continue this all along the mountain range.



### **STEP 3: Form Hill Ranges**

Once your hills at the bottom of the mountains are drawn in, feel free to draw more hills extending off of your existing hills. These are hills that extend out from the more mountainous high ground, forming hill ranges of their own. Not all hills have to extend off of the mountains; feel free to add hills wherever you see fit. Having a group of four or more hills is best, arranged into relative lines. Try and make shapes with your hills, forming C's and S's for variety.



#### **STEP 4: Define Your Hills**

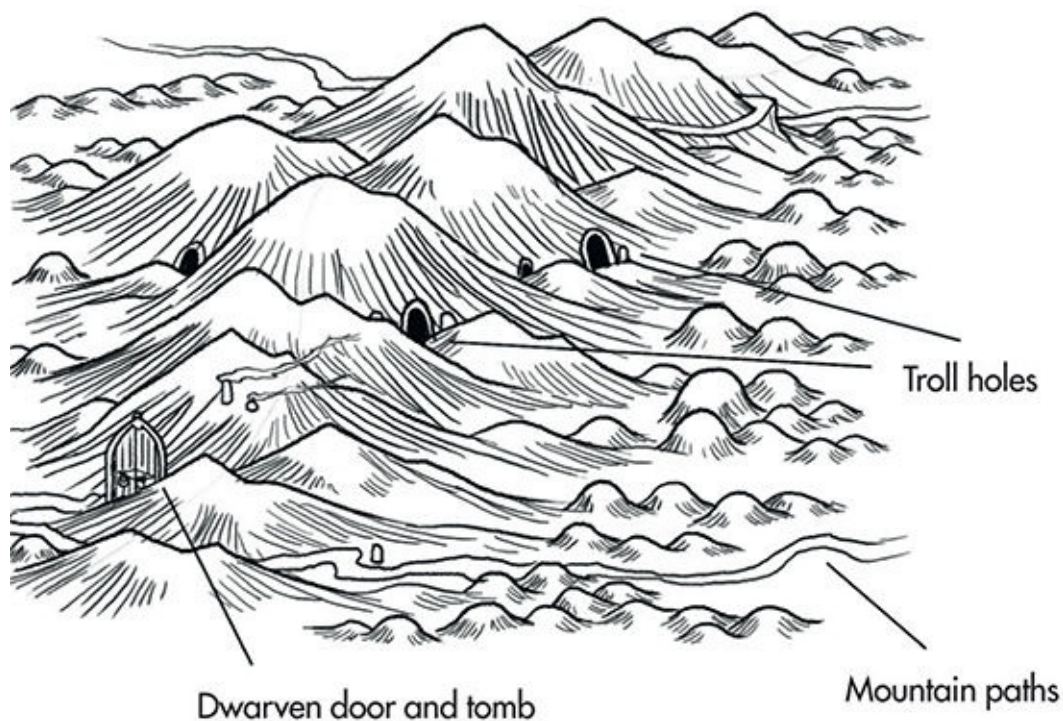
When you have finished laying in all your basic hills, go back in and add a few small lines to each hill bottom, just like you did to define your mountains. This adds some dimension and weight to the ranges.





### STEP 5: Complete the Ranges

After step 4, your mountains and hills should look something like this.

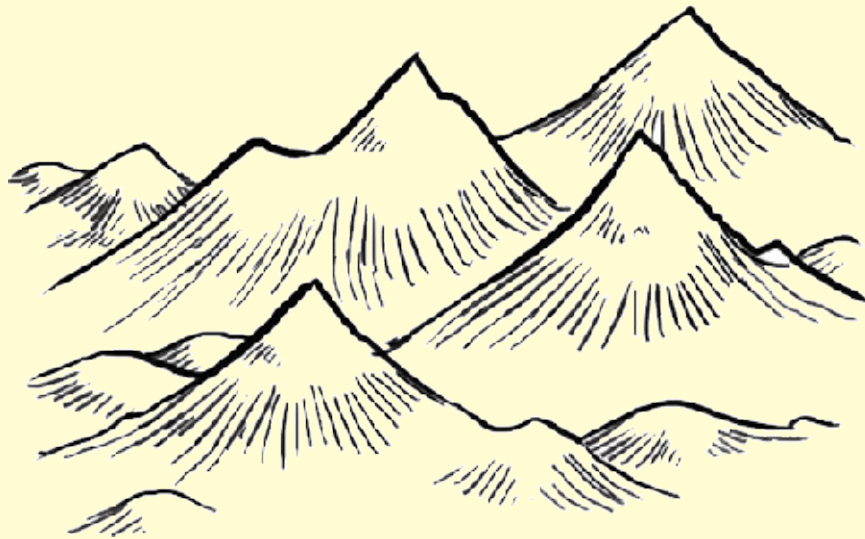


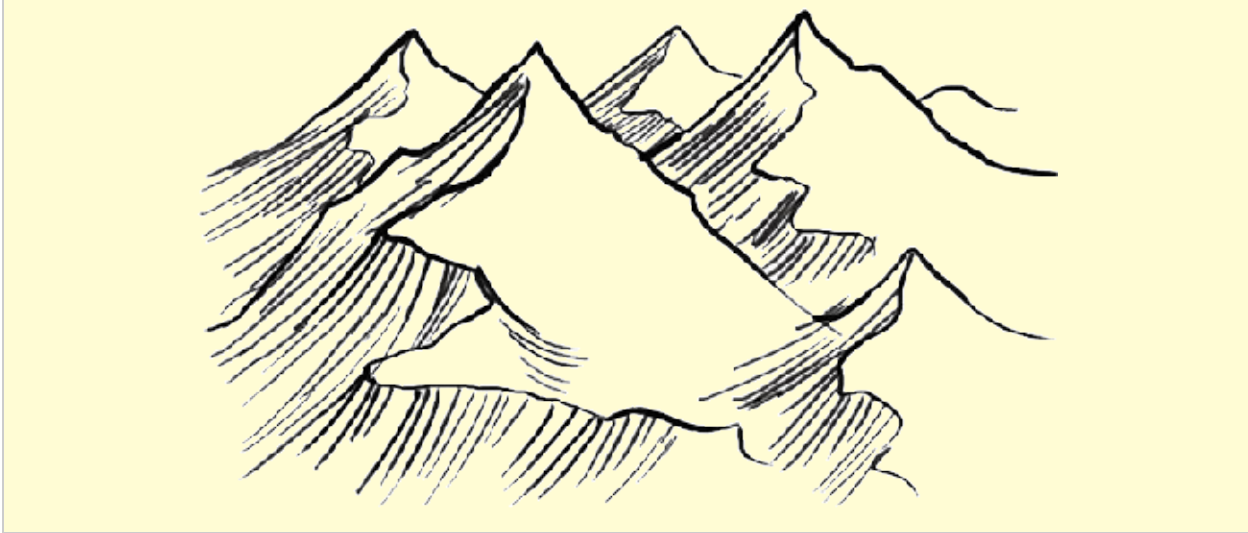
## STEP 6: Add Character

If you are feeling adventurous, get creative and add troll holes and other openings and paths in and around your hills and mountains. Any details you can add will bring some character to the map in general.

### **Alternate Mountains**

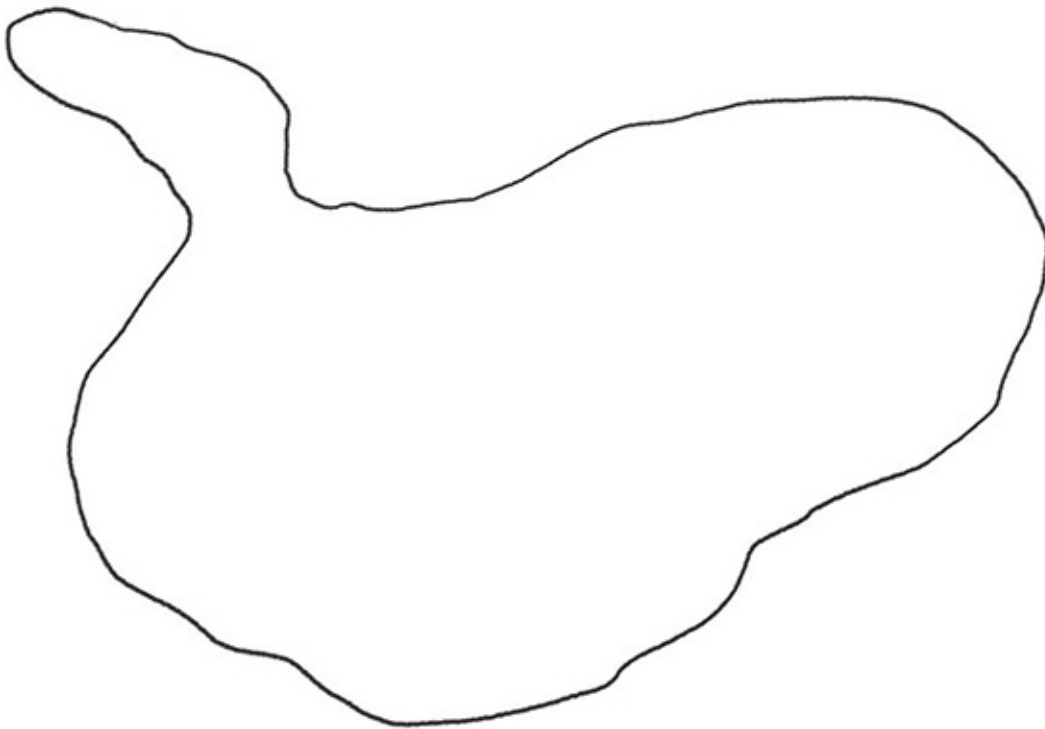
There are several different ways of detailing mountains. Some use more shading than others. Once you have mastered the basic mountain technique, try and practice drawing some mountains to resemble the examples shown. A map should keep the same mountain technique for uniformity's sake, though I urge you to experiment and develop your own mountain types and forms. Certain mountain techniques work better than others depending on the tone of the map.





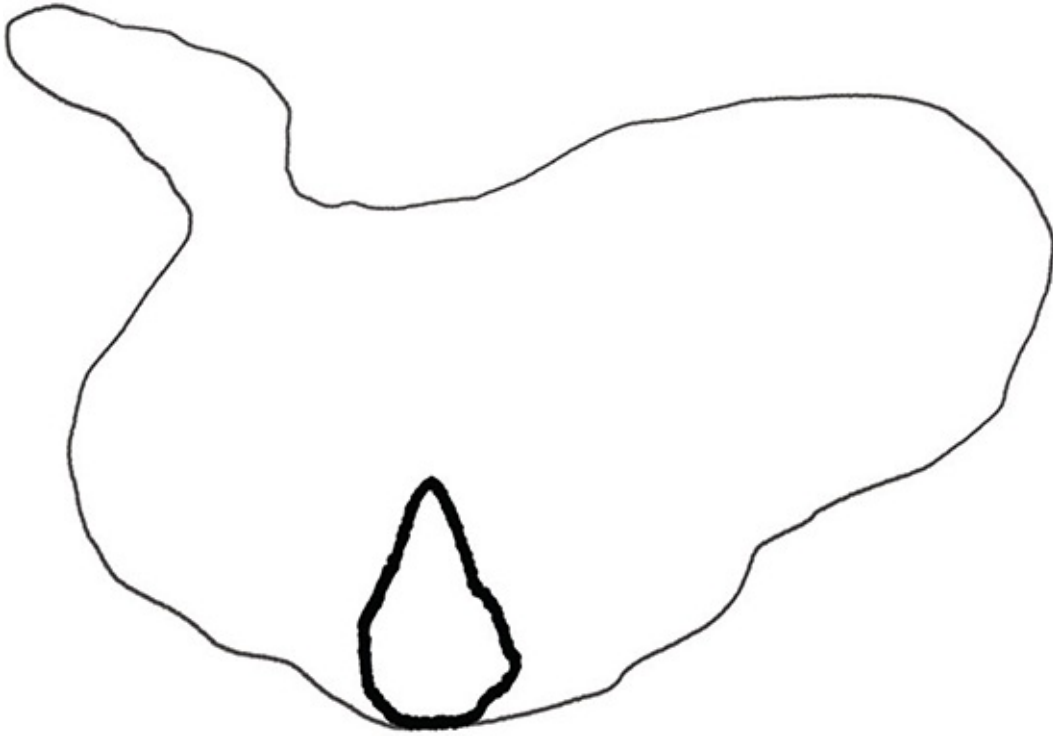
## **Woods and Forests**

Drawing forests is a fun and interesting way of adding a lot of dimension to your map. Starting with a general area sketch, you will lay in a few trees here and there, first drawing the large groups of trees that will form the main parts of your major forests. After that, you can add smaller woodlands or standing bodies, and finally end by adding some definition to your woods. There are a few separate techniques for the depiction of forests, with some different shapes and sizes that you can use, though each is easy to learn.



**STEP 1: Mark General Forest Areas**

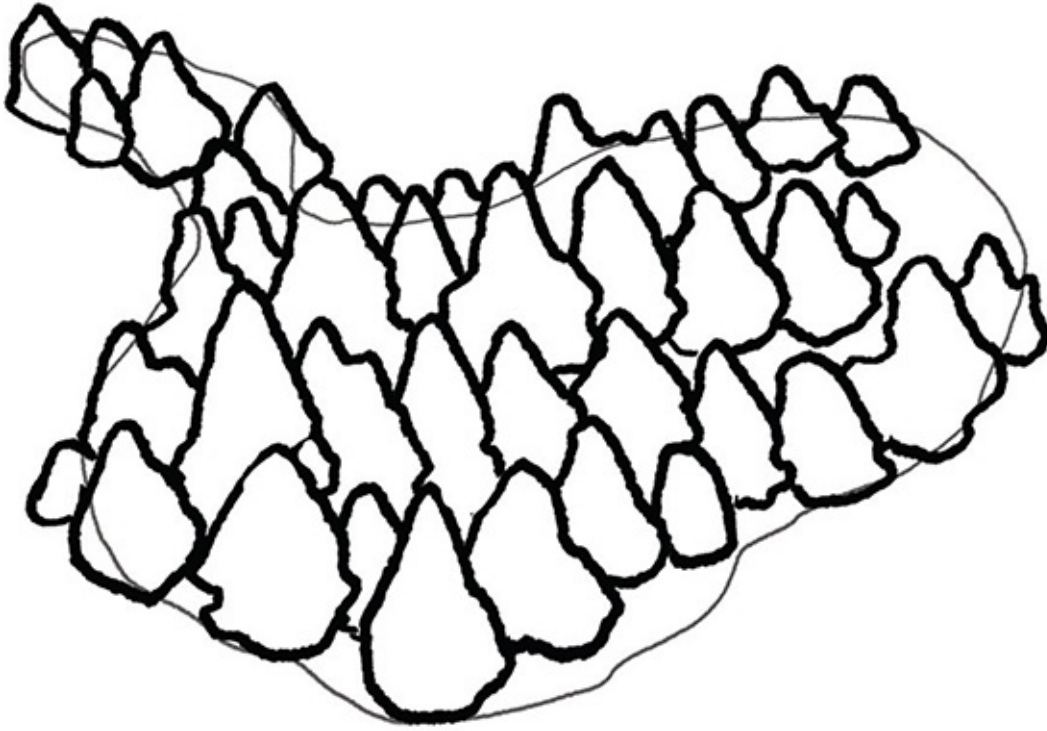
Take your 2H pencil and lightly draw the general areas where you want to place your major forests. Press very lightly since you will only be using these lines as a guide.



## **STEP 2: Draw the First Tree**

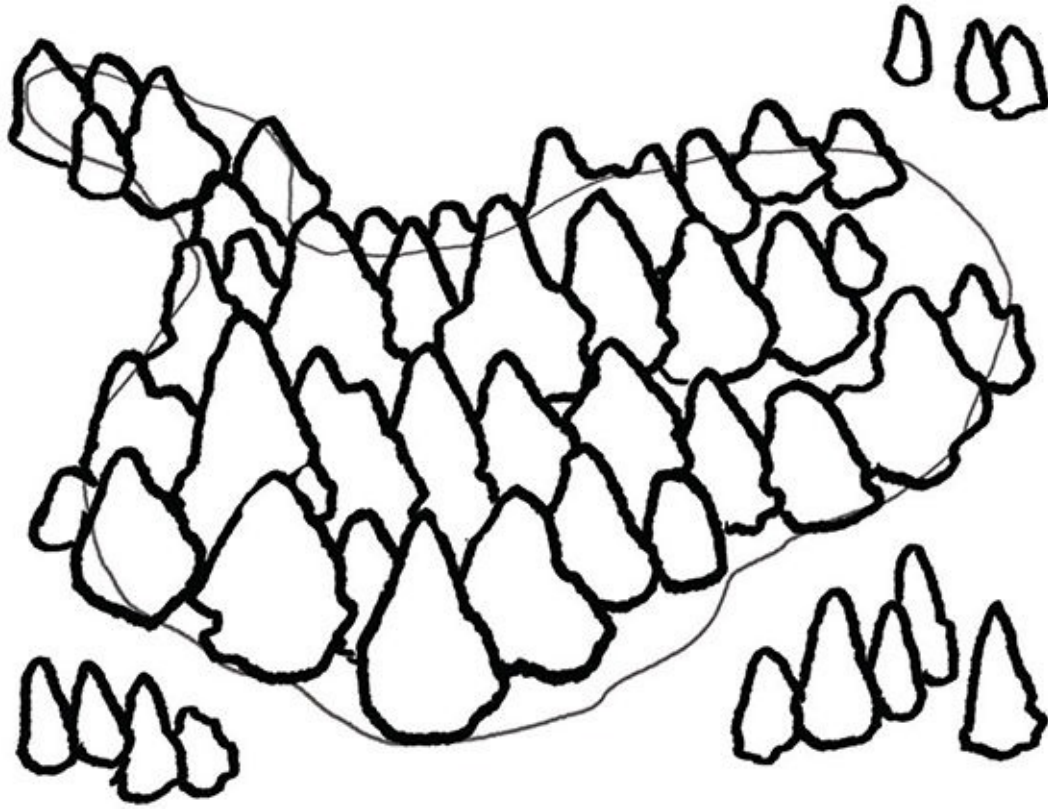
Now comes the fun part! Using your HB pencil, draw your first tree by making a triangular shape with a flatter bottom. Your first tree should be placed within the guidelines you drew.





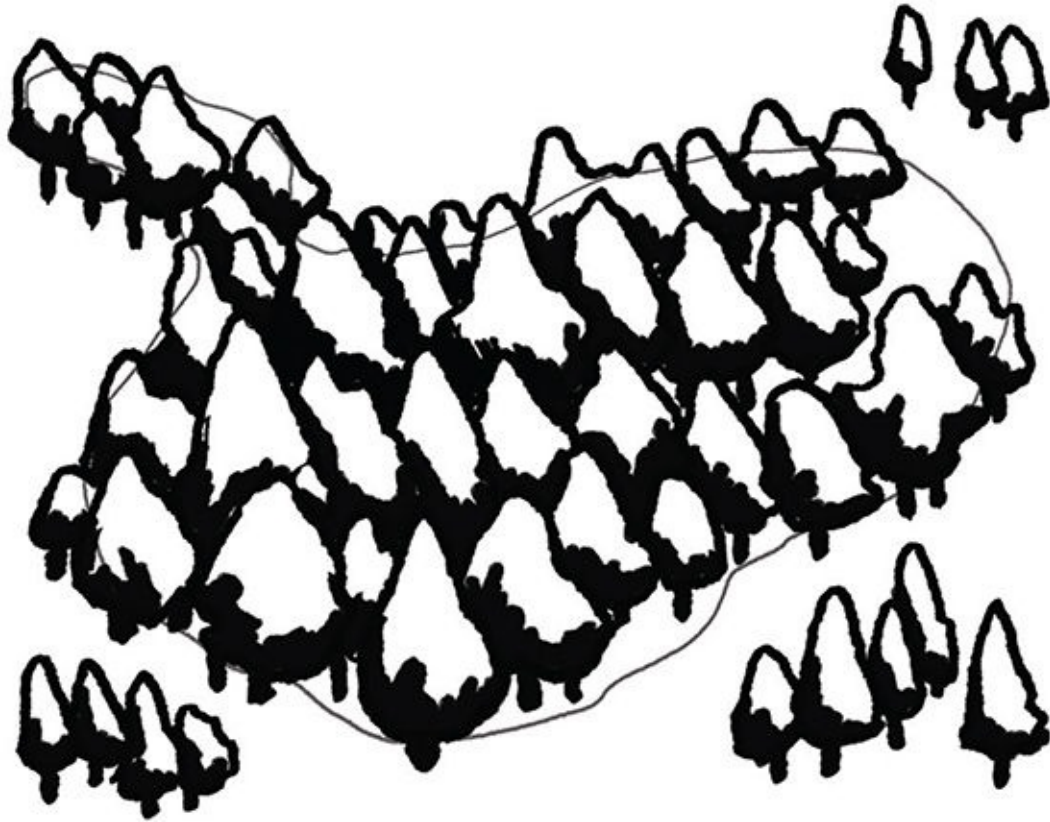
### **STEP 3: Draw Major Forests**

Once you have drawn in your first tree, expand your forest by drawing more trees using the same general shape as your first one. Keep drawing trees one next to another until you feel satisfied with the size and shape of the grouping. Feel free to vary the size of your trees to make them look more organic, grouping together similar tree shapes to add variety.



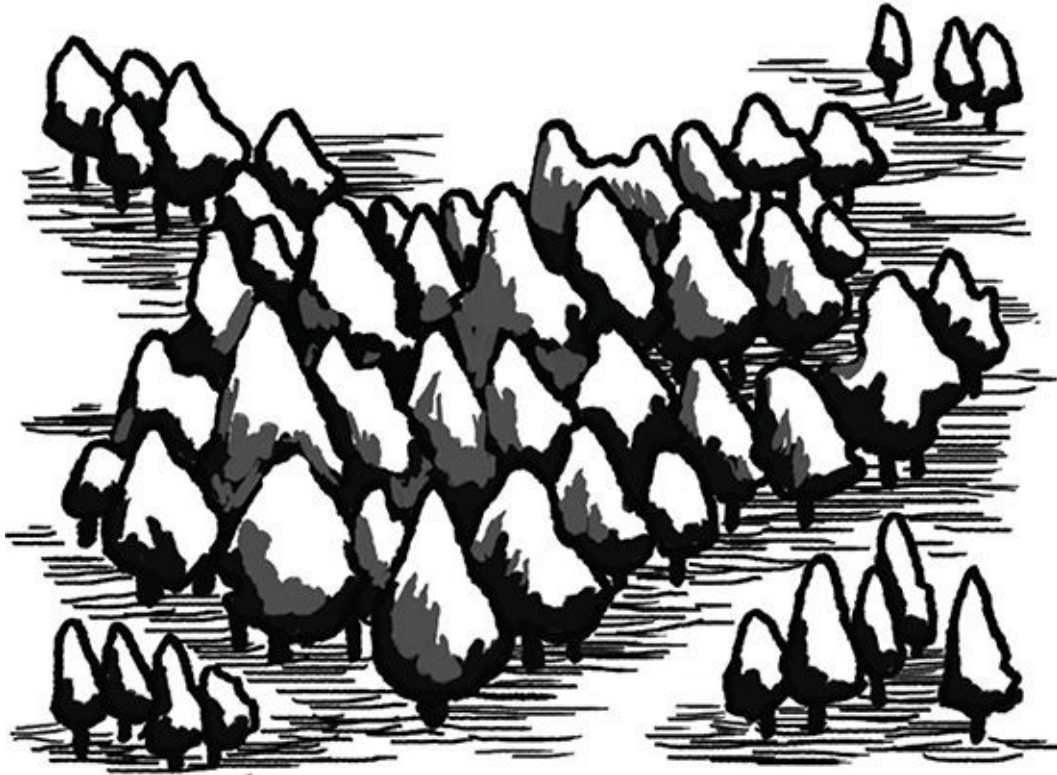
#### **STEP 4: Add Minor Woodlands**

Once your major forests have been drawn, add in some random groupings of trees in and around your major groupings to add more flavor and variety. Try and draw your minor woodlands by grouping three to five trees. These minor woodlands can be placed anywhere on the map, though they look really good when they are used to break up really sparse areas.



### **STEP 5: Define the Trees**

Once your major and minor woodlands are finished, it's time to add some definition. Take your HB pencil and gently shade in the bottom corner portions of each tree with a few lines. Try and stick to only one side of the tree shape to provide a more uniform look, though some trees should be more shaded than others. After shading, add tree trunks.



### **STEP 6: Finish With Shading**

After your tree trunks are laid in, it's time to shade your forests and woodlands. Use your HB pencil to draw lines around the bottom of your tree trunks and along the sides of your established forests, as well as in between the gaps you have left. Try to only add shade lines to the bottom of your tree groupings, varying your line length, to give an appropriate shading look.

### **Types of Trees**

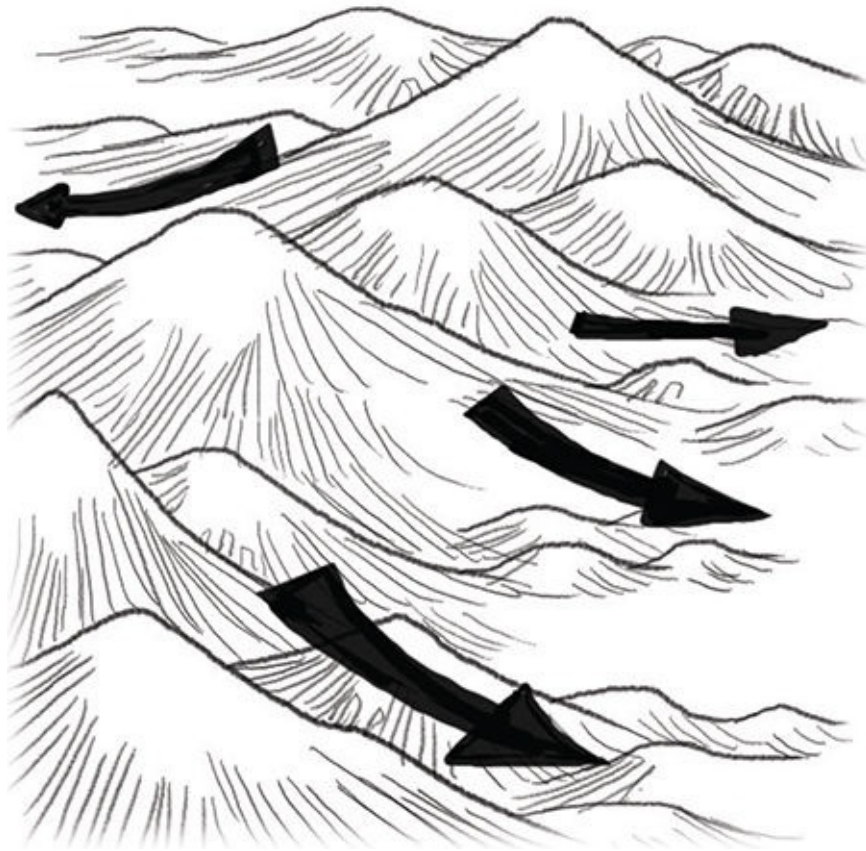
Be creative with the shapes of your trees. Trees come in a whole variety of shapes and sizes, and you should use several different types for different tree looks. Certain shapes can represent different tree species, and they look best when grouped together. However, mixing and matching makes for an interesting and complex-looking forest that is sure to add dimension to your world.



## **Rivers and Tributaries**

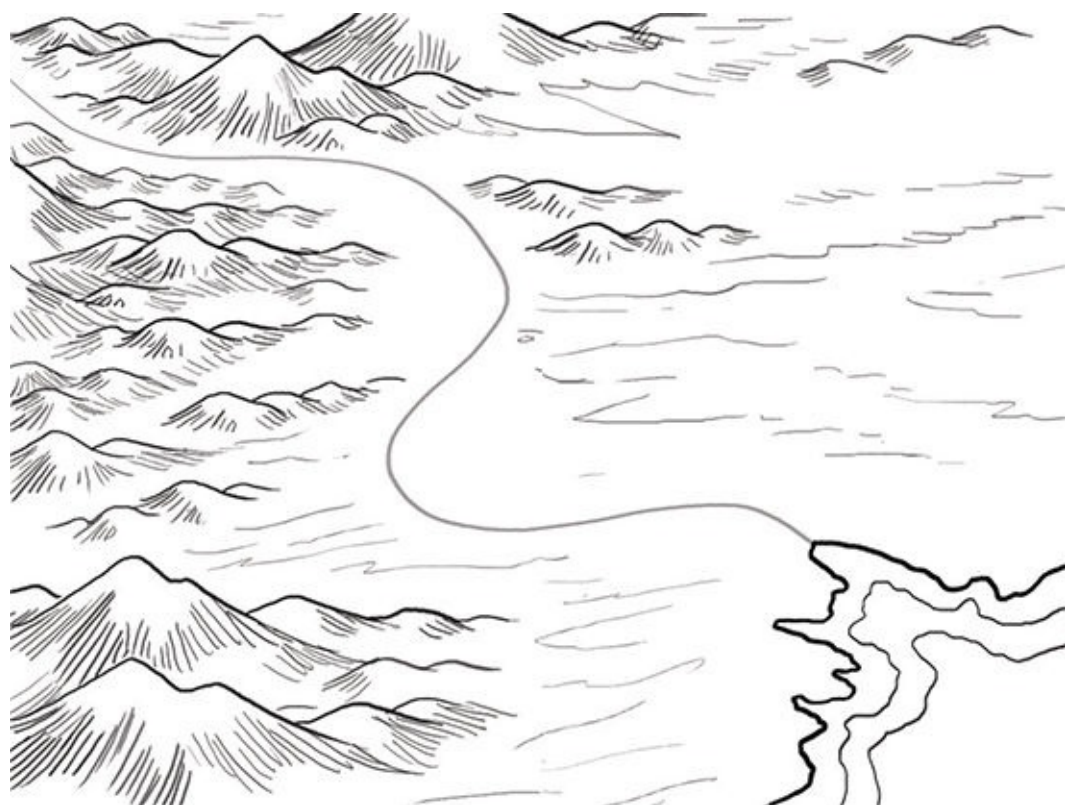
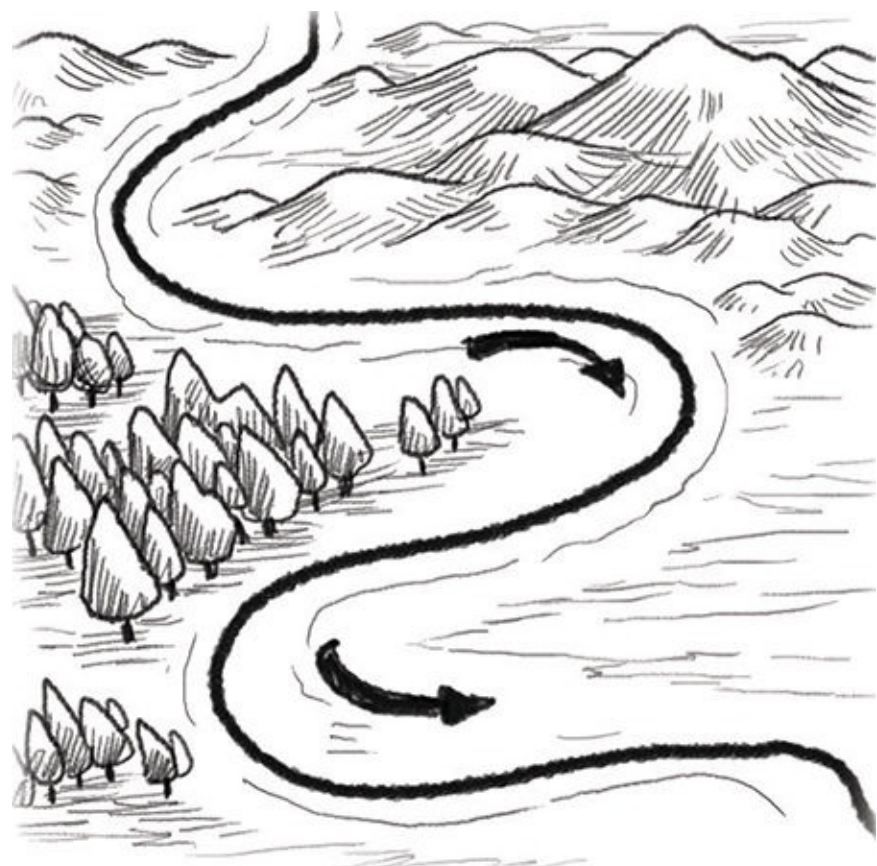
The drawing and placement of rivers can be a tricky but really rewarding experience when making your map. The vision of mountain streams cascading down the mountain sides and rushing into mighty rivers is a powerful one. Rivers are one of the best natural boundaries available to a mapmaker and have served as excellent defensive borders for kingdoms and vying powers since time immemorial. All rivers actually begin quite small, as tiny streams of mountain waters that trickle downhill to merge together, forming larger streams called tributaries. Tributaries continue to flow downhill, picking the easiest path through the land, eventually running into other tributaries and forming into a larger river that flows out to the sea. Since water flows around obstacles instead of right over them, rivers and tributaries often have distinct snakelike properties, and turn and twist across the land.











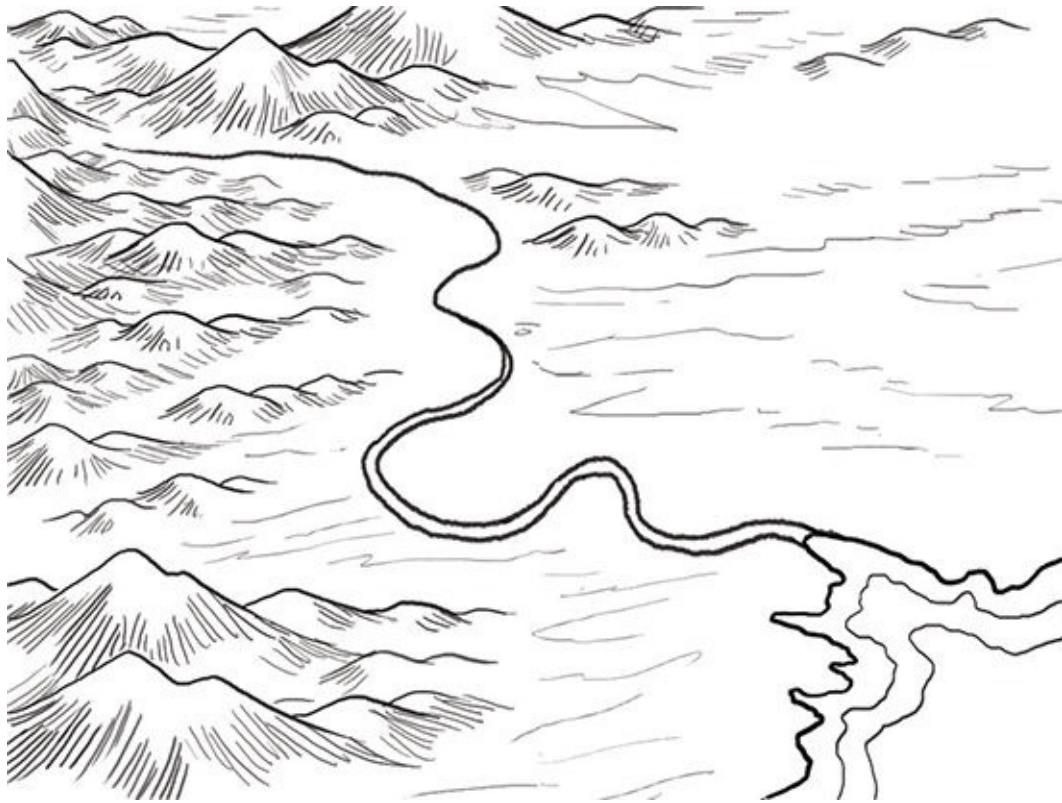
## **STEP 1: Decide General River Placement**

Taking your 2H pencil, lightly draw your first guideline for where you think a river would start and end. Remember that rivers will often begin in the middle of two mountain or hill ranges, so you should place your river somewhere near a range and have it end in the sea. Rivers sometimes originate from lakes too, though most lakes never spawn more than a single major river, and some rivers will flow through a lake and on down to the coast.



## **STEP 2: Develop the First River Line**

When you are happy with the initial placement of your river, it's time to draw it in darker. Take your HB pencil and follow the general direction of your guiding line. Start at the base of the mountains and slowly draw a wavy line outward toward the sea. The line may curve and snake, so don't be afraid to give it some movement and curvature.



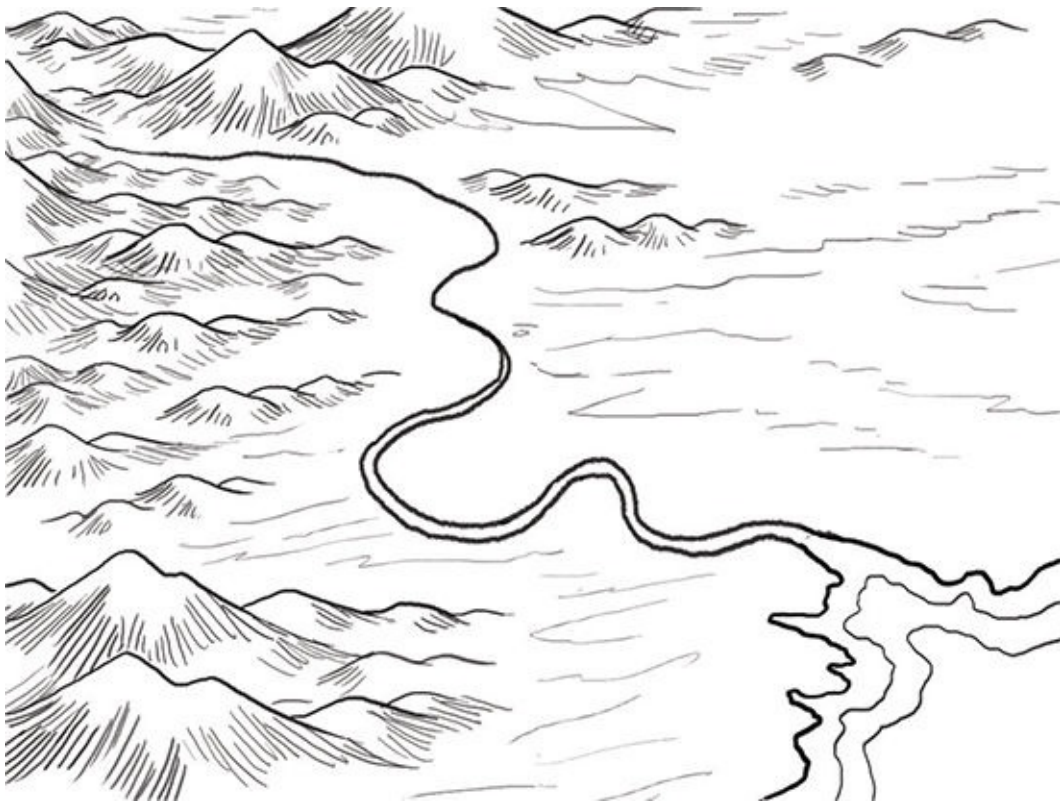
### **STEP 3: Completing Your First River**

Starting about halfway down your first line, draw another line parallel to your first and continue it all the way to the coast. Rivers often widen as they approach the coast, and this gives you a good representation of that.

#### **River Shapes**

Rivers often look like giant twisty earthworms from the sky as they follow the natural curvature of the earth. You don't need to emulate that effect completely, but some movement and snaking is always a good thing to hint at and will make your rivers look more exciting. Take a look at the mighty Mississippi River in North America, or the Nile in northern Africa for some inspiration.

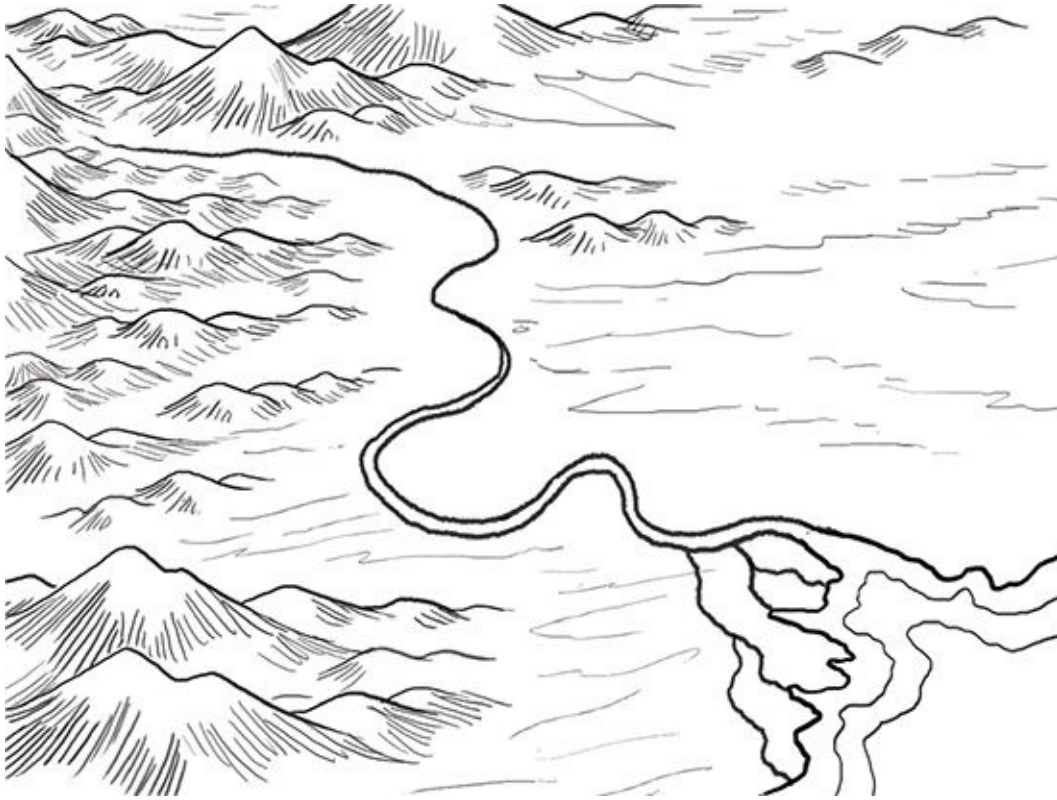




#### **STEP 4: Open the River Mouth**

When both river lines touch the ocean boundary on the coast and the river water meets the ocean, it's called the river's mouth. Take your kneaded eraser and

gently erase between the two lines to form an open river mouth. Once complete, you should have a nice-looking river mouth.



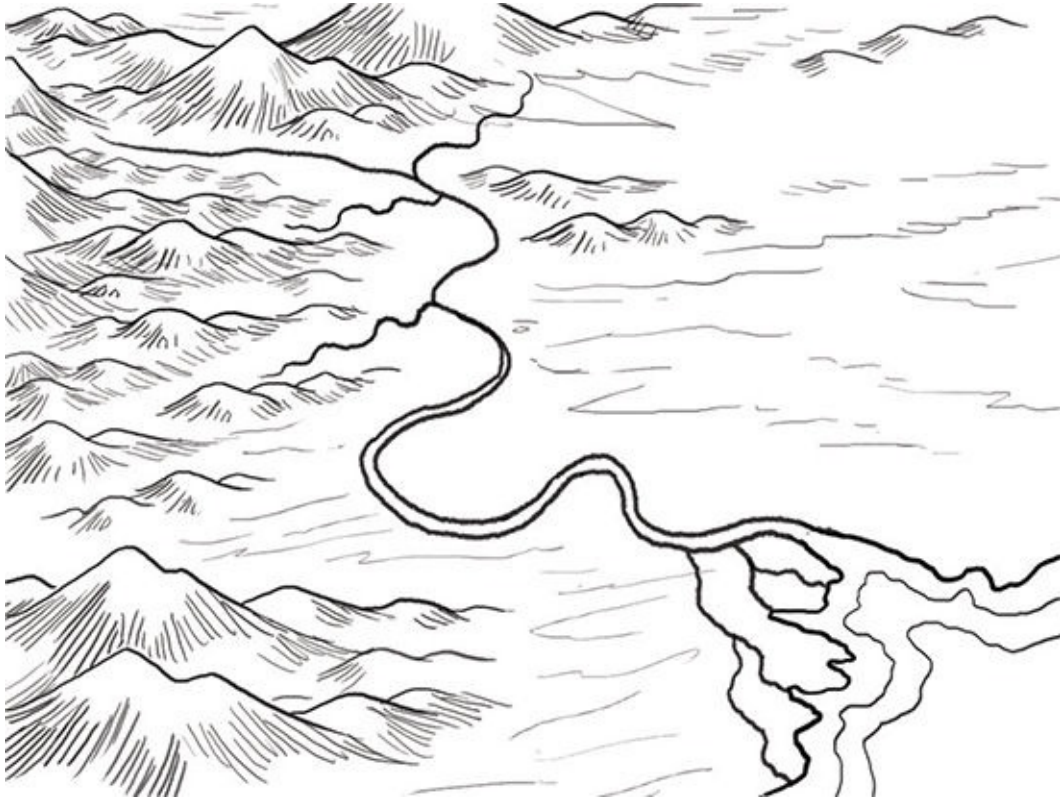
### **STEP 5: Develop a River Delta**

To attempt something a bit more complicated, you could try your hand at a river delta, which is essentially when a river fragments back into smaller tributaries before it reaches the ocean, forming coastal lowlands ripe for lush crops. To draw a river delta, just add a few small lines to the river mouth, making it spread out like the branches of a tree.

#### **Line Pressure**

Press lightly with your pencil when you are near the mountains and hills, and then harder for a darker and richer line when connecting your river to the

coast. This gives the impression that a river starts small but gains strength and speed as it connects to the ocean.



### **STEP 6: Drawing the Tributaries**

Once you have finished the river, add the tributaries that flow down from the mountains and hills. Tributaries often look like branches stemming from mountains and hills. To simulate these smaller streams, take your HB pencil and draw a thin wavy line from the closest mountain terrain to the top of the nearest river, snaking a bit along the way.

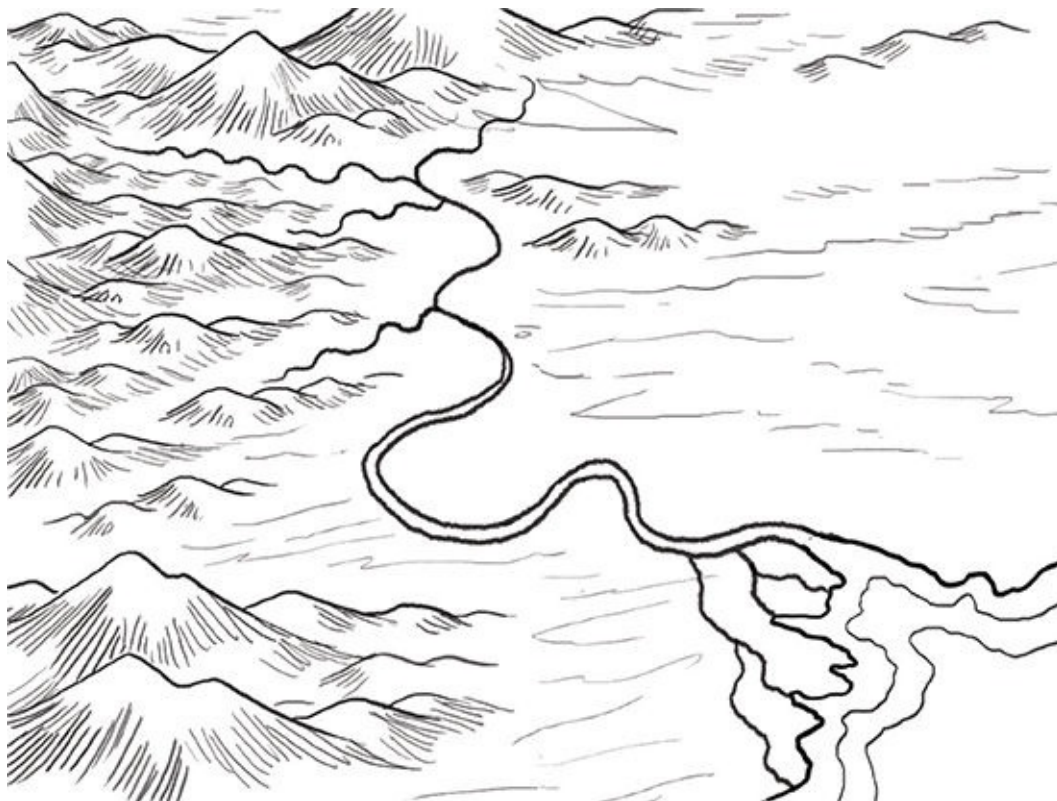
Continue drawing those tributaries, connecting them to the topmost part of the river (where it begins). A good rule of thumb is to have three to five tributaries per river, with most coming from surrounding hills and mountains.



### **STEP 7: Redraw the River Top**

After your tributaries are finished, erase the top of your river, and redraw it like a tributary.





### **STEP 8: Finished River**

Your finished rivers and tributaries should look something like this.



## Shore and Water Lines

Now that you have defined your landmasses and rivers, it's time to put some flair into the continent boundaries. Emphasizing the shores with a bit of decoration can go a long way toward making it easy to quickly recognize landmasses. We can do this with a technique that's easy to do, though it might take a bit of practice to perfect.



**STEP 1: Draw Shorelines**

Take your 2H pencil and start drawing a light line around your original coastlines. The line should maintain about  $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) distance away from your original boundary, and should be lighter in weight and richness. This line should not completely mimic your continental outline, and should smooth past any major details of your coastline, only giving a general impression.



## **STEP 2: Don't Forget Lake Shorelines**

If you have any lakes on your map, make sure to include a shoreline within each too.



### **STEP 3: Continue Adding Shorelines**

Once your first line is completed, trace another line on the outside of your first shoreline, again trying to maintain  $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) between the two lines as best you can. You may include additional shorelines on your map, though two to four works best.



#### **STEP 4: Make Ocean Lines**

You can go a step further and draw some defining lines to better denote the beginning of the ocean.

Taking your HB pencil, draw small lines that mimic small waves extending horizontally from the shorelines. These lines can be anywhere from  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) to 1" (25mm) long but should vary only a small amount from one another.



### **STEP 5: Finished Ocean Lines**

Each line should be very close to the next and be equidistant from one another. Continue drawing these wave lines until the entire coast has been decorated (large lakes may be filled in this way, too). Once you have finished your ocean lines, it should look something like this.

#### **Shoreline Shapes**

Visually, this technique works best with a single shoreline, with ocean lines sprouting off of that, though two shorelines could work just as well. Feel free to experiment with defining your coastlines and shorelines to make them original and unique.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Town and City Icons

Most maps exist to mark where important places are in relation to other places, and icons are the elements that do just that. In this chapter, various techniques on how to illustrate the basic icons will be discussed in detail, with a number of step-by-step demonstrations laid out for the beginner as well as the experienced mapmaker. Icon illustration has a great impact on the look of a map and its tone, with icons varying from tiny illustrations of castles and huts to the use of symbology for simplicity's sake. Whether the important places are cities, towns, fortresses or bridges, they all form key components that give information about a country and its people. For fantasy maps, icons are doubly critical, providing insight into the various fantastical peoples and places within the boundaries of your world, as well as allowing you to flex your creative muscle. Soon you will have dozens of towns, cities and hill forts populating your world.

# Towns

Towns are by far the most numerous of settlements both in our world and most fantasy worlds. Rendering towns is a relatively simple affair, with much room for experimentation and creativity. Before you start scribbling away, you should think about the type of setting you are building in your world, and how towns might look and be depicted. Certain cultures have very distinctive architecture, and it's always good to introduce a pinch of realism into your fantasy setting. How many towns dot the land? Are there many or only a few? The density or sparseness of towns can say much about the region, with many indicating a flourishing society, and others either a diminishing people or unexploited territory.





### **STEP 1: Decide Town Placement**

With your 2H pencil, draw light dots where you would like your towns to go. Don't press too hard since you will be drawing right over these soon.



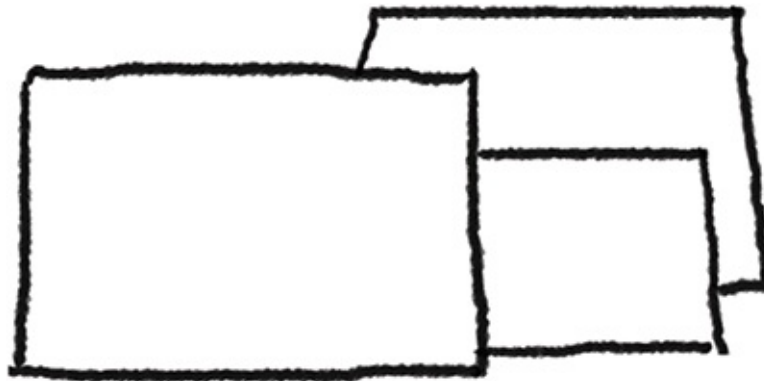


## STEP 2: Start With a Roof

Pick one of your initial town placement spots and select your HB pencil. Begin by drawing a small rectangle, this will serve as one of the town building's roofs.

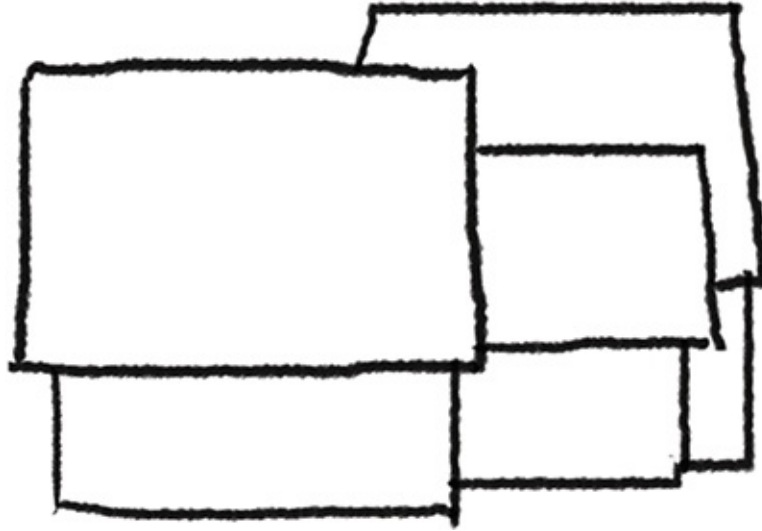
### Location

Many towns often lay near rivers, coasts or natural resources such as pasture for cattle and farmlands. Try and place your cities in areas that you think people would settle. A city in the middle of the forest usually doesn't make too much sense, unless of course, those people are Elves! A smattering of towns in random places works just as well in a prolific society. Trade and goods flow along roads, keeping the towns all alive.



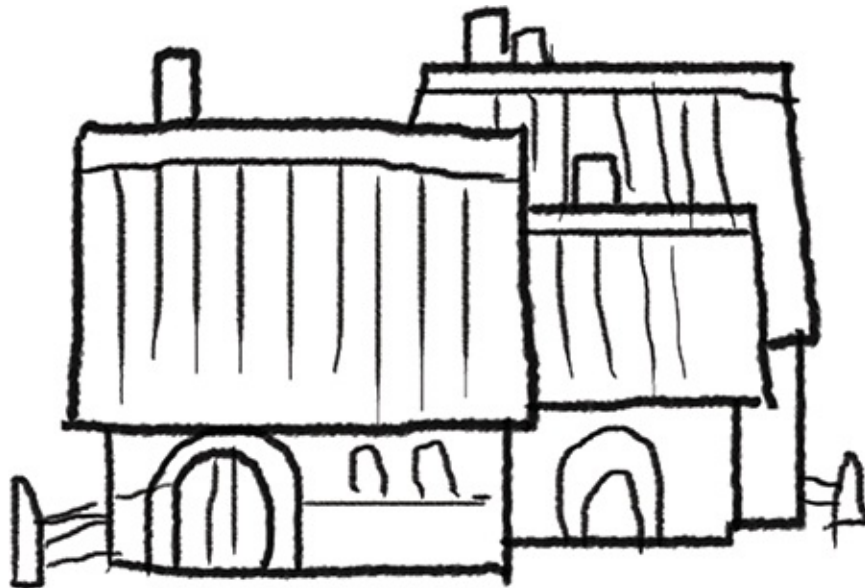
## STEP 3: Expanding the Buildings

Draw another smaller rectangle next to the first, adding as many as you would like according to how large you think the town should be. I recommend two to three roofs at first.



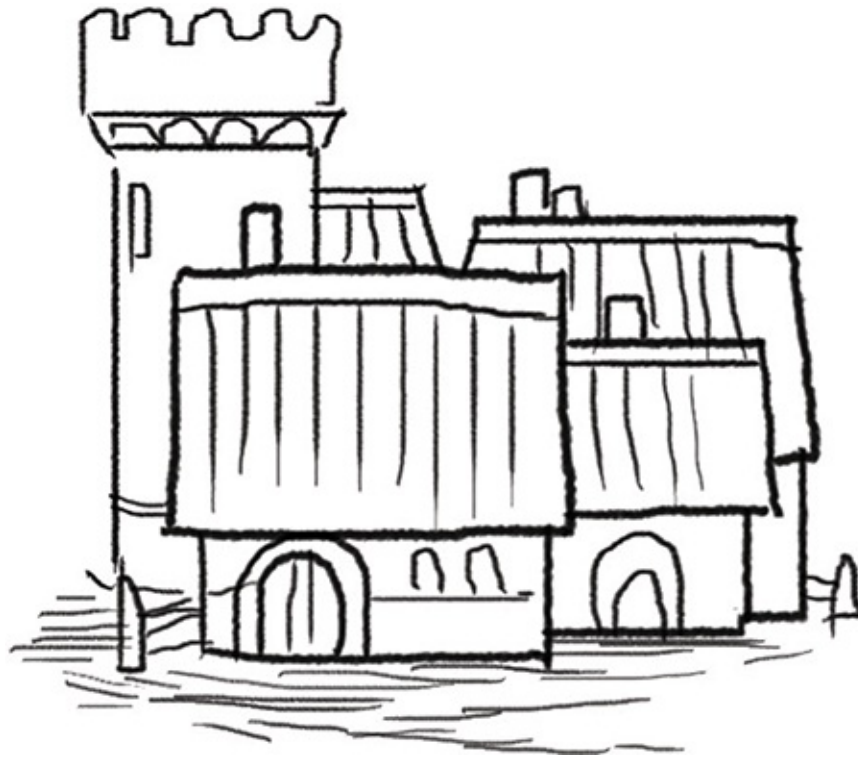
#### **STEP 4: Fill In the Buildings**

When the roofs are drawn in, add some rectangles directly below them. These are the house bases for your roofs to sit on. Each roof should have a box underneath it to fill out the houses. It's OK to vary these a bit in size.



#### **STEP 5: Fill In the Details**

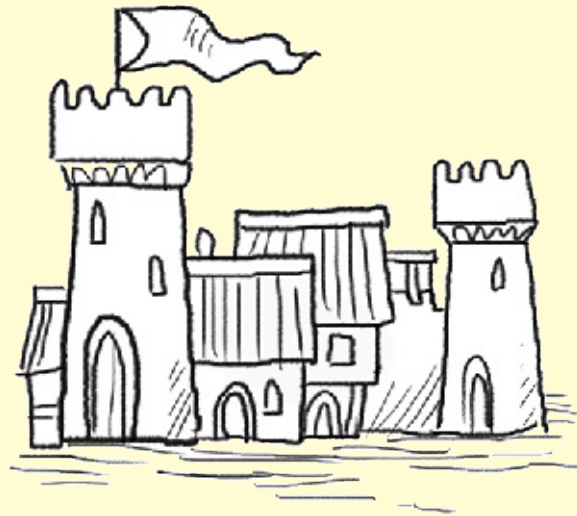
Now that your basic shapes are there, add a few small doors, some crossbeams, and a few chimneys and roof lines. Congrats! You have made your first basic town!



### **STEP 6: Embellish With Extras**

If you are feeling creative, add a small guard tower, temple dome or some other small detail to your town. These details will make town icons come alive, and add a touch of uniqueness to each.

### **Town Examples**



# Cities

Cities are the largest and most prosperous of civilized centers, and each is often much larger and more powerful than their smaller counterparts. Cities offer a greater amount of variety than towns in general, many being surrounded by protective walls or guarded with tall towers, all of which are fun to draw. Cities can be two to three times the size of towns, though you will follow very similar steps when drawing them. Have fun!



## STEP 1: Decide City Placement

Just like you did with your towns, take your 2H pencil and draw light dots where you would like your cities to go.

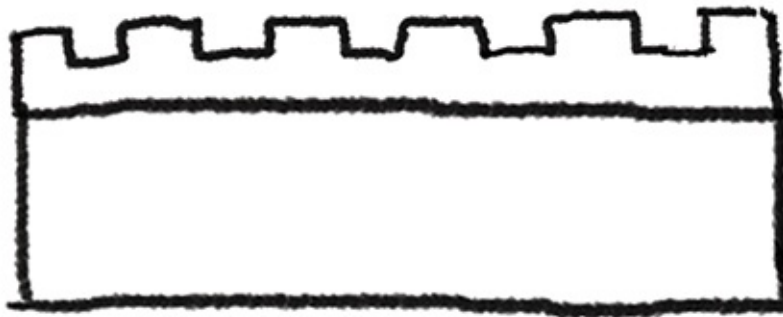
### **City Placement**

Be careful when you are placing your cities, as most are founded on major trade routes, rivers or as main ports. Most cities need access to lots of water, so placing them on coasts or large rivers is ideal. However, that should not stop you from placing them in foothills, atop mountains, in the frozen north or even under the sea. In fantasy, magic is usually alive and well, so anything goes!



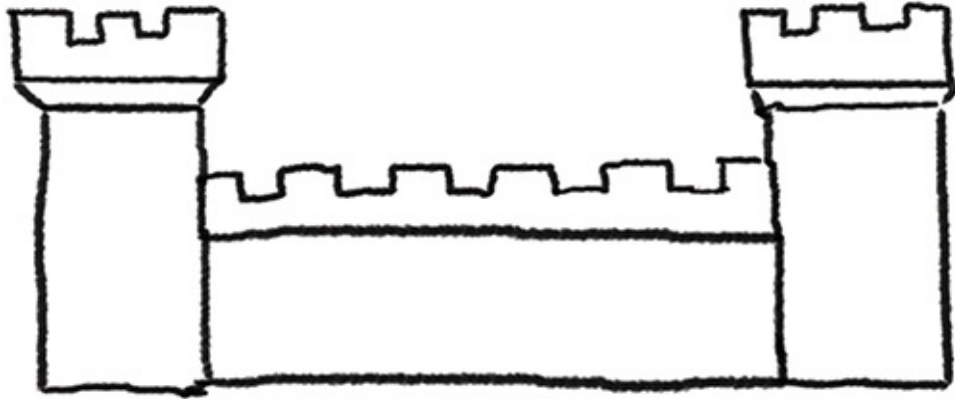
#### **STEP 2: Build a City Wall**

First take your HB pencil and draw an elongated rectangle.



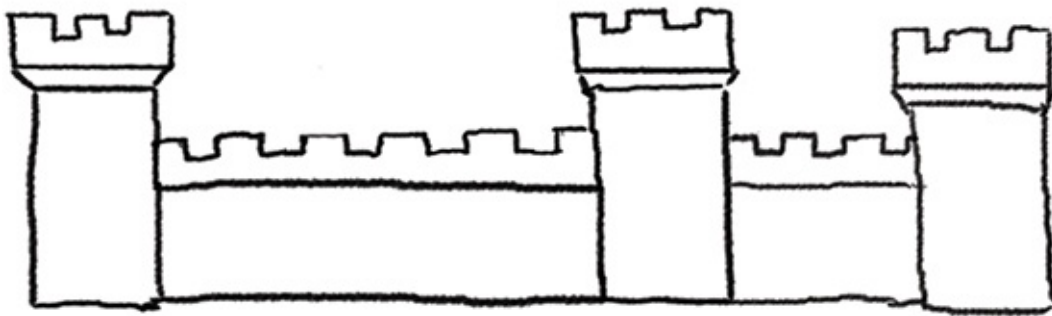
#### **STEP 3: Add the Wall Top**

Draw the top of the wall with an alternating square pattern forming crenellations.



#### **STEP 4: Create Towers**

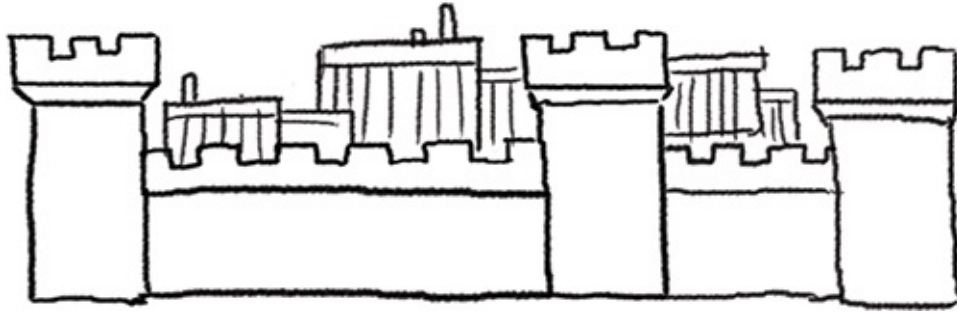
To add towers to your basic city wall, draw vertical elongated boxes connected to your city wall. Make them taller than they are wide, and add wall tops.



#### **STEP 5: Expand the Walls and Towers**

Once you have your first basic wall and towers drawn, you can repeat steps 2–4 to expand your city, adding multiple towers and walls. Add as many as you like! Towers can vary in size and shape, though sometimes it's best to keep some uniformity in them.





### **STEP 6: Add Building Roofs**

When your towers and walls are finished, you should add some roofs to the city. You can use the town steps from earlier in the chapter to help you out. Adding a few roofs, one on top of the other, is good and can represent how cluttered a city can get.



### **STEP 7: Include Specialty Buildings**

To add even more detail and uniqueness to your city, you can add a large temple dome, or bigger buildings to complement the smaller houses. If your city is near

the ocean, add a dock. If it's near a river, add a bridge extending from the city over the river. Holy cities may have cathedrals and temples.

### City Examples



*Small city*



*River city*



*Coastal city*

## Castles and Holdfasts

Placing castles and holdfasts is one of the most enjoyable things you can draw on a map. They are easy to draw and add plenty of character and clout to a fantasy map. Traditionally, castles are used for defending large stretches of territory, and are usually located on hills dominating the surrounding landscape. From its fortifications, defenders could observe an enemy army from the safety of its walls, and when the enemy passed them by to attack somewhere else, they could rush out and attack the enemy from the rear. Castles and large fortresses are built to house entire armies of troops, while holdfasts are smaller keeps that are the homes of minor lords and knights. Countrysides are usually covered in holdfasts, while citadels and fortresses are reserved for the protection of important trade cities, major rivers (and bridge crossings), rich coastal routes or along political boundaries to defend against a foe.



### STEP 1: Decide Placement

Just like you did with your towns and cities, take your 2H pencil and draw light dots where you would like your castles and holdfasts to go.

### Historical Inspiration

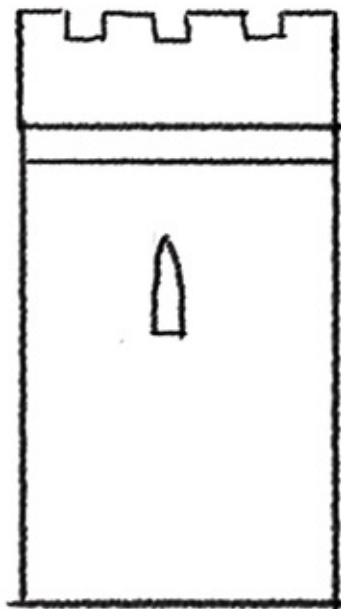
If you would like some inspiration or ideas for some of your castles and fortresses, just take a look at some history books on the medieval times, or

the crusades. Historically, the Normans were fantastic and very prolific castle builders—many of which are still standing today.



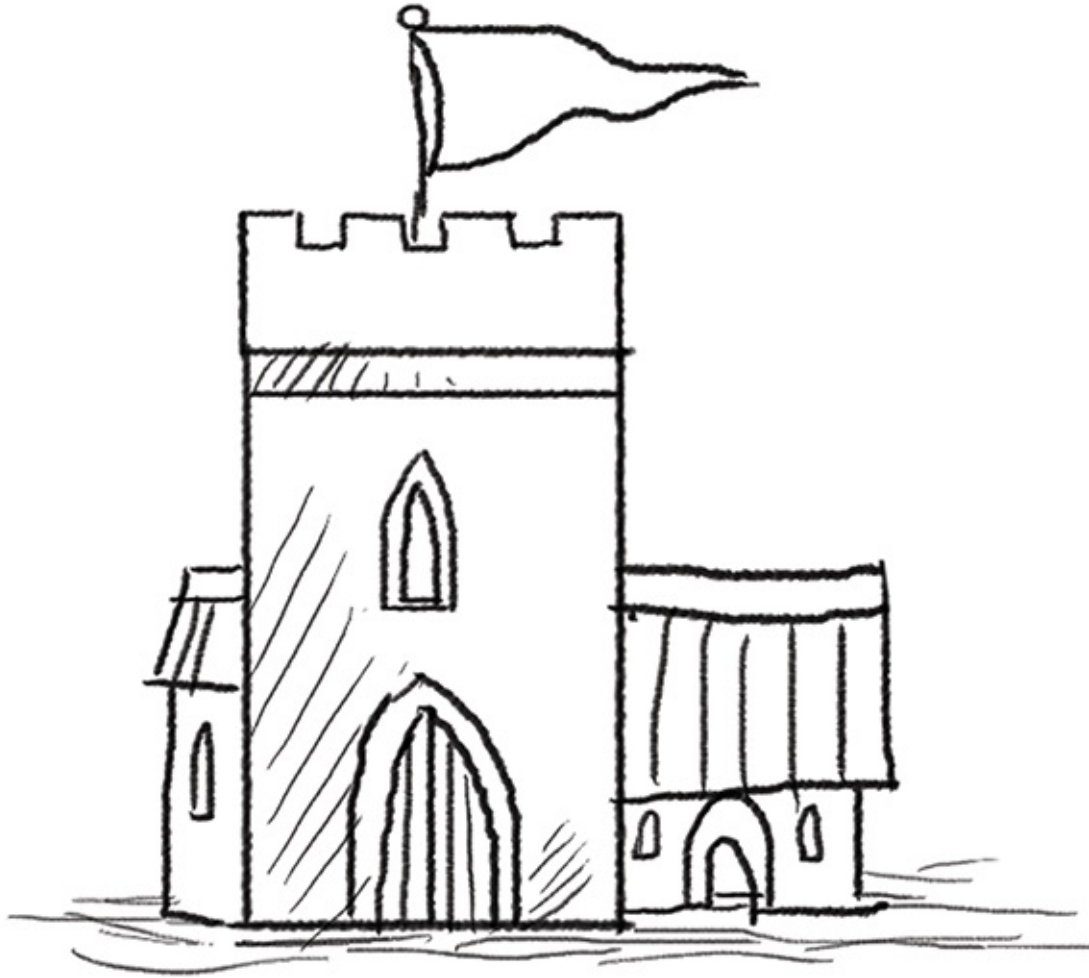
### **STEP 2: Start With a Tower**

Start with the castle's first tower. Begin by drawing an elongated rectangle that is taller than it is wide.



### STEP 3: Draw the Wall Top and Window

Finish your first tower by adding crenellations (fortifications) to the top. Add a window or two.



### STEP 4: Finished Keep

At this point, if you want to finish the icon as a keep, add a small door and a flag to the top and your first keep is complete. You can also add a small house or two



standing next to it to give it some more personality, though lone keeps work great too.

### Keep Examples



*Small keep*

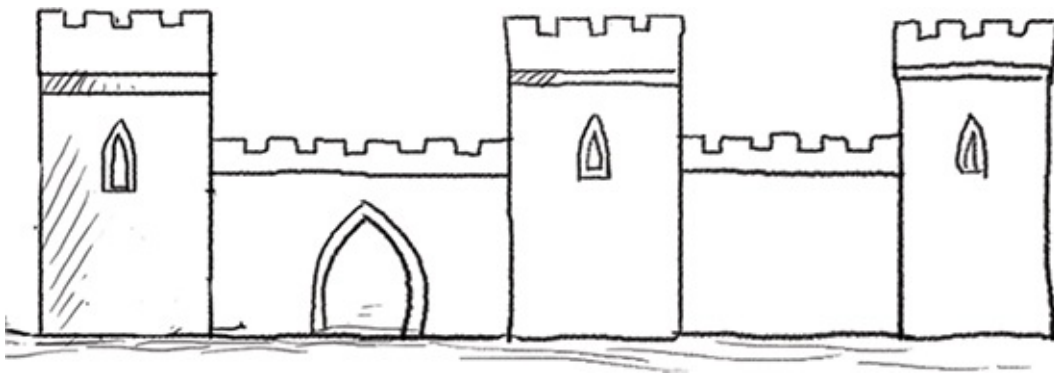


*Medium keep*





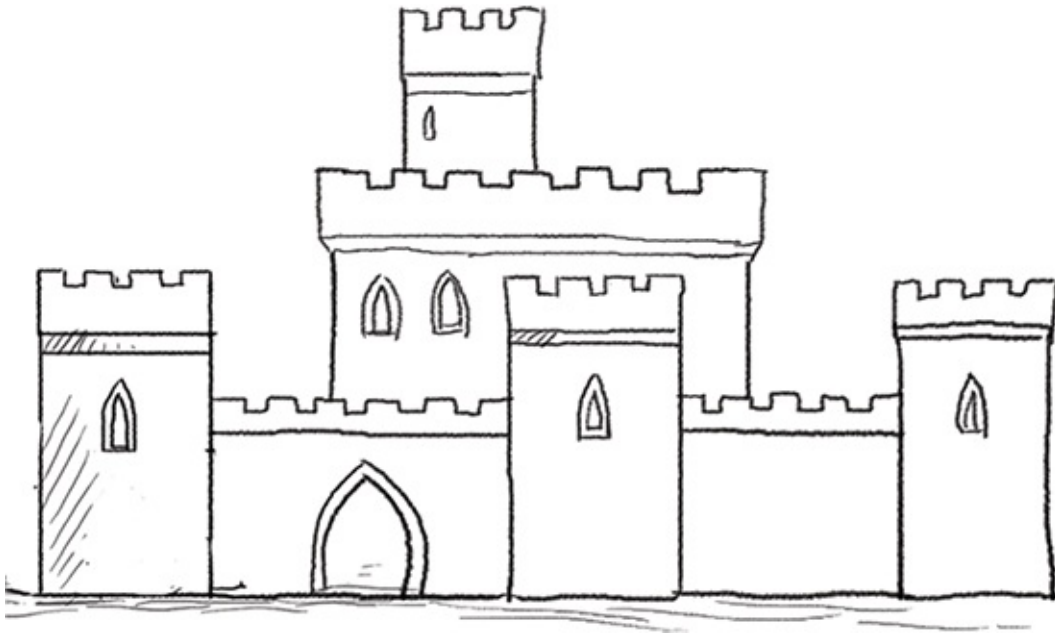
*Large keep with small curtain walls*



### **STEP 5: Expand the Keep Into a Castle**

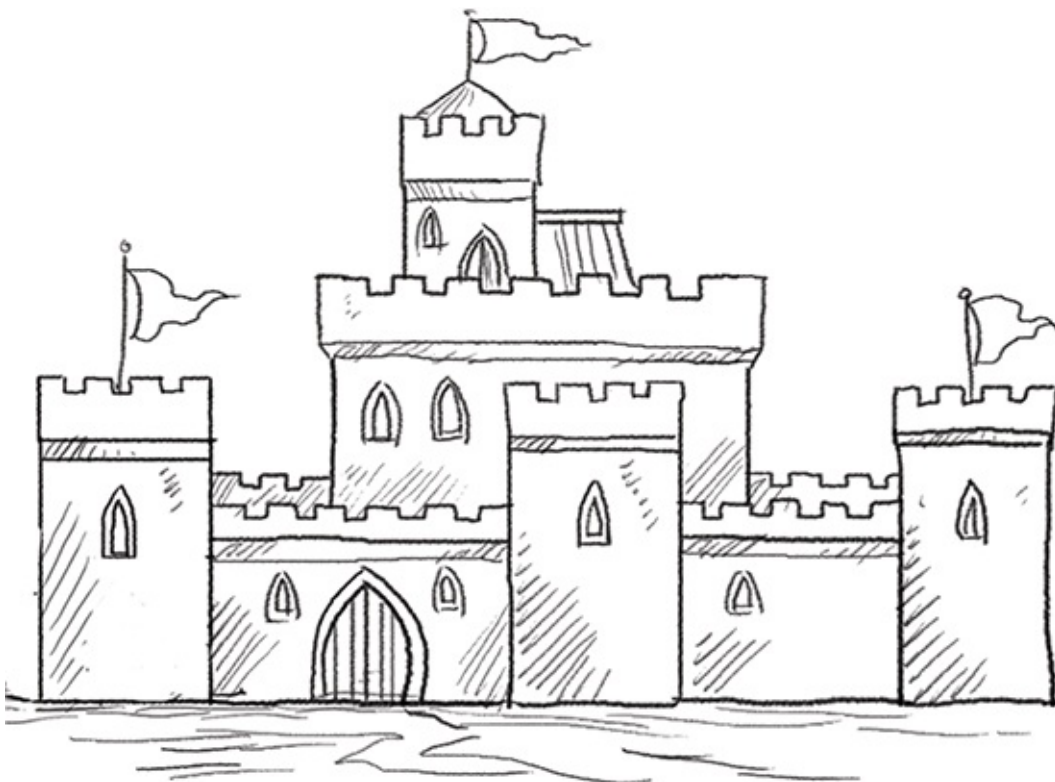
If you want something larger, expand your keep by adding another tower or two, and another wall section.

Castles work best with three towers and a few wall sections, but you shouldn't be constrained to that. Experiment with different wall lengths and tower heights, mixing and matching as much as you like.



#### **STEP 6: Add a Large Castle Tower**

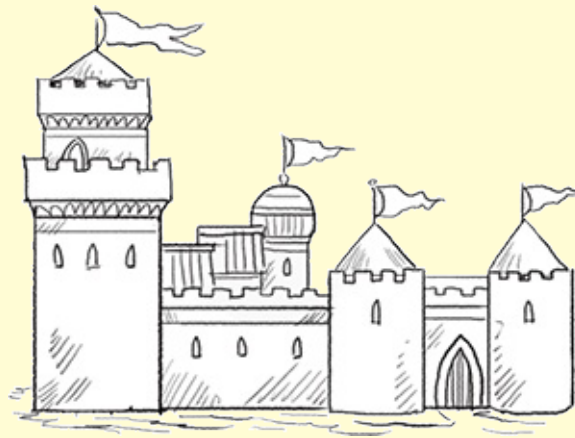
Once you have expanded the castle, add a large singular keep to the middle of the castle. It should be wider than the standard towers and have a few windows.



## STEP 7: Castle Details

Once the keep, towers and walls have been drawn, you can finish your castle by adding detail to the large castle door, a few more windows and some flags on the towers. Add any specialty buildings you'd like as well.

### Castle Examples





## CHAPTER FOUR

# Typography

Typography can be one of the most important elements in cartography, and it can contribute greatly to the success or failure of a map.

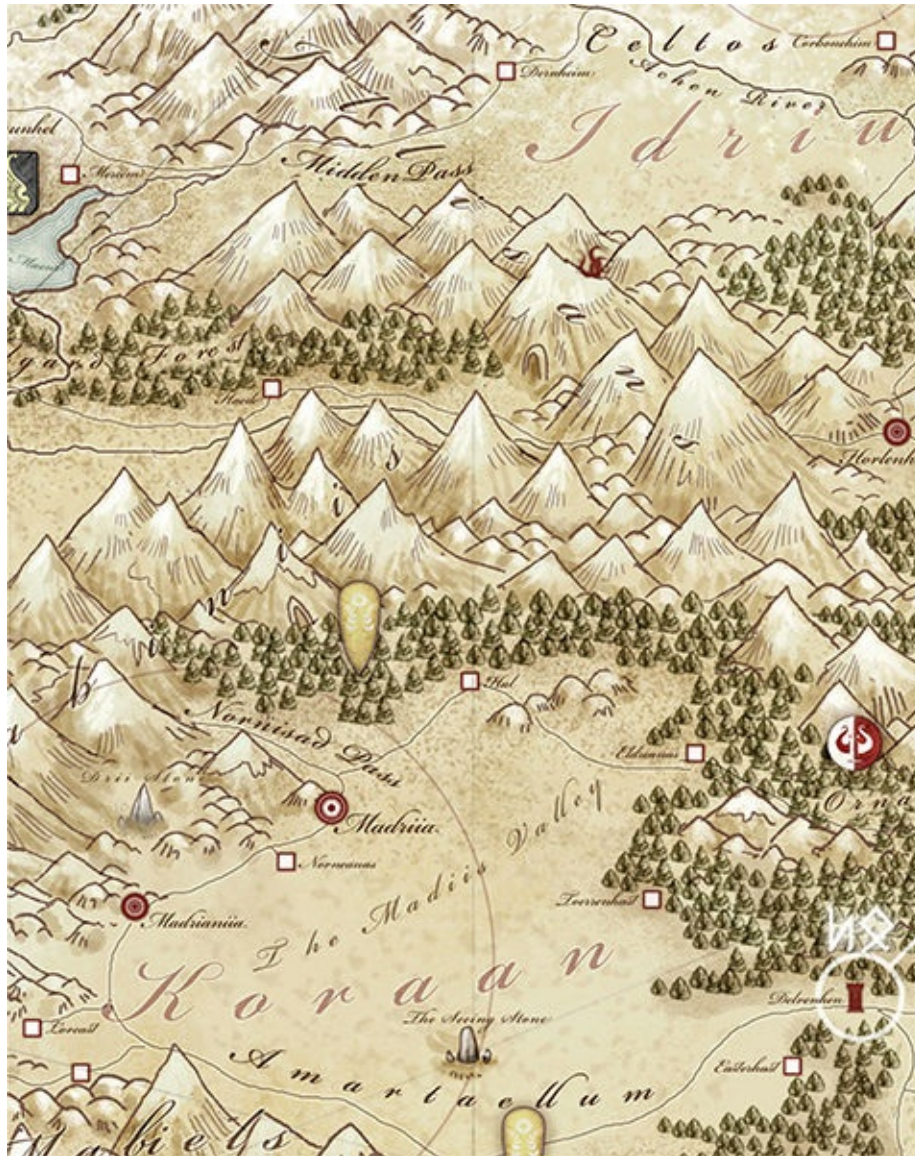
Typography is essentially the art of writing. For mapmakers, that means laying in text to label locations and geographical areas so a reader knows what is what. There are many parts of a map that need typography, from the title bar of your map to the various towns and geographical features, and all should be clearly marked. Not only is typography used for marking places and areas on a map, it can also be used as an effective decorative element as well, adding a layer of sophistication to your fantasy map. In this chapter we'll address script style, which deals with the look of the actual text your are using, and labeling, which has to do with where and how the text is placed.

## Script Style

Before you start marking down locations on your map, there are a few different writing styles you may want to try out for added emphasis and flair. In this section of the chapter, I will go over a few different types of script styles that can be useful for labeling. I have divided script styles into standard scripts and decorative scripts. For the most part, the most common style of label is in our very own standard script and its various offshoots. The more advanced may try their hand at the more elegant and cursive-esque decorative styles. Most forms require a bit of practice to lay in correctly and evenly, and some are more complex than others. I have included a number of script ideas for you to draw inspiration from, and if you're really creative, to expand upon to create a unique new style!







## Historical Languages

Writing is a powerful graphic and communicative tool, and the fantasy genre has plenty of examples of unique languages and inspirations to draw upon. Ancient Nordic runes and Egyptian hieroglyphics are excellent resources.

# Cultural Typography

Before you start putting labels on your map, it pays to think about the culture or time period that you are striving to portray. Maybe the map is of a strong empire, so your script should be strong and bold as well. In contrast, the map of an Orc territory might have a more jagged and disjointed look to convey the barbarous nature of greenskins. Script styles play a massive role in the tone of your map. Standard script with little or no difference from our own might serve well for a map of mostly human lands, but what if you were portraying the realms of great Elven lords?

## STANDARD SCRIPT EXAMPLES

IMPERIAL

### ***Imperial Script***

*Imperial script is one of my favorite styles, and is a strong script resembling an authoritative high medieval realm. I often use this sort of script for maps of cultured human lands.*

# Gothic

## ***Gothic***

*Gothic script is a bit less refined than the Imperial script and represents more of a dark-age Viking feel.*

## **DECORATIVE SCRIPT EXAMPLES**

# Elven

## ***Elven***

*Elven script should look like a more refined and fluid cursive style combined with runes, representing strength but also grace and dignity.*

A stylized, black Draconian script representation of the word "Draconian". The script is highly decorative, with a large, flowing initial 'D' and subsequent characters that are intricate and somewhat abstract, resembling a mix of cursive and geometric shapes.

### ***Draconian***

*Draconian script is my idea of a very old and mostly forgotten language, remembered only by the lore masters. It is long, flowing and difficult to read, but quite beautiful.*

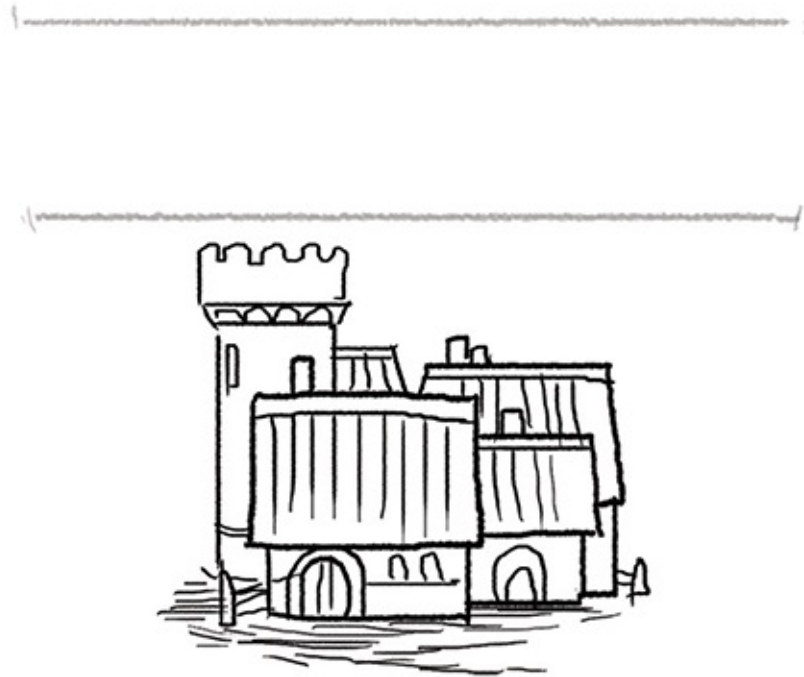
# Location Labels

The first and most common element of typography is labeling your location icons. Towns, cities, castles, keeps and other actual locations represented by an icon should be labeled in a straight line, with no curve to the label. With your label straight and uniform, it is easy for a viewer to instantly decipher what is a location and what is an area. Along with being straight, labels should try not to overlap other elements of the maps such as hills, forests and other icons. It's best if you can keep a uniformity for all of your location icons, though it's not completely necessary as long as the label is close enough not to be confused with anything else.



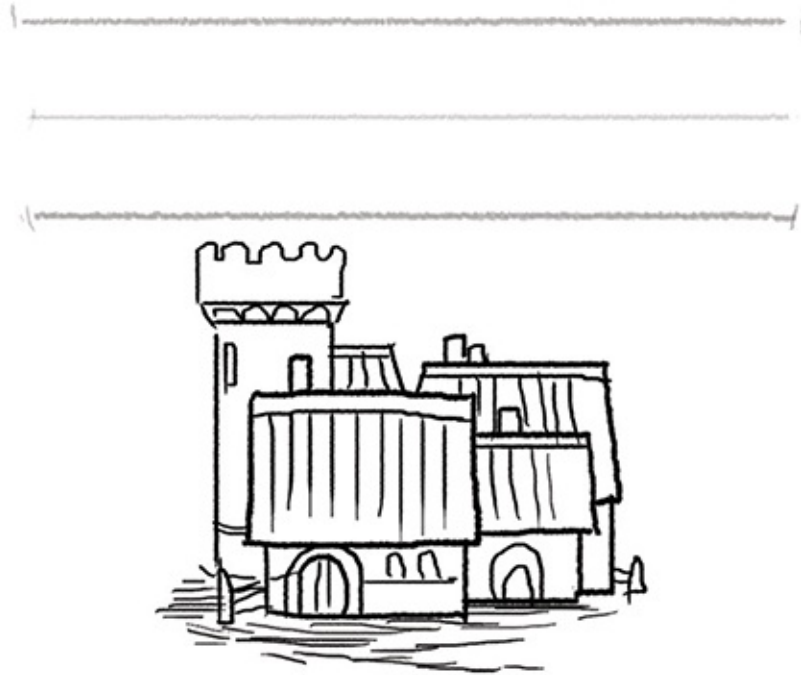
## STEP 1: Mark the Bottom Script Line

To start, pick one of your towns, and with your kneaded eraser erase any terrain elements that may get in the way of your label. Then, using your 2H pencil and a ruler, draw a straight line lightly next to your town icon as shown here. This is your bottom script guideline.



## STEP 2: Mark the Top Script Line

Once your bottom guideline is down, use your ruler again to draw another light line above your first. The distance between these two lines will decide how large your type will be.



### **STEP 3: Mark the Middle Script Line**

When you have both your top and bottom lines down, add a middle line. This is a useful tool for when you have to do upper- and lowercase letters.





#### **STEP 4: Start Your Text**

Now you can write your town's name. Using the light guidelines, carefully begin to pencil in the name of your town, starting with an uppercase letter.

Grim



#### **STEP 5: Continue Your Text**

Try not to go over the guidelines as you carefully write your text using whatever style you have chosen.

# Grimhold



## STEP 6: Finish Your Text

Finish up your text, and use your kneaded eraser to erase your guidelines. With a steady hand and patience, your first town's label should come out great!



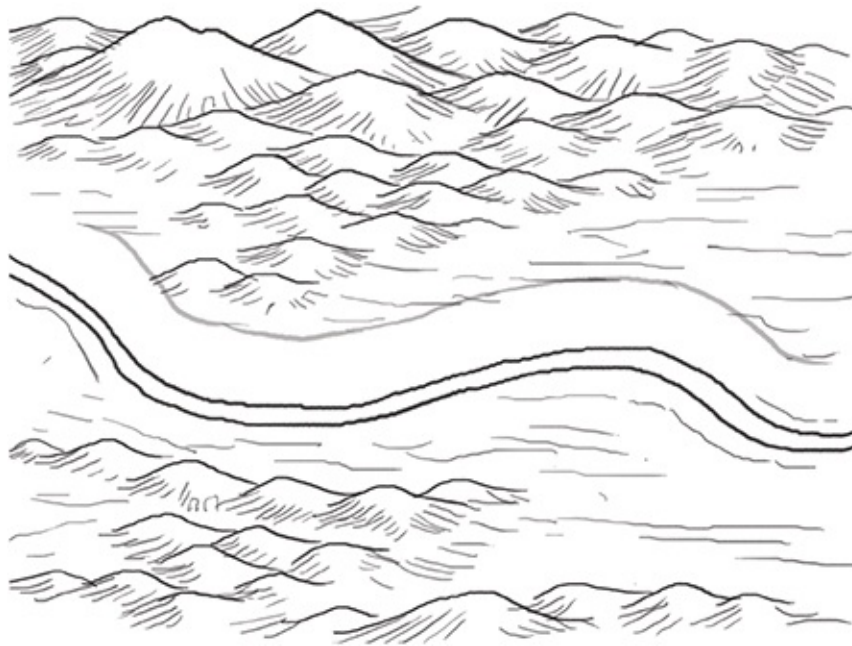
## **Emphasizing Capitals and Citadels**

Some locations are much more important than others and should be emphasized accordingly. Most often these will be citadels and capitals of great nations. When labeling these, you can use all uppercase to give them a look of preeminent importance. You could also simply use a larger text size.

# Area Labeling

Labeling areas is a bit trickier than labeling your towns and cities. Oftentimes you will need to find a way to fit your label in overtop of your map elements. Labeling rivers is relatively easy, while it's a bit trickier with other areas. Sometimes area labeling requires erasing some of the element that you have already drawn so that you can fit in your label. It sounds tricky, but with some patience and practice, you will be a pro in no time!

## LABELING RIVERS



### STEP 1: Set the River Script Guidelines

To label a river, first select the river you wish to place your text along. Then, with a 2H pencil, lightly pencil in your top guideline using the actual river as your bottom line.



## **STEP 2: Pencil In the First Letter**

Once your guidelines are down, carefully pencil in your first letter with your HB pencil.



### STEP 3: Space Your Letters

After your first letter, pencil in your second, and then third, each one following the curvature of the river. Leave some space in between each letter so that your script spans the length of the river or at least most of the river if it's long.





#### **STEP 4: Finish the River Script**

When you have finished penciling in all of the letters, go back in and erase the guidelines with a kneaded eraser.

#### **LABELING MOUNTAINS**



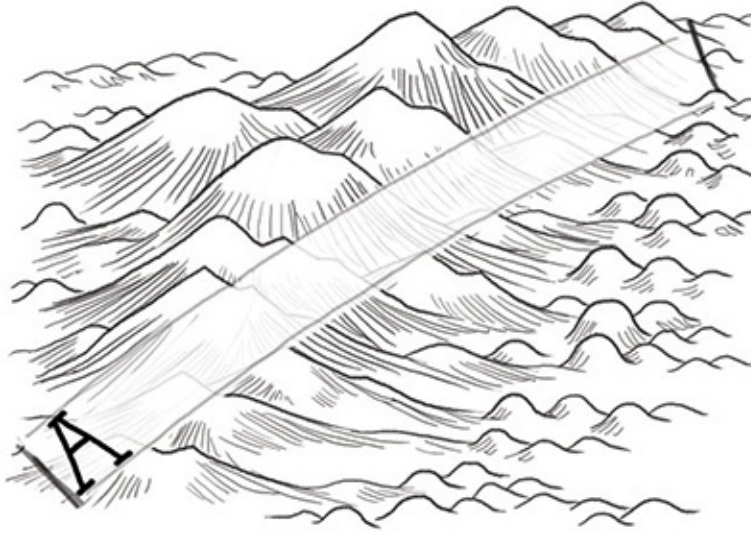
## **STEP 1: Decide the Mountain Script Area**

When labeling a mountain range, approximate how much space you will need to lay in your text. You will be writing your text above, below or in the middle of the mountain range, wherever you feel it will look best. Use a 2H pencil to lightly mark the area edges.



## **STEP 2: Pencil In Guidelines**

Using your 2H pencil, lightly draw lines that follow the contours of the mountains. Do not be afraid to skip over other elements, as your mountain text can hop over them and continue on the other side.



### **STEP 3: Add the First Letter**

With your kneaded eraser, erase between the guidelines and the edge lines where your text will go. Then use your HB pencil and carefully pencil in the first letter.



### **STEP 4: Continue Adding Letters**

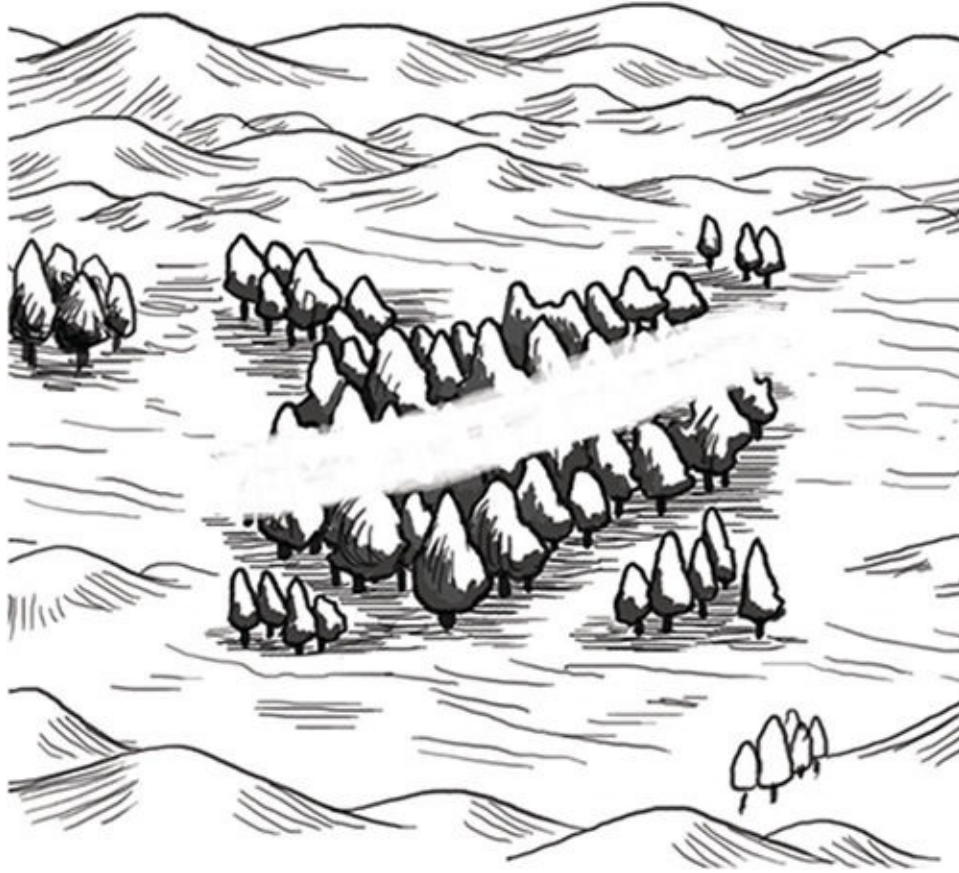
Continue drawing in your letters using your guidelines, spacing each letter equidistant from one another, following the general contour of the mountains. Mountain letters should all be of the same size, with uppercase letters being optional.



### **STEP 5: Finish the Mountain Script**

Once you have penciled in all of your letters, go back in and erase your guidelines.

## **LABELING FORESTS**

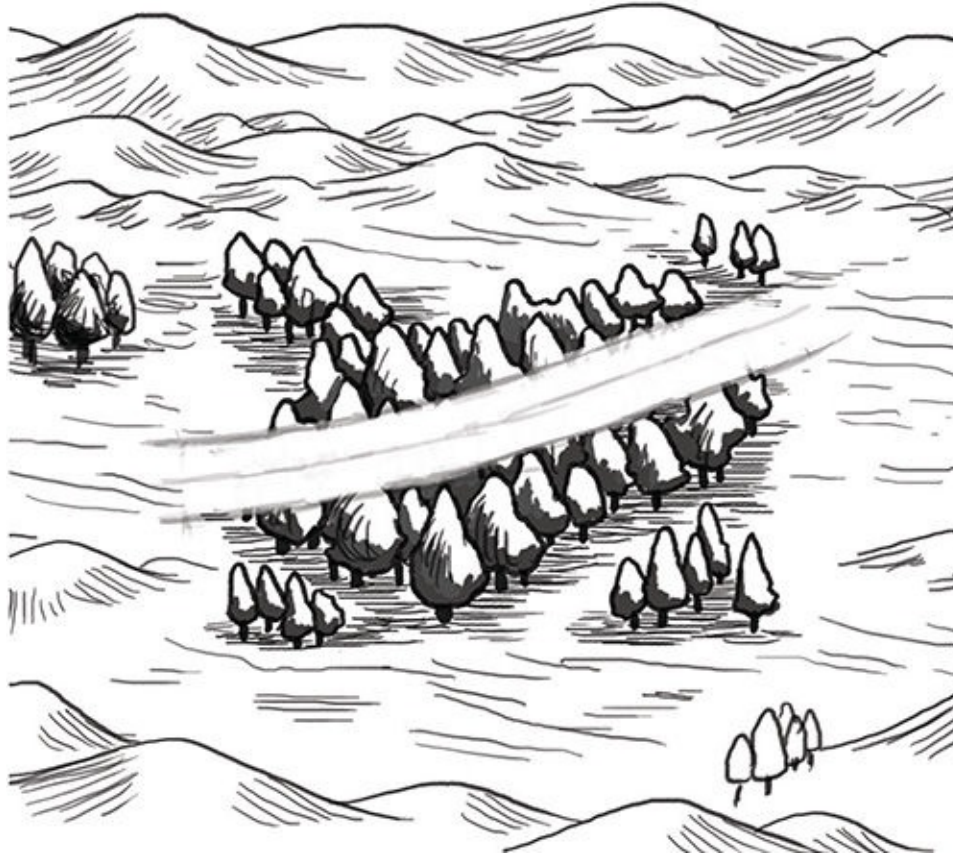


### **STEP 1: Decide the Forest Script Area**

Select your forest area, and then approximate how much space you will need to lay in your text. Use your 2H pencil to lightly mark the area edges where you think you will need to erase.

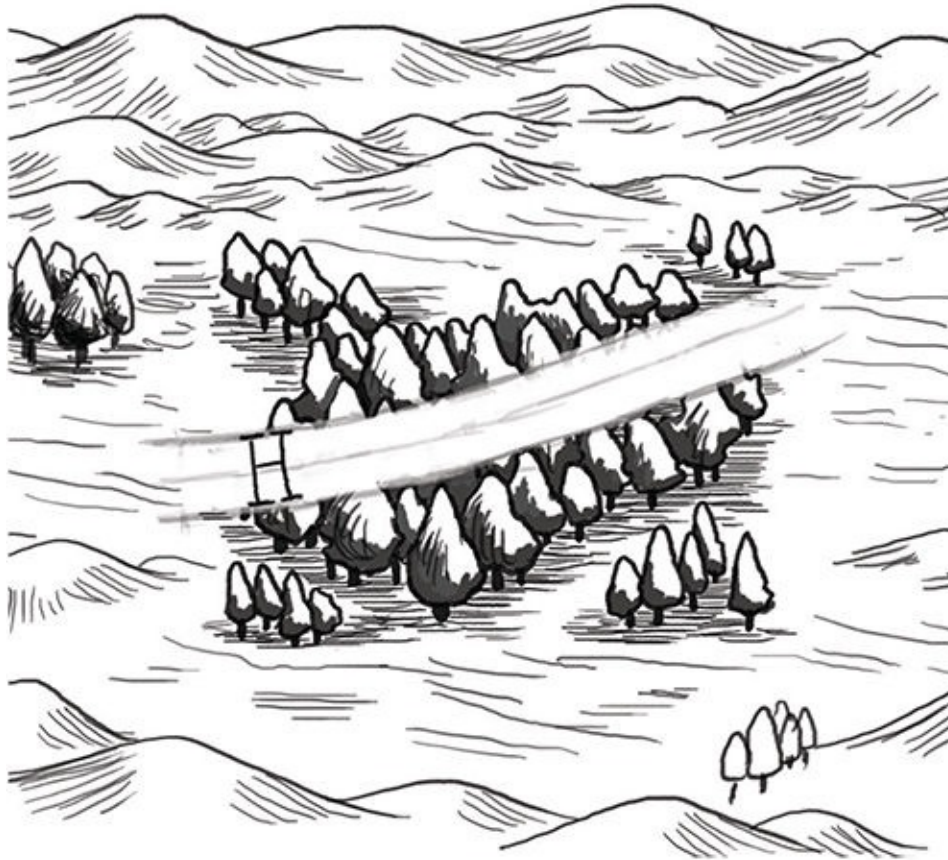
Then carefully go in and erase the forest that you think will be in the way.





## **STEP 2: Place Guidelines**

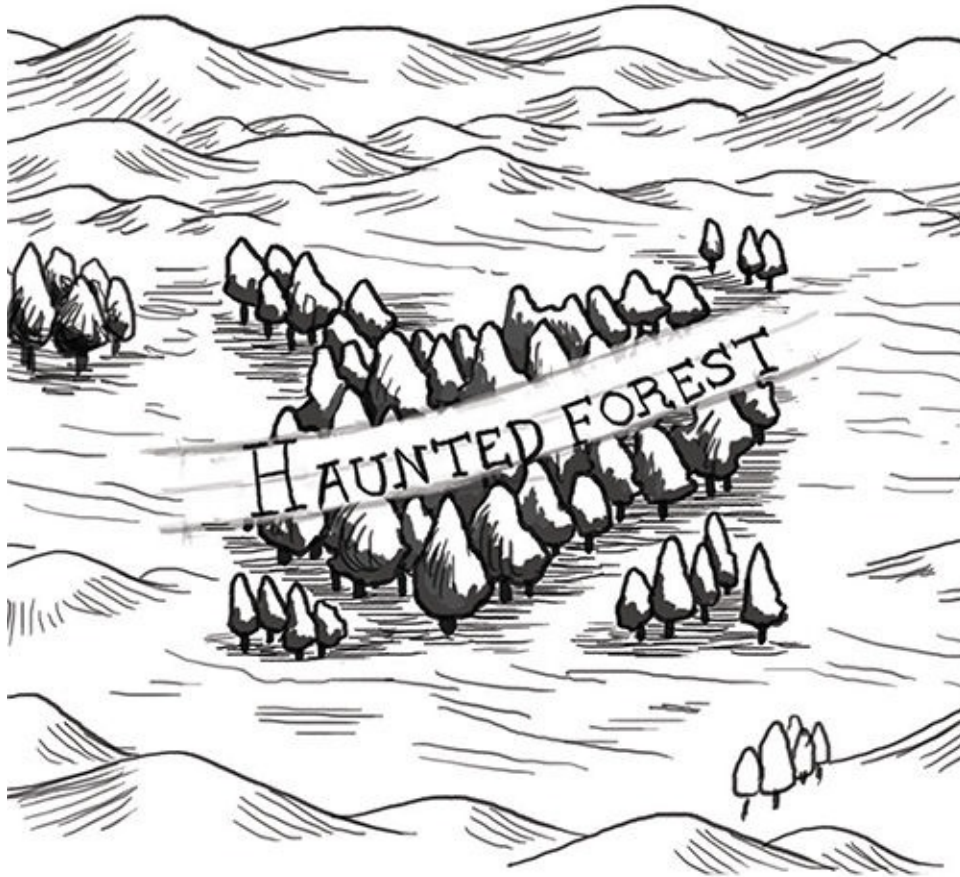
Once the forest script area has been cleared, use your 2H pencil and carefully mark your script guidelines, following the general contour of the forest shape for the best result.



### **STEP 3: Pencil In the First Letter**

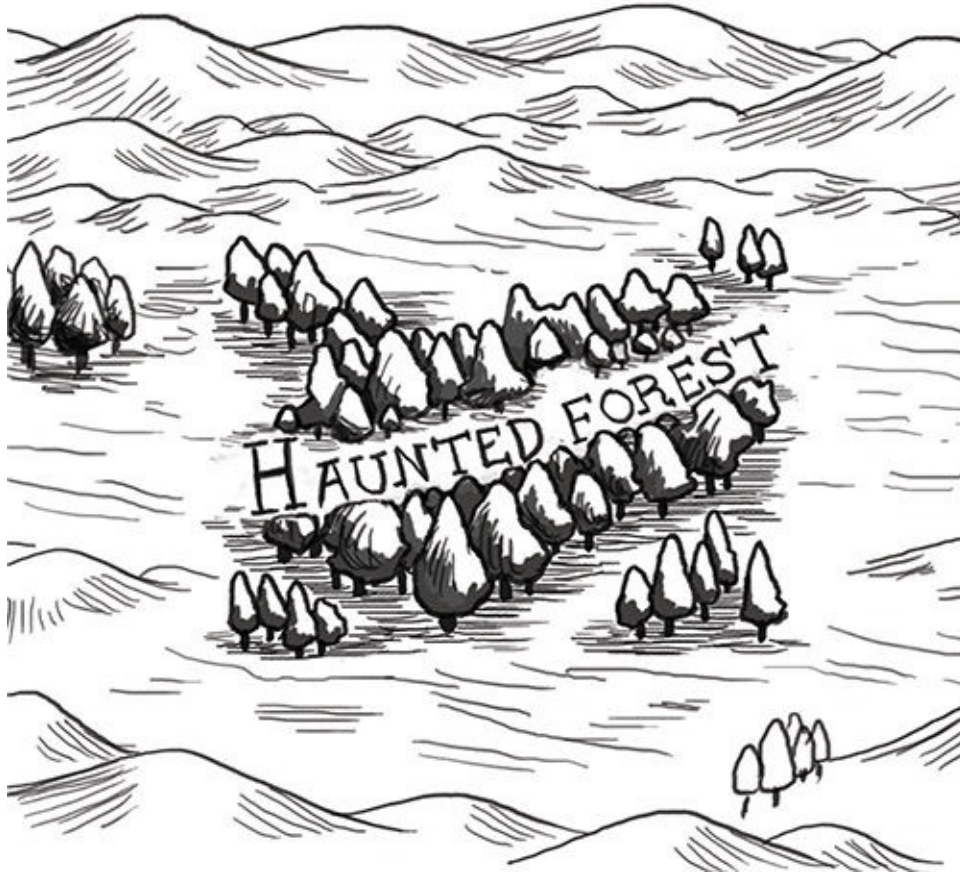
Using your HB pencil, gently draw in the first letter of the forest script, taking care to stay within your guidelines. Forests should use all capital letters, unlike mountains.





#### **STEP 4: Continue the Script**

Continue penciling in the forest script. Forests do not need to have their letters spaced out like rivers and mountains, though you can if you'd like to depending on how large the forest is.



### **STEP 5: Fill in the Trees**

When you have finished your text, go back in and erase your guidelines, then carefully draw in any trees that may have been partially erased in step 1, filling them out and making them look like part of the wood. Once the trees are in, you have a nicely labeled forest.

## **LABELING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS**



### **STEP 1: Approximate the Region Script Area**

Select the area that will receive a country or region label and approximate how much area you will need for the text. Use your 2H pencil and lightly mark the beginning and end of the area.



## STEP 2: Place Script Guidelines

Use your 2H pencil and gently draw both your top and bottom script guidelines. Region text is usually twice as large as standard city text, while country text can be up to three to four times larger. Each label should be slightly curved, following the contour of the map or region.



### **STEP 3: Pencil In the First Letter**

Pencil in your first letter. Try to stay within your guidelines. You may use all upper- or lowercase letters, though all should be of the same approximate size. Map out your letters with small boxes within your guidelines to further help you space your letters.



#### **STEP 4: Continue Lettering**

Pencil in the next letter, then your third and fourth, leaving a bit of space in between each letter.



### **STEP 5: Erase the Guidelines**

Once you have finished penciling in your text, go back and erase your guidelines.





### **STEP 6: Fade the Script**

If you are adventurous, take your kneaded eraser and gently dab your text, fading it by about 50 percent. This pushes your region script back so location labels will take precedence and appear bolder.



### ***Ocean and Sea Labeling***

*Oceans should be labeled much like area and region labels, arching through the space and covering a good amount of the map area. Spacing should be broad as well. However, seas and lakes look good when labeled much like location icons, albeit a bit larger. Of course you can use area labeling for seas and lakes too, just keep all types of labeling consistent with each other.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Landmarks

So you've gotten through the basic map stuff and want to know more? Awesome! This second part of the book will teach you how to really make your map shine with the application of a little elbow grease and some creative juices. It's time to start thinking about what features you want to include to make your map special. Do you want to map the prosperous regions of a mighty kingdom? Maybe the territory of an ancient sorcerer king now haunted and desolate? How about the island archipelago fiefdom of a pirate queen? From ancient roads and musty tombs, to the heraldry of imaginary nations and kingdoms, new worlds are at your fingertips!

We'll start the advanced techniques with landmarks. Landmarks are areas of your map that are different than your standard towns and cities and are included to illustrate more specific areas of significance to a viewer. The most common forms of landmarks are roads, highways and sea routes. Other more creative or important places such as old mines, destroyed or haunted ruins and ancient portals are all fun examples of how imaginative you can get with landmarks on your map.

# Roads and Routes

Cities and towns are great, but now you need to connect them all together with passages for the wagons of merchants and for troops to march on. Though cities do not always need to be connected from all directions, you should decide on how settled and well traveled your kingdom is. More populated areas will have many roads between towns and cities, while wilder parts will have few and far between. Routes comes in a few different forms. On land, there are paths, roads and highways, while the water has sea routes.





## HIGHWAYS

Highways are the lifeblood of a kingdom, and are the largest and most traveled of the land routes. Frequently traveled by merchants and trade caravans, highways should connect your largest cities to one another, bypassing smaller towns and hamlets. Highways are very easy to draw.



### STEP 1: Start the Highway

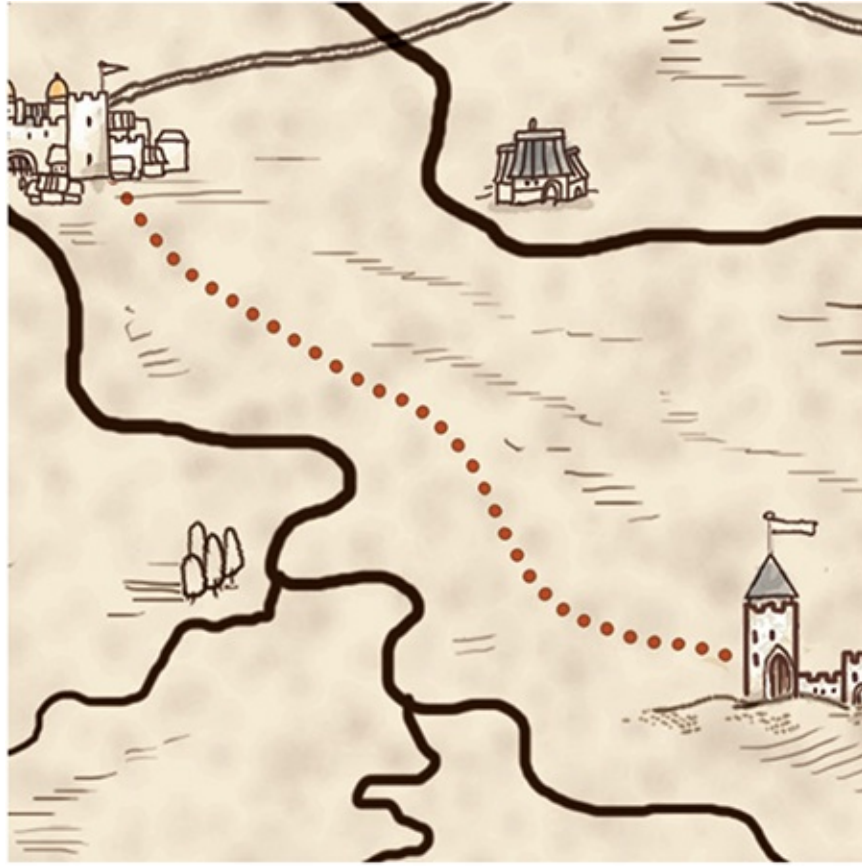
After you decide to make a highway, draw a double line between two cities. Try and make the lines as even as possible.



## STEP 2: Extend the Highway

After you have connected your first two cities, continue your highway by connecting other larger cities to it.

## ROADS



### **STEP 1: Start the Road**

After you decide to make a road, start by drawing a dotted line between two towns or cities. Try and keep the dotted segments evenly spaced for a clean look.



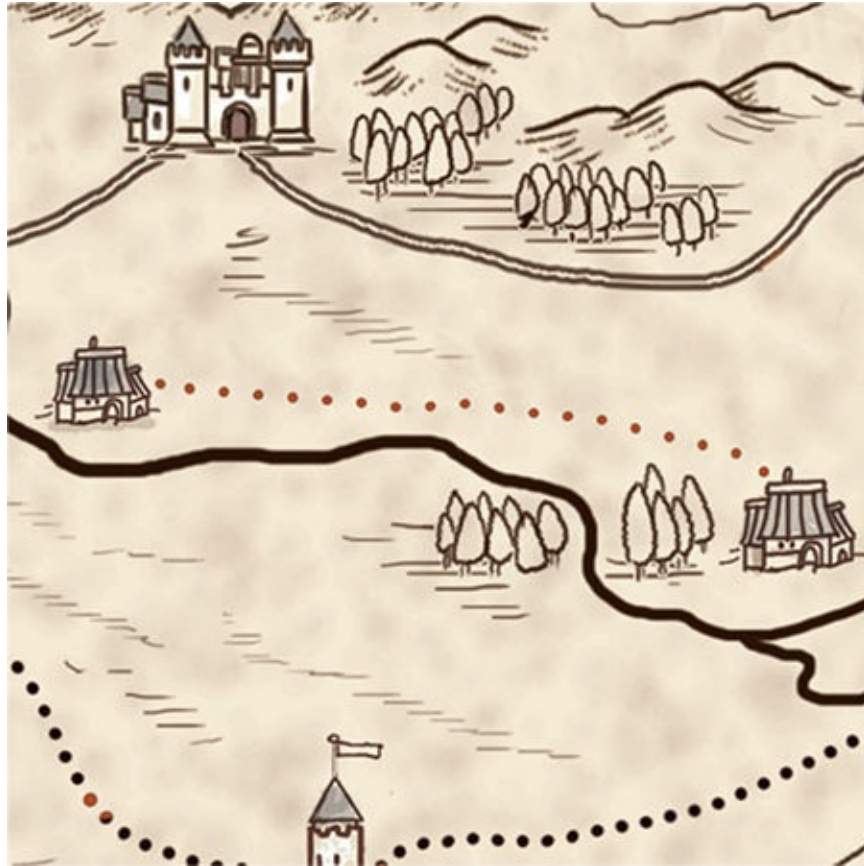


## STEP 2: Extend the Road

Continue the dotted line until it almost touches the second city. Use your eraser to clean up the lines and make them even. After you have finished your first road, go on and connect a few more of your cities together.

## PATHS

Paths are the dirt foot tracks or ancient decaying roads that are seldom traveled. Paths are common when connecting small villages to each other, or for use when traveling through marshes or mountains. Draw a few dotted lines between some of your towns, winding them a bit to give them a wayward look.



### STEP 1: Start the Path

To make a path, draw a light dotted line starting at one hamlet and connect it to another. The dots should be relatively close, but try and keep them even and clean.



## **STEP 2: Extend the Path**

After your first path is finished, continue drawing paths to outlying towns and hamlets and through hills and woods like shown.

## **SEA ROUTES**

Cities and towns near water often trade over the sea, following well-traveled merchant routes. Drawing in sea routes can be fun, since cities from across the world can be connected via their ships. Be creative with your routes; they will often be long but with many branches that go to different destinations.





### **STEP 1: Start the Sea Route**

When making a sea route, draw thick dotted lines between two cities, either across from each other over a sea or lake, or on the same coastline. Be careful to keep the dots similar to one another.



## STEP 2: Extend the Sea Route

Once your first trade route is completed, go on and connect multiple cities together.

## **Special Locations**

When the deep woods need a hidden Elven stronghold, the tall mountains have a mighty dragon nesting in them, or an evil wizard needs a large and impenetrable tower where his hordes of minions can issue forth from to terrorize the free folk, you need to draw in some creative locations. Including a few of these special interest areas adds depth and story elements to a map, and they can be a lot of fun to draw. Here are a selection of locations to draw, though I encourage you to come up with some of your own!

### **DRAGON'S LAIR**



### **STEP 1: Draw the Door**

Draw a large door in the mountains. Add windows, a reinforced doorway and some ruins.





## STEP 2: Add Detail

Refine the window and door details. Fill in the large hole, adding two eyes.  
Draw a wisp of smoke for the dragon.



### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Shade the details and add color to finish the lair.

## **ANCIENT PORTAL**



### **STEP 1: Draw the Portal**

Start by drawing three large stones, making a three-sided picture frame.



## STEP 2: Add Detail

At the bottom, draw in the portal's base, adding a few broken rocks and fallen stones.

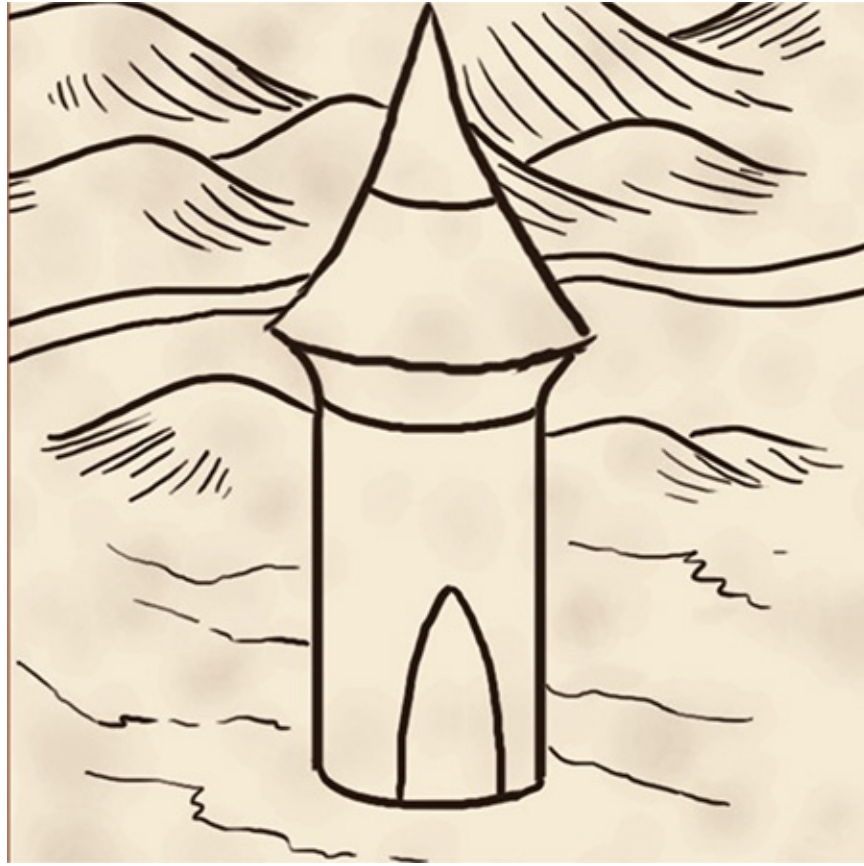




### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Shade the rocks and details. Finish the portal by adding color.

## **WIZARD'S TOWER**



### **STEP 1: Draw the Tower**

Start by drawing a single tall tower with a long and pointy top.





## STEP 2: Add Details

Add some windows, a set of doors at the base and tower reinforcement lines. Draw in a small path and some roof shingles.



### **STEP 3: Final Details**

To finish, shade the tower and its roof with an ominous dark gray or purple. If you are feeling adventurous, paint the doors a nice yellow to stand out.

## **RUINS**



### **STEP 1: Draw the Ruins**

Draw in the bases of a few buildings, careful to cut off the tops so they look disheveled and broken.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Add a half broken tower, and a few more stones to surround it.



### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Shade the ruined houses with dark colors, while dabbing in some dark spots to resemble some burn marks. Add some highlights on the top with lighter colors and your ruins are complete!

## **STONE HENGE**





### **STEP 1: Draw the Henge**

Draw a few small upright stones and top them with another large rectangular stone.





## STEP 2: Add Details

Add in a few more small scattered stones on the ground, as well as some line shading for definition.



### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Add in some detail work on the stones and some background lines to give the stones some weight. Then add color to finish.

## **TROLL CAIRNS**



### **STEP 1: Draw the Cairns**

Start with a group of large bumps in the ground, about three to five will do. Then add small holes in each bump. These basic shapes are where your trolls will live.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Next add some definition to the holes, using linework to give them form. Fill in the troll holes to make them look deep and forbidding.



### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Shade the holes darkly, painting mainly in dark greens and browns, but highlighting in light greens and yellowish whites. Now your trolls are ready to terrorize the local town.

## **SEA MONSTER**





### STEP 1: Draw the Sea Monster

Pick a spot in the open ocean for your sea monster. Start by drawing the waves as a base, and then a few semicircles and a barbed fish tail poking out.



### STEP 2: Add Details

Add some segment lines to the monster's back and ribbing to its underside. Add detail lines to the fins and draw a few more waves to finish the base.





### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Shade the monster with light greens and reds, making sure to dab in some white highlights so it looks like reflections on the scales.

## **TREE OF LIFE**



### **STEP 1: Draw the Tree**

To draw a tree of life, pick a good spot in the middle of a forest, and erase what you currently have. Then draw in the trunk of a large tree with many branches. Use an oak or pine tree for reference.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Continue the tree by adding some details. Draw in some smaller trees around the main tree, as well as a few circular glyphs. Finish by drawing the roots, digging them in the ground. Once the tree is complete, draw in some of the incomplete trees that you had erased.



### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Shade the tree's trunk with a brown or black, and the boughs of the tree with a nice green. You can also have an autumn tree that has a white trunk and orange and red boughs.

### **Tree Design**

Try and model your tree of life on real trees from different places. Maybe it would look interesting as a large African savannah tree, or perhaps a bonsai.

# STATUE OF VICTORY



## STEP 1: Draw the Statue

Start by drawing the statue's base. A rectangle or square works well. Then draw a human-like figure in robes or armor on top, with its arms out.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Finish off the pencilwork by adding in some small detail lines for the clothing and armor.





### STEP 3: Final Details

Shade the statue with blues, grays or purples, adding white highlights on the head, outstretched arms and the top of the base.

### Monument Design

A statue of a warrior is a fitting monument to a great city, though it might be fun to make a great statue a ruin, like the ancient Colossus of Rhodes. Statues don't have to be humanoid either; they can be of animals and monsters.



## CHAPTER SIX

# Iconography

Icons have been used in mapmaking since maps came into existence, and are a great way of showing information in simplified forms. In this chapter, you will learn how to make and use simplified city icons, as well as the most iconic image of all things on a map; the compass rose itself. You will find some exercises to help you create your own using simple geometric shapes.

# Simple City Icons

Simple city icons are a great way of depicting your towns and cities without going into too much detail. They are excellent for use on a large map, or a map with a great many locations. By keeping them bold and simple, and by using standard geometric shapes as a base, you will soon be making your own creative designs!

## CAPITAL ICONS



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

To start a capital, draw a thick circle, and then add another smaller circle inside it.

Capitals should be larger than other city icons.



### **STEP 2: Add Details**

Next, add four smaller circles inside the center.



### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Add a crown to your capital for extra emphasis. A king needs a seat for his kingdom!



## CITY ICONS



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

Just like a capital, a city should also start as a circle, though not as large. Draw in a smaller circle and fill it in.





### **STEP 2: Add Details**

Add four smaller circles to the center. Done! Not all of your cities need to look alike; try and use different shapes and sizes on the base or inside.

## **TOWN ICONS**



### **STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes**

For a town icon, start with a basic square.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Add an even smaller square inside. Next, add four small circles in the center. A town is born!

### Icon Size

Towns should be smaller than cities and capitals. Though square towns are great for quick recognition, you can just as easily depict towns as smaller, more simplified circles.



## VILLAGE ICONS



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shape

Villages should be the smallest of your simple city icons. Start with a small circle, about half the size of the town square.



### STEP 2: Add Detail

To finish, simply draw another small, filled circle inside the other, leaving a small border.



### ***Village Examples***

*Villages can vary in shapes though shouldn't vary much from each other in size.*

*Here are a few different examples of village icons that would be fitting for simple hamlets.*

### **CITADEL ICONS**



#### **STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes**

A citadel is a bastion of power and majesty within a kingdom, and should be as large as a capital icon. Start with two rectangles connected by a small bridge.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Top the two towers with crenellations, three on each top. Be careful to leave a gap between the tower top and the tower itself. Draw in a few lines to make for the door.



## STEP 3: Final Details

Finish off the citadel by filling in the tower areas, leaving a small space for windows in each tower. Add a few towers and your citadel is complete!

### Consistency

If you have multiple kingdoms on a map, it's a nice touch when each faction's cities match one another, at least in shape or color. Keep them similar and the effect will be noticeable.

## HOLDFAST ICONS



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shape

Holdfasts are castles and a more simplified version of the citadel. Start with a rectangular tower and add a window.



### STEP 2: Add Details

Complete your holdfast by adding a crenellated tower top and finishing the base.

### Customize Your Buildings

Both citadels and holdfasts can be illustrated in a great many ways. Try your hand at both by adding a few more towers or small connected houses. Just



make sure all the citadels and holdfasts match one another so there is no confusion.



# Location Icons

Location icons are a fun and simple way of adding in some more exotic points of interest to your map. These areas do not follow the same geometric shapes as the city icons, but each is a small illustrative glyph that tells a different story. From dusty temples to wandering dragons, you will quickly be making up your own icons.

## MINES



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

Mines should be located in foothills or mountains. To start, draw a small door, and add a small mining cart.



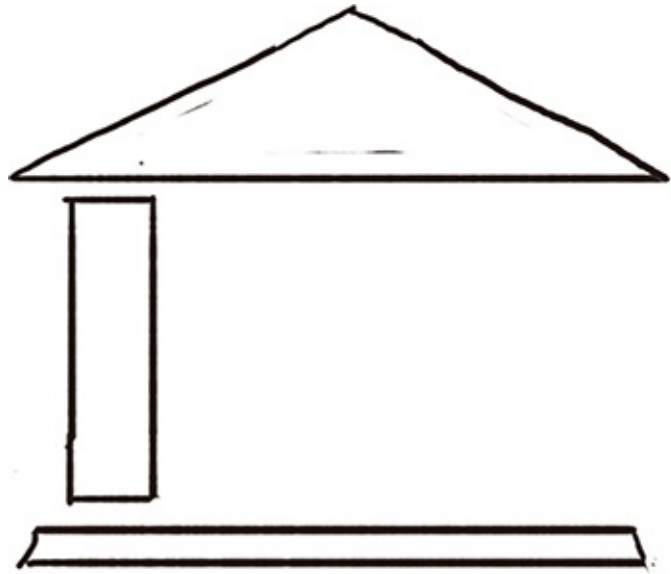
## STEP 2: Add Details

Finish off the mine by adding a small mining pick and a pile of coal or gems.

Depending on the type of mine, you could add in a few bars for a gold mine, or a large diamond to denote a gem mine.



## TEMPLES



### **STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes**

To start, draw the base of the temple, a wedge roof and start adding pillars to it.



### **STEP 2: Add Details**

Finish off the temple by adding more detail to the roof and completing the pillars.



### ***Cultural Design***

*Though a Greek temple is instantly identifiable, you should feel free to alter the temple type depending on your map's cultural influence. A Japanese Shinto temple would look much more appropriate in an eastern themed map than a western Greek temple. Try your hand at a few different temples based on different cultures.*

### **BRIDGES**





### **STEP 1: Draw Basic Lines**

Bridges mark important locations, but are very simple to illustrate. Start by erasing the part of the river that the bridge is crossing, then draw two parallel lines across it.



### **STEP 2: Further Emphasize the Lines**



At the tip of each line, draw another line angled out on each side. To emphasize an important bridge, draw another set of lines outside the original lines.



## RUINS



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

Draw a flat line for the foundation. Then draw some bumps above it for the ruin's edges.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Put in some half-broken towers and a few broken rocks. Fill in the tower and rubble, and add a few lines underneath the base.



## ***Ruins***

*Ruins can look like almost anything, and can be larger or smaller depending on the ruins you are trying to depict. The more broken the towers and rocks, the more important the former location was.*

## **BATTLEFIELDS**



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

Battlefields are important icons, but quite easy to depict. Pick a location, and then draw a sword at a forty-five degree angle.

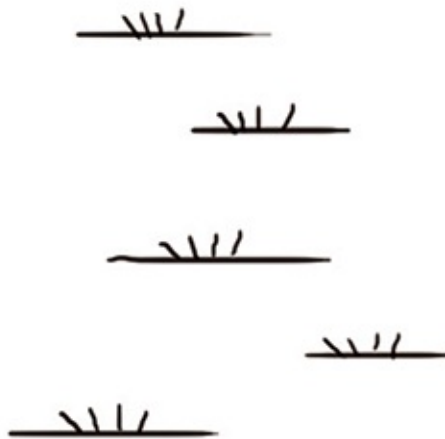


## STEP 2: Add Another Sword

Draw in a second sword crossing the first. If you want to give your battlefields a slightly different look, use a curved sword or even a pair of axes.

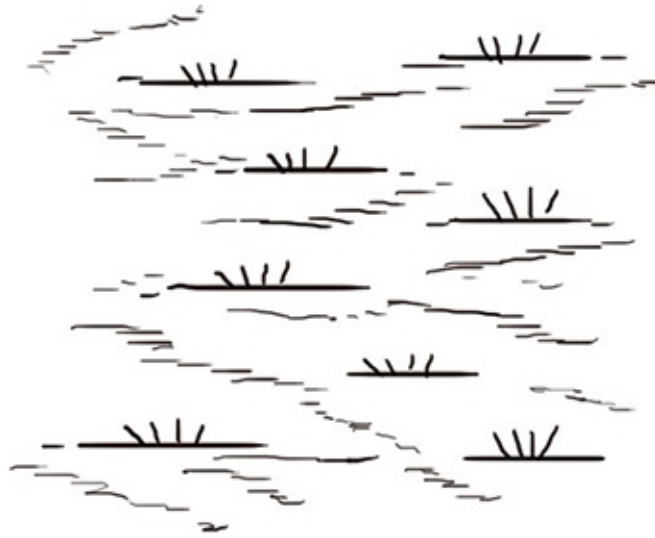


## MARSHLANDS



## STEP 1: Draw the Basic Lines

When drawing in marshlands, start by drawing a few grass tufts, then underline them. Add a few more tufts to make a grouping.



## STEP 2: Add Details

Add a few lighter lines and some sporadic dots. Make the marshlands as large or as small as you want.



## DRAGON



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

Start with a single S line as a base. Then add the crest on the head and the tail.



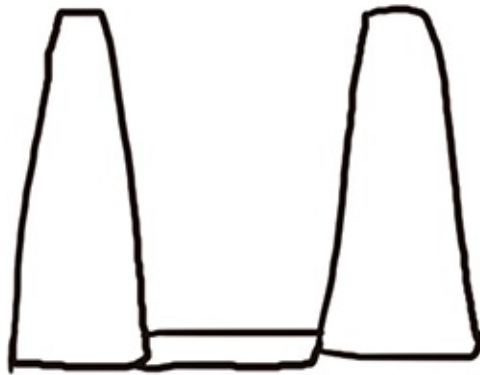


## STEP 2: Add Details

Finish off the dragon with a few claws and further define the tail and the head crest. Fill out the dragon's body, but don't make him too fat. Play around with your dragon shapes; you can always come up with some new designs.



## PORTAL STONE



### STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

Start your portal stone by drawing the three basic stone parts: two tall ones and one smaller one linking them together at the base.

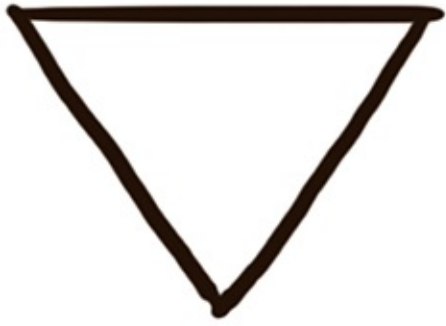


## STEP 2: Add Details

Add a cross stone on the top, and add some shading into the stones. Draw in a spiral line for the portal. You can easily leave out the spiral to denote an inert stone or one that is broken.

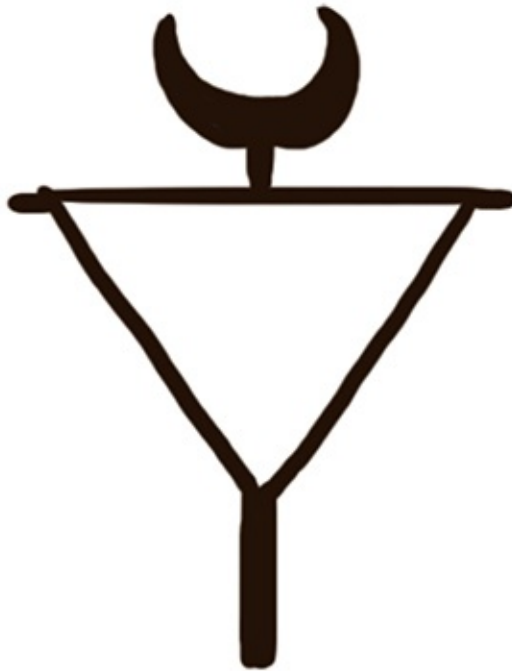


## TROLL CAIRNS



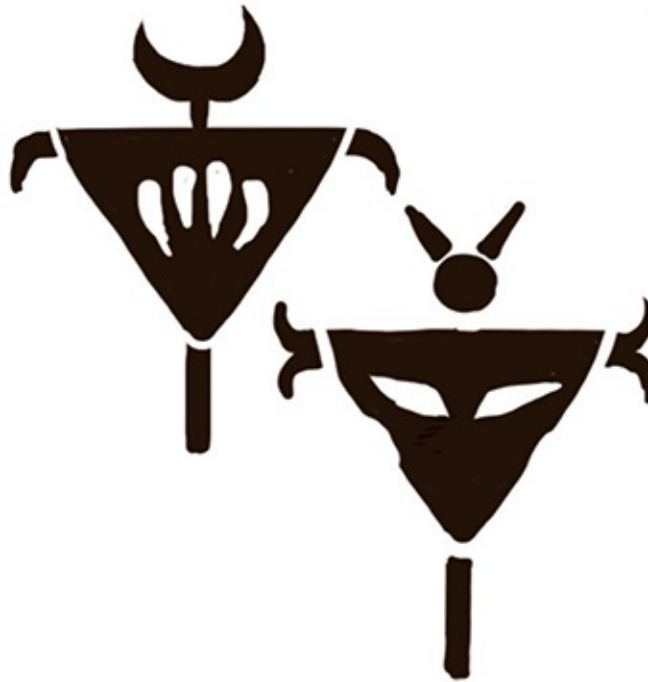
### **STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shape**

Draw a triangle. This will be the basic shape of the banner representing a group of trolls.



### **STEP 2: Add Details**

Draw in the haft of the spear, and then the spear top. Try using different shapes for the banner top. Horns, helmets and half moons work great.



### STEP 3: Final Details

Fill in your banner with some of your own designs and add the cross spear points. Experiment with different designs to make your banners suitably savage.



## ***Finished Icons***

*Below is a map with many of these location icons included together. See how they are spaced and play off one another? When putting them on your own map, be free with them, but don't clutter your map.*



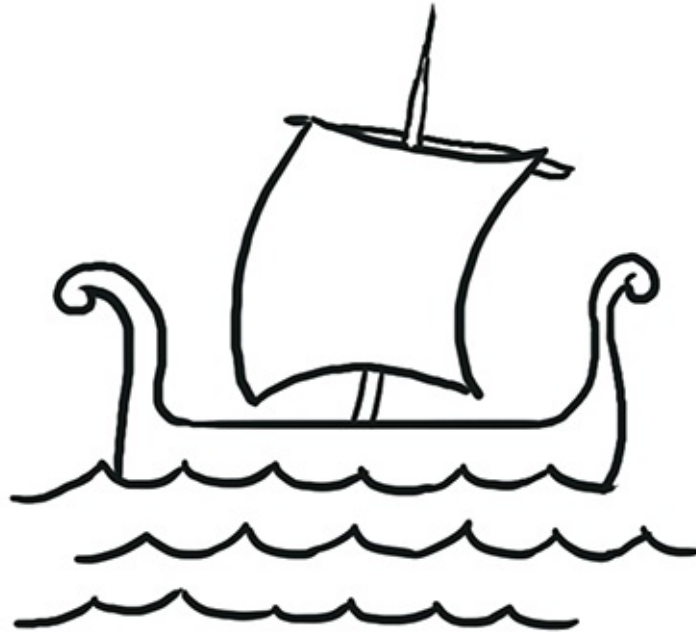


# **Ocean Icons**

Fantasy map oceans are usually filled with all manner of raiding warships, sea monsters and merchant vessels trying to ply their wares across the dangerous seas. This section includes tutorials on how to draw some basic icons to include in your fantasy waters. Whether they be ships or monsters of the deep, soon you will have plenty of creatures inhabiting the high seas.

## **LONGSHIPS**

Longships are traditionally the vessels of the Vikings, notorious brigands of the old world. Their primary mode of transportation, the longship, was a sleek ocean-going vessel with a shallow draft. Able to carry both warriors and pillaged plunder, the sight of a longship's single sail on the horizon inspired fear and terror in ample measure. For your purposes, they are also a fantastic way of depicting barbarian raiders on your own map.



### **STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes**

Select a spot in the ocean, preferably near the coast. Draw in the distinct lines of the ship's hull, which should curve up at both ends. Then draw in a large taut sail and a mast.

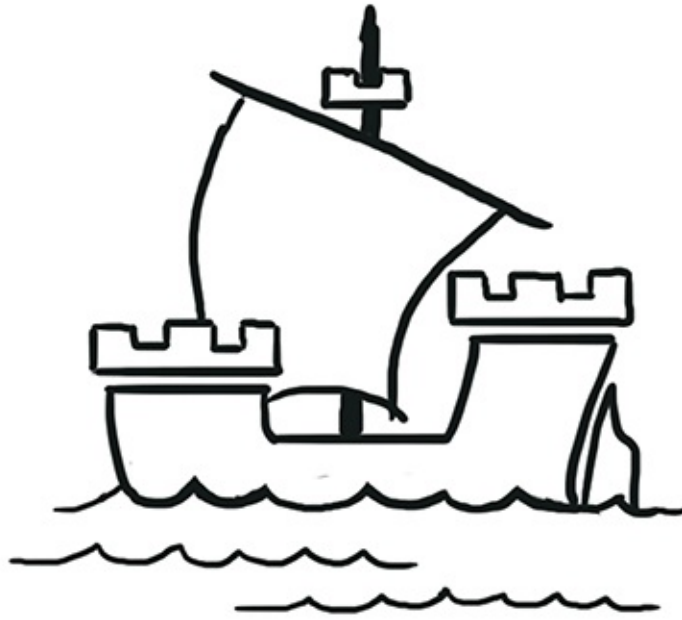


## **STEP 2: Add Details**

Draw a few round shields on the side of the hull, carefully erasing the parts of the hull that become covered. Then add a flag to the top, as well as rigging lines and some hull planks. Fill in the rest of the sail so it pops out. You can draw a symbol or a pattern on the sail or flag. Battle axes or other weapons are great symbols for barbarians!

## **TRADE COGS**

Trade cogs are a wonderful way of emphasizing particularly lucrative trade routes, or neat to have just for show. Historically, trade ships and cogs were large and multi-masted vessels, capable of carrying sizable amounts of cargo over long distances. Having multiple masts allows these relatively heavy and clumsy vessels to make best use of the wind. The design of the traditional trading vessel did not change much for many years, and usually consisted of high fore- and after-“castles,” which were useful when overlooking the sea and cresting high ocean waves. For all their size, trade cogs and ships were vulnerable to attackers if caught by sleeker and faster predators. Cogs would try and outrun opponents whenever possible.



### **STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes**

Select a spot in the ocean, preferably along a sea route. Draw in the lines of the ship's hull, which should be short and fat. On each top corner, draw a castle top on both the front and back. The "castle stern" should always be taller. Add in the waves at the base of the ship.



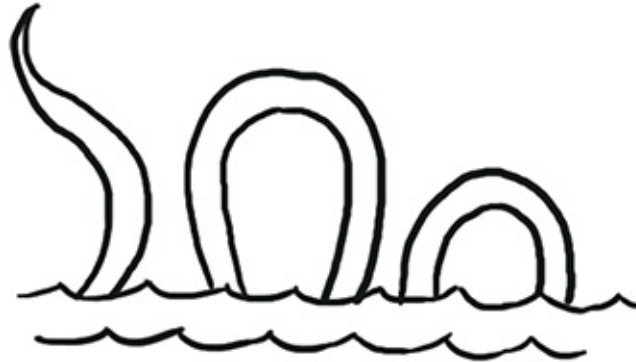
## **STEP 2: Add Details**

Continue the trade ship by drawing a front mast. You can also include fore and aft sails. Add the lines for the wood planks of the ship and add detail to the main sail.

## **SEA MONSTERS**

The seas are a dangerous place, with plenty of monsters hunting for the unwary ship. With beak, claw, tentacle and fin, these monsters of the deep are always a threat. Historically sailors believed certain areas to contain a number of fantastic creatures that were a danger to passing ships. These areas were marked on nautical maps as places best avoided if at all possible. Whales, sharks and squid were all considered to be large and threatening, and their size and impact on the maritime community were often exaggerated to a great degree.

However, in a fantasy world, such creatures do exist, crushing ships and devouring sailors!



### **STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes**

Pick a spot in a region of the ocean that is off the beaten track, maybe in a corner somewhere. For a large sea serpent, draw a large horizontal S in the water. Erase half of it, and draw in the ocean waves as a base.



### **STEP 2: Add Details**

Draw a large fin on the tail and another toward the front of the monster's body. You can also add a few segmented scales if you want. Add a few more wave



lines to finish.

Sea monsters need not all be serpents, but can also take the form of massive octopi, huge sharks, killer whales and so forth. Let your imagination run wild and see what you can come up with.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Heraldry and Shields

Heraldry and shield design are the symbols of different factions, cities and nobility. On a map, shields are an excellent way of depicting cultural and political boundaries without actually drawing lines on a map. Though not every town and hamlet should have its own shield design, cities and capitals would often be the home of very specific noble families. Each would have its own heraldry and influence. Shields are also good for marking general regions, denoting areas of cultural influence that a faction may have on it.

## Shield Shapes

Not all shields should be of the same shape. Many factors affect shield shape, including where the city or region is from, as well as cultural influence of that area. A western medieval city is usually defended with a “heater” type shield (an upside-down iron), while eastern cities tend toward more rounded shields. However, a fantasy map need not obey any standard, so play around with shapes to come up with one you like.



### ***Basic Shapes***

*Basic shield shapes are very simple, consisting of circles, rectangles, heaters and ovals. Here is a selection of basic ones. Try and draw some of these freehand, or come up with your own unique shapes.*



### ***Shields for Battle***

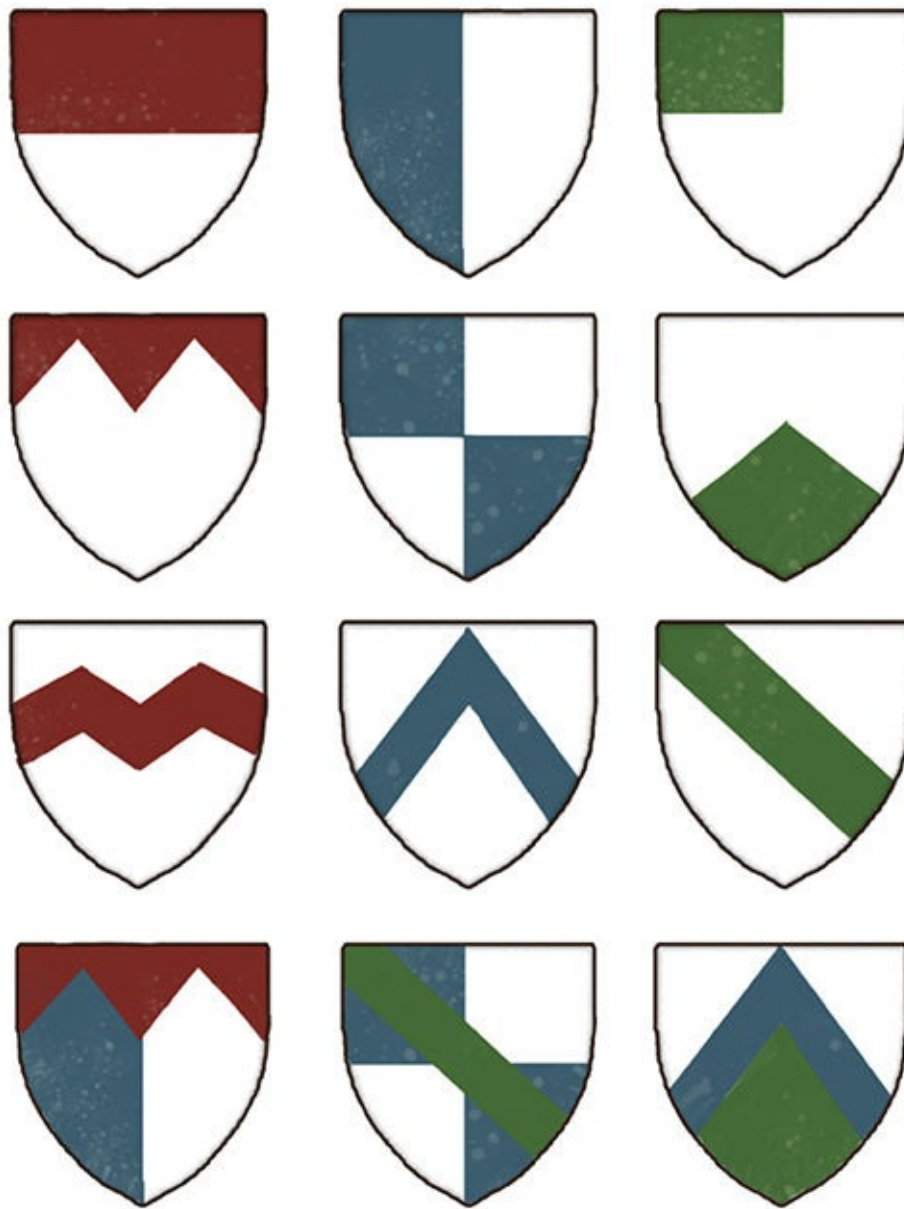
*Shields in the west tended to be heater or teardrop shaped because of the dominance of heavy cavalry on the battlefield. Heater and teardrop shields were easier to use and less cumbersome than large round shields. Since heavy cavalry were usually made up of the nobility, heater shields tended to dominate the heraldry and shield design of the time.*

*Most cities within the same culture would share the same shield shape, even if they differed in color or markings.*

# Simple Heraldry

Heraldry is the use of specific graphic symbols and icons to form a unique pattern. Heraldry is best known for decorating the shields of medieval knights, though it is still in use today, often for the towns and cities of Europe, as well as old or renowned families. Heraldry is a very old art which utilizes specific iconography and rules. The official use of heraldry started sometime within the mid-eleventh century when knights first started to use symbols to define themselves and their family houses from their peers. The art evolved and was finally standardized between the European nations around 1500 AD. There are a bewildering variety of heraldic devices, though all are quite fascinating. In this chapter you will learn how to make some simple heraldic symbols for your own kingdoms. Have fun and be creative!





### **Quartering Parts**

*When you have settled on an appropriate shield shape, it's time to lay in some basic heraldry overtop of it. Heraldry at its most basic consists of a shield being "quartered." This means that it can have straight bars, zigzags, quartered squares, half bars, or stars and dots. I have included a number of basic heraldic devices for you to choose from and emulate. Feel free to mix and match them to come up with your own design.*

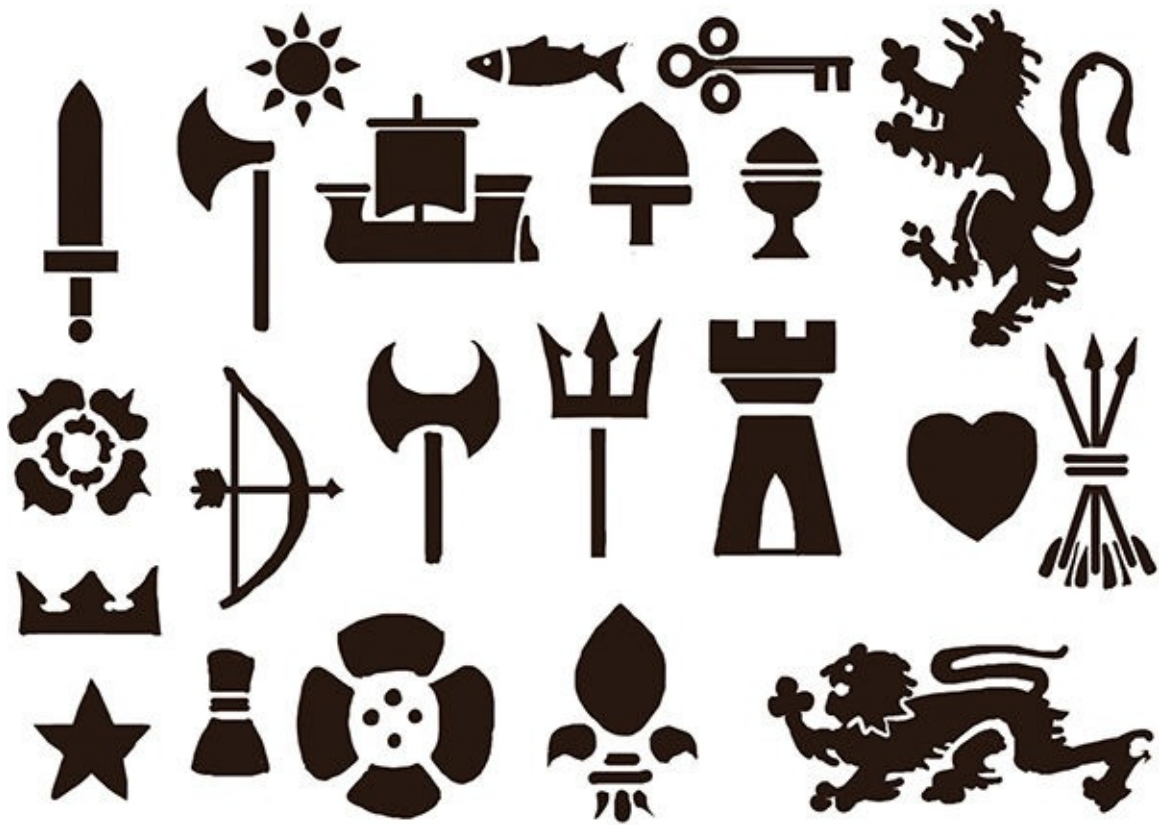


### ***Historic Shield Examples***

*Here are some historic examples from Europe. Heraldry was often quartered. This was a way of differentiating between close noble houses by adding slight differences to each heraldic device. Each piece of the quartering process meant something different. This usually served to tie the many different houses and blood lines together, telling friend and foe who their family and allies were, making for easy recognition.*

## Simple Shield Symbols

Not only would shields have different shapes and quartering to differentiate them, they would also have house symbols, and faction devices. These would come in a bewildering variety of forms, from wild animals to ships, weapons and flowers. The addition of a sigil (or symbol) can also be used to tie factions and houses together, though it was common for multiple rivals to have similar, or even the same sigil. In this section I have a few more basic symbols for you to use or draw inspiration from.



*Applying Symbols*

*Select a sigil, and overlay it onto your shield. If it's dark on dark, erase the dark quartered part so that the sigil shines through, creating a nice bold shape. After you have combined a shield shape, a quartering shape and a simple symbol, your shield will be finished!*



### ***Shield Examples***

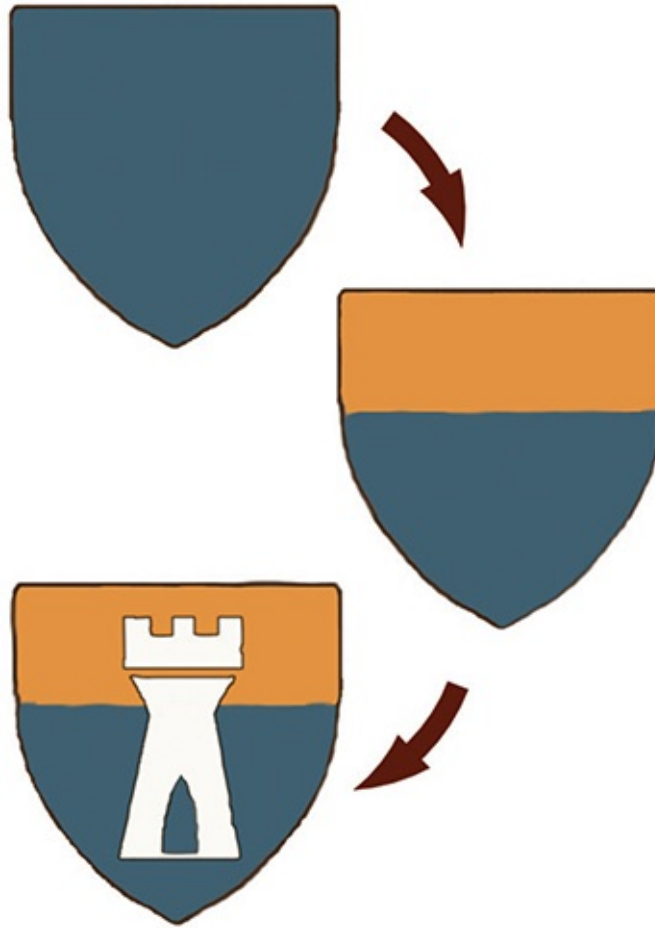
*There are almost endless combinations for you to mix and match. Try and remember not to make shields too elaborate, or choose too many symbols for one shield. One is usually plenty. Kingdoms share the same basic shield shapes, though they may all have different quartering and symbols. Use these combinations I came up with as inspiration for your own designs.*

# Painting Shields



## STEP 1: Shield Colors

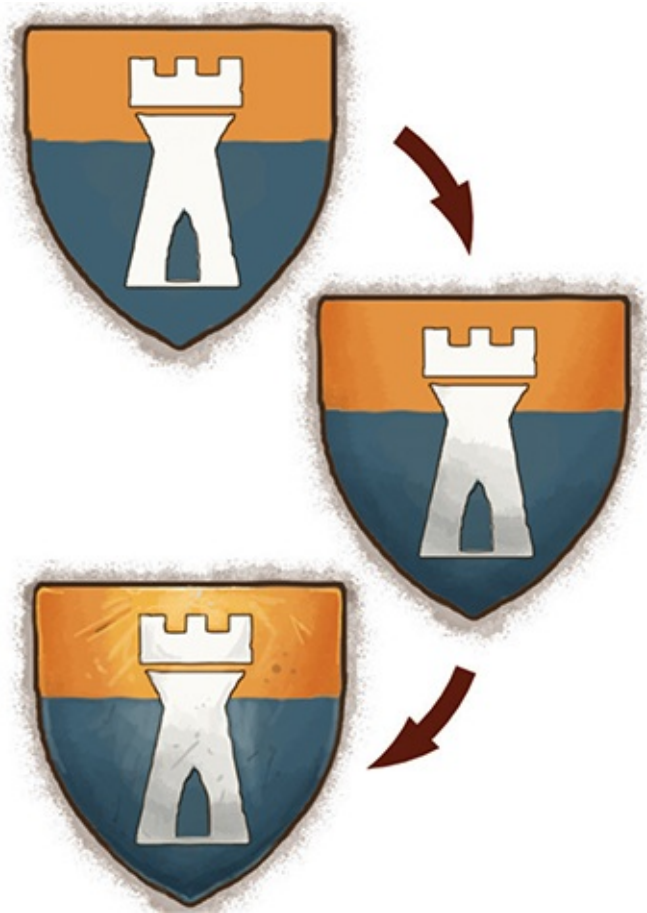
When choosing colors for your shield, it's best to stick with the primary and secondary colors, using complementary colors where possible. This gives the shield a more homogenous look. Usually you will choose a primary color that serves as the main color, and a secondary color that will be used on the quartered part.



## **STEP 2: Paint the Basic Shield**

Once you have chosen your primary and secondary colors, paint the shield shape in your primary color. Be careful not to go outside your shield's edges. Select a type of quartering, and carefully paint that on top in your secondary color. Finally, paint the symbol on top of the shield, centering it as best you can. The symbol should stand out, either as a darker or lighter color, depending on the background.





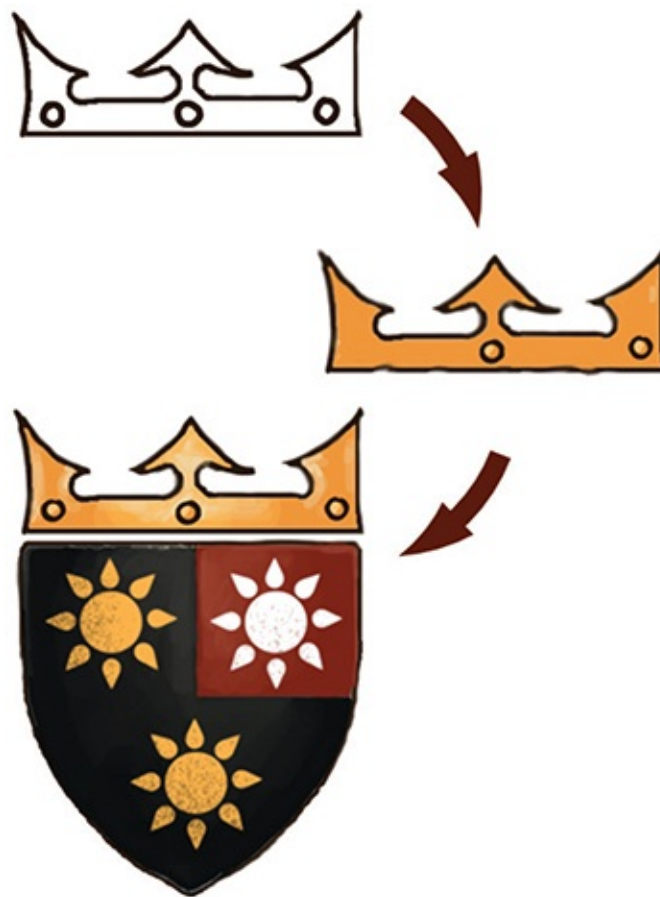
### **STEP 3: Add Weathering and Highlighting**

Once you have painted your colors, it's time to give the shield a bit of oomph. To start, shade around the shield just a bit to give it some pop. If you want, add a few dents and scuffs to the shield as well. After that, add shading to the bottom of the shield and to the dents and scuffs, painting in slightly darker tones than your original colors. Finally, use lighter versions of your colors to highlight your shield, starting at the bottom point. Use a slightly brighter color at the top center to give it some dimension.



## Shield Embellishments

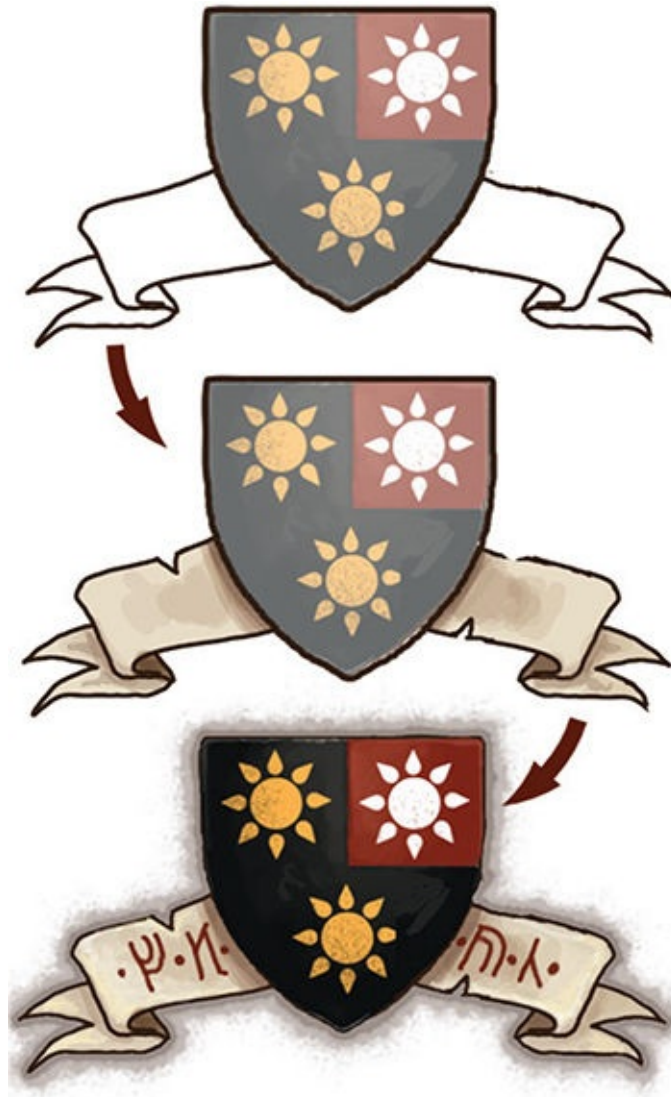
Sometimes a shield should be emphasized even more, whether it be for the kingdom's capital city, or for spiritual or mercantile importance. Additional symbols can be added to the top or sides of a shield to further distinguish it. Symbols such as a crown, or even illustrative scrollwork are typical examples.



### ***King's Crown***

*Begin by drawing in the rough shape of a king's crown. This may be as elaborate as you'd like, though keeping it relatively simple is usually best. Next, paint in*

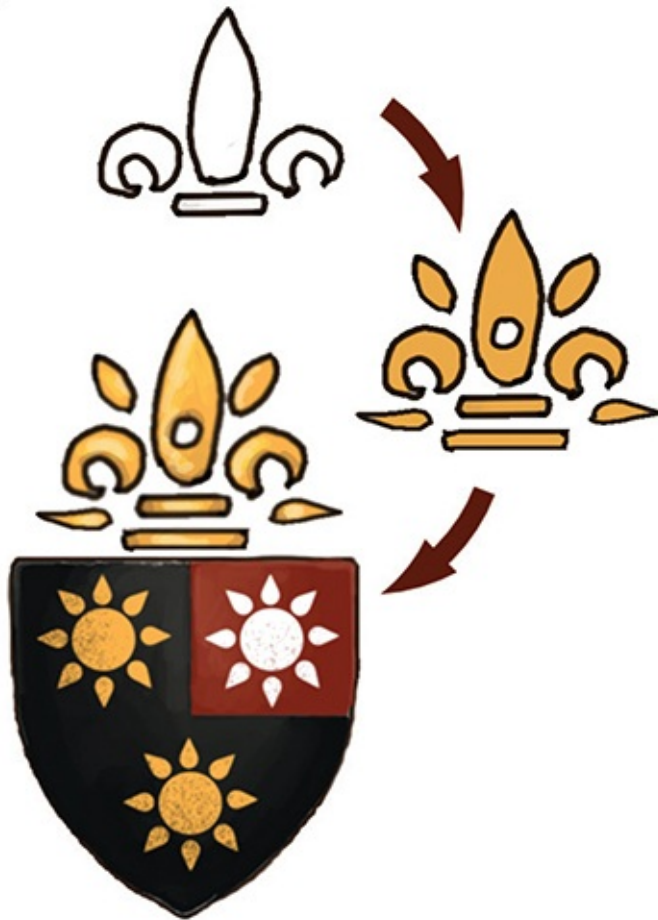
*your primary color, usually a gold or yellow, carefully keeping within your lines. Last, add some highlights, and then outline the entire crown in a dark brown or black to make it pop. Now, your kingdom has a seat of power.*



### **Scrollwork**

*Carefully draw in a basic scroll shape, making sure it wraps behind itself, and goes behind your shield. Paint it a light color, usually ochre or cream, though it can be any color you choose. Finally, shade the folded parts darker, and highlight the edges. Add a few runes. Outline the scroll, but not so much that it*

*takes away from the shield. Play with different colors; red and white work well too.*



### ***Graphic Floral Designs***

*Start by carefully drawing your design above the basic shield. I have chosen a simple flowerlike design. Next, paint it your shield's secondary or complementary color. Then add shading and highlights to give the shape more dimension.*





# Shield Placement



## **City Shields**

*A city shield should be placed directly over the city artwork, though you should leave a small space so as not to crowd the actual city icon or art. You may wind up covering part of the map's topography if you do this, and if so, that's OK. If you don't want to do this, you can move the shield underneath the city artwork as well, though above is usually preferable.*



## ***Regional Shields***

*Regional shields differ in placement from city shields, but not by much. You still want to try and maintain equidistant space from map elements, especially cities. Improper placement can lead to unbalancing a map's aesthetics. Try not to cover map elements, and place these shields in open areas so they don't clash with other items of importance. Allow them to stand on their own. Regional shields should be larger than city shields, and in some cases you will only need one for your purposes.*





## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Political Boundaries

The use of boundaries can form a crucial part of a map and tell a viewer much about the land's history and its people. At their heart, boundaries are dividing lines between a country's inhabitants, either on a political, geographical or military basis. These dividing lines can accentuate a map or dominate it, though historically, maps with political or country boundaries wouldn't have much other detail. When laying in boundaries, there are a few things you should think about.

- How many factions do I want portrayed on my map?
- Do I want to portray regional boundaries as well as national borders?
- How do I want to paint in my boundaries?

Soon you will have plenty of rival factions, kingdoms and principalities populating your fantasy map!

# Boundary Lines

The first way to differentiate regions and counties is by using line work. As opposed to the use of color alone, lines are a much bolder type of boundary, but if not used correctly they can clutter a map with too much information. Line boundaries can be made up of several different types of line, varying from repeating dots and crosses to squares. When using colored lines, it's best to use reds and dark browns since they give a uniform, subtle touch.



*Line Types*

*Here are some line boundary types that you can use on your map that will serve well to divide your regions and nations. You can mix and match them on the same map, though it's best to stick to one or two types to avoid confusing a viewer. Use these as inspiration for your own boundary ideas.*



### **STEP 1: Select Line Type**

Select the boundary line type that you wish to use, and then lightly draw in your initial sketch line where your boundary should go.





## STEP 2: Start Marking Lines

Mark in your first boundary line mark. Be careful to try and follow rivers, mountains and hills as you continue.



### STEP 3: Continue the Lines

Continue the boundary lines, making sure not to cover any icon or label. A boundary line should always take a back seat to all other elements in a map and blend in.



#### STEP 4: Final Details

Continue with the rest of your boundary lines, following steps 1–3. Finally, finish up your boundary lines, taking care to clean up your lines as best you can.

# Boundary Colors

Using colors for nations to tell them apart is another technique. The use of color as boundaries has been the most common technique in cartography, and unlike line boundaries, is an immediate and bold way of presenting a viewer with instant and definitive information.

Generally, color boundaries are best used on monochromatic or simple parchment maps, where the color will stand out. Historically, color boundaries emerged with the birth of the first nation states, becoming commonplace in maps from around the 1600s and on.



**STEP 1: Select the Color**



To begin, select the color that best serves your purpose, and paint in your first line by hugging the shore boundaries and rivers (if any), being careful to not cover the actual dark boundary lines.



## STEP 2: Continue Adding Color

Try not to cover any towns or cities directly, going underneath them when possible. Complete your boundary line by coming full circle.



### ***Subtle Colors***

*Here is a selection of colors that work well when painting in boundaries. Boundary colors should always be subtle and somewhat transparent so as not to cover any details or the terrain. If using a paintbrush, thin down your paint by mixing it with water so you can brush in your colors slowly and carefully. If using a computer, reduce the opacity of the color to at least 50 percent.*





### STEP 3: Keep Color Separate

When color boundaries border each other, which will happen often, they should run parallel to each other, careful not to touch.



# Boundary Types

There are two different types of boundaries, national and regional. National boundaries are the boldest and thickest, and are used most often to denote national borders. Regional boundaries are much more subtle with smaller markings but are the most common and versatile, often used to depict county and political borders within a kingdom.



## ***National Boundaries***

*National boundaries should be thick and very pronounced, usually solid and bright as well. National boundaries should be quite bold and instantly recognizable.*



## ***Regional Boundaries***

*When depicting counties or provinces, regional boundary lines are best. These lines are often dotted, or broken, and are much thinner than national lines. This is usually due to the fact that counties and provinces would blend into a map, not stick out like a sore thumb.*



# Using Natural Boundaries

When laying in boundaries, you should always try to follow the natural contours of mountains, hills and rivers when you can. Natural boundaries are often the place where state boundaries reside. Water boundaries need not be highlighted by regional boundaries, though national ones can overlap and cover them. You should always think of your map and its factions, and how they would share or fight over land. Properly established boundaries can be an interesting component of a good map, spurring a viewer to think more about the people and places within it.





### ***River Boundaries***

*When drawing river boundaries, try and hug the river as close as possible.*



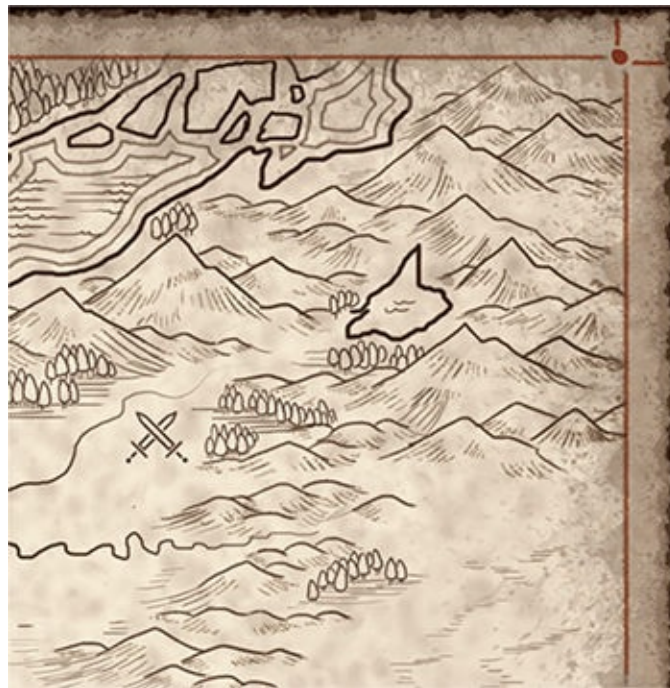
## CHAPTER NINE

# Backgrounds

Backgrounds can be made up of a great many things, from the borders and corners, to informative motif boxes that provide design and compositional elements to a map. A map border should often be thought of as a frame of sorts. Just like a picture frame, a border can be very simple or very elaborate, depending on the type of map you are making. A proper border not only looks suitable and contains design flourishes to enhance a map, but also includes subtle information for a viewer. The most interesting borders are those that are integrated directly into a map's composition, giving you a seamless piece. Backgrounds also broadly include one of the most important pieces of map information, the legend, which is a keystone to any map.

# Borders

Borders can be portrayed in a variety of ways, from simple line art to more complex painted framing designs. One of the most important elements of a map's border is the “neatline” that acts as a true frame by giving the map a definitive border, which no artwork should exist outside of. Many maps also include a scale ruler (or border) within the neatline, giving a map that distinctive checkered border look. In this section we will be focusing on basic techniques.



## STEP 1: Mark the Corner

Take your ruler and lightly mark a point in each corner of your map about  $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ " (6–13mm) in from each edge.



## STEP 2: Create a Basic Frame

Then using your ruler as a straightedge, connect your dots, forming a basic frame. You may make the line thicker or thinner depending on your preference.



### STEP 3: Add Another Frame Line

Now draw another frame within the lines you just drew, about  $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) inside the first line.



### STEP 4: Create a Scale Ruler

Each segment should be equal to give a uniform look. Measure the length of your neatline and divide it by as many scale segments as you want. Use your ruler to dot in the rough placements. Fill every other segment, like a checkerboard.





### STEP 5: Final Details

After your scale is completed, take your ruler and draw another frame about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) outside your neatline. Your scale is complete. Just add color to finish the piece.

#### Color Variation

You don't have to stick to black and white when constructing a border ruler. A variety of colors look good as both a neatline and a border ruler. Reds, blues and browns all are perfect for old maps.

# Border Corners

The corners of your border are a great way to add some character to your map. Corners can come in a large variety of forms. Corners are essentially their own small illustrations that integrate with your original neatline and scale border elements. Properly done, corners can do much to make a map shine. This section will focus on both simple and more advanced techniques for tackling corner illustrations. Simple line corners add a nice accent to your map, and are quick and easy to do, while complex corners make use of additional elements that require patience and practice to master.



**STEP 1: Prepare the Corner**



Select the first corner you'd like to illustrate. Let's use the same corner we were just working on. Take your eraser and carefully clear the work area.



## **STEP 2: Add the Basic Design**

Let's start with a simple geometric design. Don't be afraid to try different shapes!



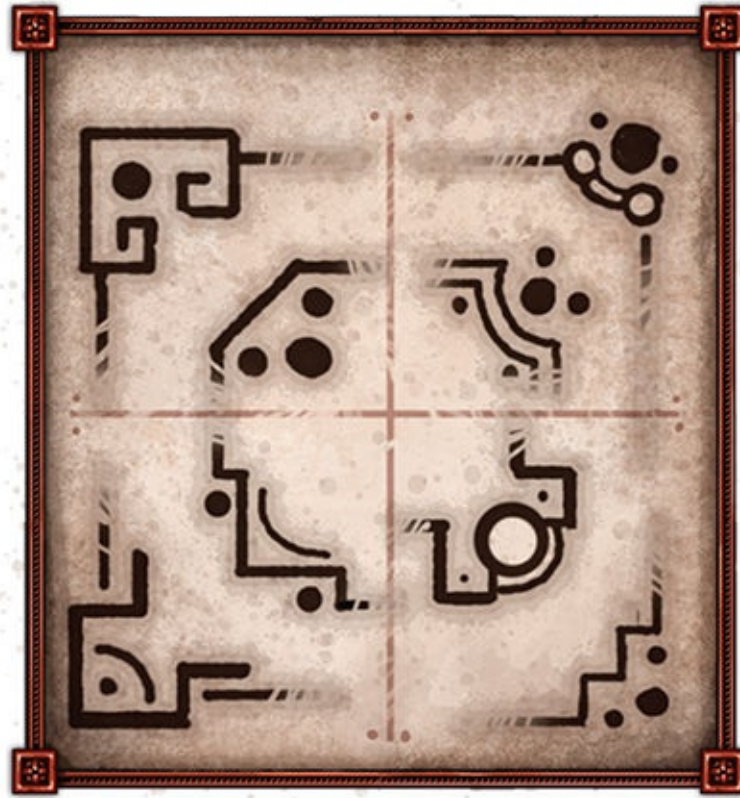
### STEP 3: Add More Details

Continue by adding a few more detail lines and marks, trying to keep them as even to one another as possible. Draw a small circle centered in the corner.



## STEP 4: Final Details

Finish your corner by drawing in the parts of the border and scale that you had initially erased. This will integrate the corner seamlessly.



### ***Simple Corners***

*Squares and rectangles are wonderful for corners, but you should experiment with other shapes too. You might be pleasantly surprised with what you can come up with!*





# Complex Corners

While simple corners are fitting for simpler maps, sometimes you will want to include more complex illustrative elements. Complex corners are essentially small illustrations that are a bit like book corners, adding sophistication and character to an in-depth map. In this section you will learn how to construct complex corners by starting with geometric shapes, and progressing with more organic elements to form your own distinct designs.



## STEP 1: Prepare the Corner

Select a corner and erase the neatline and borders.



## STEP 2: Add the Basic Design

Draw a circle as centered as possible in the corner. Try and make it as round and even as possible. Complex corners can vary in size but should never be larger than 1" (25mm) in diameter.





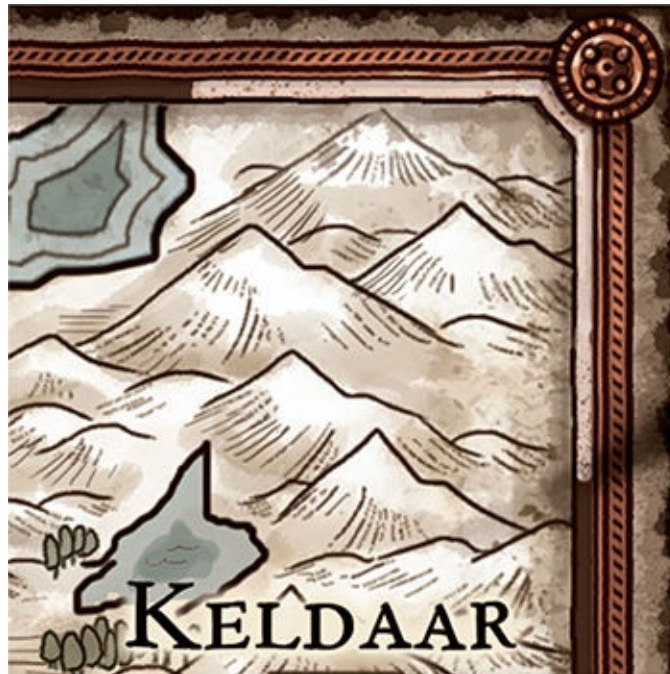
### STEP 3: Add Details

Draw another circle, giving the original circle a border, and then notch the edges so they look braided. Draw a few more smaller circles within your braided circle, and connect each with some small detail lines. Think of a knot and how each strand braids around one another.



### STEP 4: Connect the Corner

Finish your corner by reconnecting your neatline and the ruler border so that it is seamlessly integrated. Try your hand at some circle or triangle designs.



### STEP 5: Final Details

Add shading and color to finish it.



# Corner Flourishes

To spice up your corner borders, you can include a few design elements that add further sophistication to the look and feel of your map. Flourishes are graphic elements that serve to better integrate the corners with the neatline, but can sometimes stretch into the map itself. They can vary from simple line designs, to complex illustrative elements. Unlike the corner art, they may extend out, forming a part of the neatline's border. Flourishes can be roughly characterized as both basic and advanced.



## STEP 1: Prepare the Corner

Start by erasing the inner neatline from your corner.





## STEP 2: Add the Basic Shape

Starting from the corner circle, draw a petal pointing into the map. This is your main petal.



### STEP 3: Add Details

Then outline the petal with another line and add a circle on each side.



### STEP 4: Integrate the Flourish

Fill in a few small curled twigs on each side and connect them back to the main petal. Redraw any part of the corner that was erased and integrate the flourish into your corner.



## STEP 5: Final Details

Finish it up by adding shading and color.





## ***Basic Flourishes***

*Basic flourishes are small embellishments that are quick and easy to do. They are based on simple flower and plant leaves that are drawn in a bold and graphic way.*

# Advanced Flourishes

Advanced flourishes are larger and more difficult to do. They usually consist of longer branch arms and more floral elements. They can also be made up of other smaller illustrations of weapons and figures, and have a less graphic and more illustrative look. For this example complex image, let's try a vinelike design with some berries.



## STEP 1: Prepare the Corner

Begin your advanced design by erasing your inner neckline, and prepping it for your line work.



## STEP 2: Add the Basic Shapes

Draw in two vines extending out from the border corner. Try to make these as even and symmetrical as possible.



### STEP 3: Add Details

Continue the design by adding a few more vines in the same fashion as the first and second, each about half the size, as well as a cluster of berries in the center. Add more small offshoot vines to each major vine, curving them inwards.



### STEP 4: Integrate the Flourish

Complete your design by adding in another smaller group of vines, and a few clusters of berries. Clean up your drawing and integrate it with your neatline. If your design overlaps your neatline, that's OK too!



### STEP 5: Final Details

Finish it up by adding shading and color.



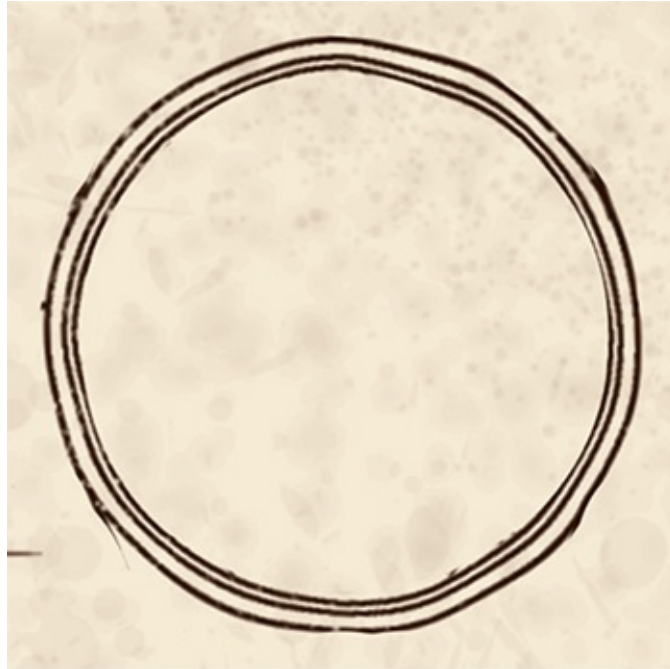
### *Advanced Flourishes*

*Mixing heavy straight shapes with leaves, berries and flowers can form some very nice design elements for your corners. Take a look at some old medieval maps. Medieval artists were very good at combining hard and soft elements.*



# Compass

The compass rose is perhaps one of the most, if not the most, indicative images of cartography. Not only is it a beautiful piece of art that can tie a map together, it is also functional, providing information and direction to a viewer. Compasses come in many sizes, shapes and styles, though all share some similar qualities, such as giving direction. Usually the north point is the most emphasized, though each point is represented as a different direction. Compasses traditionally look like a star with a number of points that can vary from four, eight and sixteen to even thirty-two points! These points also depict nautical degrees and help seafarers plot courses and make use of the winds. Since certain areas of the ocean would provide better winds than others, there would be smaller compasses located on some maps for the purpose of triangulation, or getting bearings on a specific point. This is very useful in the wide open sea. Not all compasses would focus on magnetic north as we are used to, and some would focus on the stars as the principal guide. However, today, you will be learning how to construct a basic compass for your map.



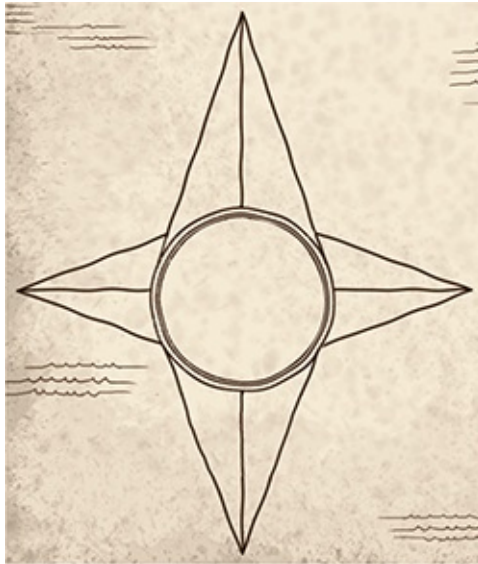
### **STEP 1: Draw the Center Shape**

When constructing a compass, first draw a circle about the size of a quarter (about 1" [25mm]) and then another inside it.



### **STEP 2: Add the Points**

Starting with the north point, draw two long triangles on the top and bottom of the circle, and two shorter ones on the sides.



### **STEP 3: Divide the Points**

Divide each of the triangles in half.



### **STEP 4: Add Design**

Go back into the middle of the center circle and draw a knight's shield. Then fill the rest of the circle with floral designs for embellishment.



### **STEP 5: Final Details**

Mark the south, east and west points with the first letter of the respective direction. For north, put in a larger N to give it more emphasis.



# Legends

The legend is the heart of a map in some respects and can form a wonderful centerpiece. It is where the title, icons and scale elements are explained and defined. A legend can be a beautiful design element when integrated with your corner and boundary art. The basic construction and information are explained in detail in this section.



## STEP 1: Prepare the Corner

Decide where you would like to place your legend. A good place is usually in one of the four corners, or the center bottom of the map. Draw in your rough lines as a guide.





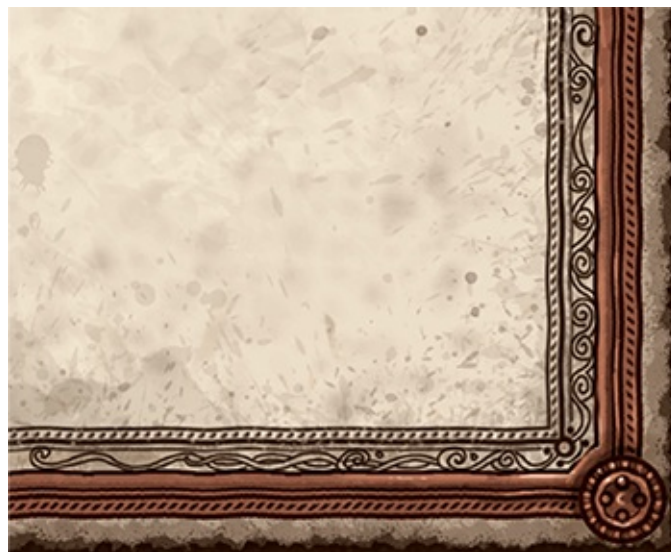
## STEP 2: Add the Basic Frame

Taking your straightedge (or design template), carefully draw in your basic design frame.



## STEP 3: Add Details

Once the basics are in, add some details to the corners and edge lines to the frame.



## STEP 4: Integrate the Frame

If your legend is close to your border art or boundaries, integrate your legend frame into the border. You can do this by adding some additional line work or floral designs.



### **STEP 5: Final Details**

Finish it up by adding shading and color.

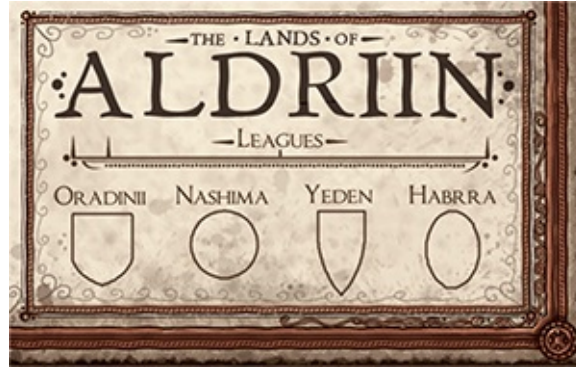
# Legend Information

The information that you include within your legend is up to you, though there are some elements that should be included for it to be effective. The basic things, like the map's title, need to be included. Other details such as icon and boundary definitions are dependent on what type of map you have made.



## STEP 1: Sketch the Placement

Lightly pencil in markers for where you want to write in the title of your map first. Then, depending on the information you'd like to depict, space out your other typography. Try not to crowd your information together. Space out where you would like to lay in your map's scale.



## STEP 2: Add the Typography

Lay in your typography, title first. Then draw in any icons you'd like to include, making sure they are lined up and the spacing is even. Draw in your scale, using a straight line. It should be the same length as your ruler boundary.



## STEP 3: Final Details

Finish your legend by adding in some more details, shading and color. Shading the borders gives the legend some depth.

# Information Boxes

Information boxes are design elements that are useful for depicting either important text information in certain areas, or giving your map some nice fantastical clutter. They're very similar to legends, but are much smaller, and should have less emphasis. They are a good way of complementing your legend or the corners of your maps.



## STEP 1: Draw the Basic Shapes

When you have decided where to place your information box, carefully draw in your first circle or rectangle to serve as your initial frame and fill it out with another line.





## STEP 2: Add Details

Then draw another box within your circle and add some simple floral design elements.





### **STEP 3: Final Details**

Finally, add in your typography and your information box is complete.

## CHAPTER TEN

# Painting Techniques

There are two types of painting: traditional with brush, paint and paper, and digital with a tablet and a computer. Though the two share similar aspects, and the final product can come to resemble one another closely, they do require some different techniques. In this chapter, I will give you a cursory glance into both. It may help you to produce and explore by your own means. Before you start, there are a few questions to ask yourself.

- What type of map do I want to make, digital or traditional?
- What do I need to get started?
- Where can I get the materials?

Soon you will be painting in the lands and details of your very own kingdom!

# Inking

Ink is an extremely versatile medium. Whether ink is being applied with a brush, a pen or an ink nib, it can be used to lay in subtle layers as well as for illustrating precise details. Though inks are usually thought of as black or blue, bottled inks come in a whole variety of different colors to work with, all of which can be mixed and matched, or watered down to produce surprising results. I personally use Noodler's inks, which are both acid-free and waterproof, giving you a very clean, deep and lasting finish. There are a great many techniques to work with, though I will introduce you to a few basic tools and methods you can use to explore on your own.

## **Inking Tools**

### **Copic Multiliner SP Pens**

Black Inks

0.5mm

0.2mm

0.05mm

Brown Inks

0.5mm

0.1mm

0.05mm

BS pen

### **Brushes**

Loew-Cornell  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) flat wash

Sienna no. 1 round

Sienna no. 4 round

Sienna no. 10 round

### **Speedball Mapping Pen**

Pen Nibs

Nos. 100P, 102P, 103P, 104P, 107P, 108P

### **Noodler's Waterproof Inks**

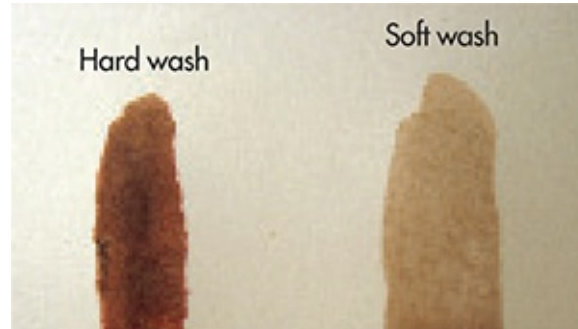
Black

Fox Red

Golden Brown



Brushes (round, flat wash) Calligraphy pen



## ***Wash Types***

*A hard wash is a mix of 50/50 ink and water, useful for strong definition of mountains, oceans (depending on the map), and for some strong shading. A soft wash is mix of three parts water, one part ink. Soft washes are excellent for building up tonality, and can be layered to build up definition.*



### ***Boundary Washes***

*To define your land boundaries, first dampen the areas of the paper that you will be applying your ink wash to (usually the seas and lakes), making sure you don't overlap into your land boundaries. Your boundary wash should be soft, and should be applied carefully with your large flat or round brush. To further dilute the wash, use more water and brush outward, away from your land boundaries.*



### ***Defining Terrain***

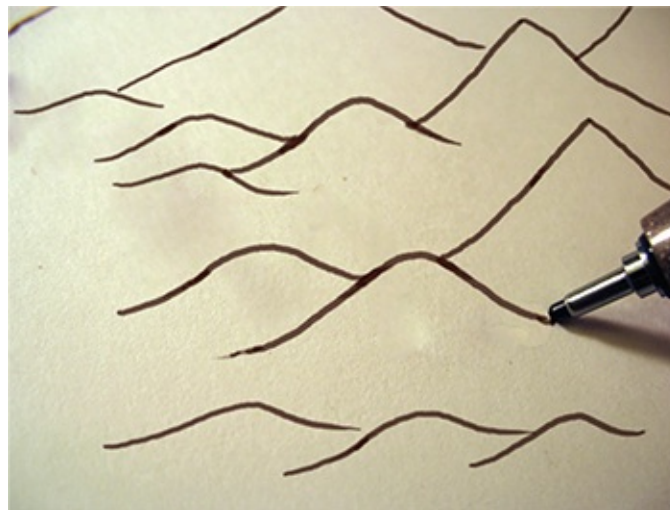
*Hard washes are ideal for defining your mountains, hills and towns. Using a round brush, first apply a soft wash over your mountains and hills as an initial*



*base shade. Once dry, apply another layer at the base of the hills and mountains with your small detail brush, careful not to cover the whole area. Once those areas are dry, carefully apply another wash at the base, and keep going until the mountains and hills are well defined. A light shade should be applied underneath your cities and town, and around your border boundaries and legend box to shade them and give definition.*

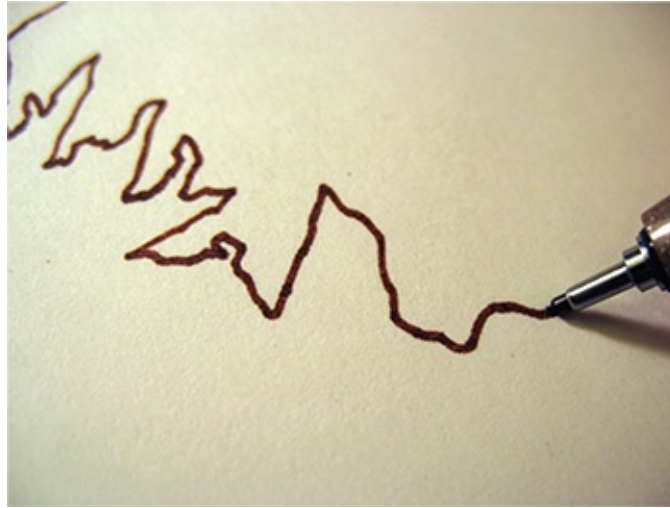
## Pen and Brush Inking

Basic inking should be done with either pens or thin brushes for definition. A pen will give you an even line that is more mechanical, while a brush or calligraphy pen will give a more organic look that is less even, but can vary in thickness by applying more or less pressure. Beginners should start out using Pigma Micron and Copic pens first, since they do not take into account pressure sensitivity, and are easy and clean to use. When you are ready and feel more confident, practice some line work with your small detail brush, as well as your calligraphy pen and its various nibs. Land boundaries should be illustrated first with a thick line so there is a clear definition between water and lands. Next, the basic mountains, hills, borders and compass should all be drawn in with medium lines.



***Medium Lines***

*Medium lines should be thinner than the heavy land boundary lines, and are useful for defining mountains, hills, rivers, boundary corners, basic city shapes, forests and border corners.*



### ***Thick Lines***

*Line weight will be important in an ink map, and thick lines should be used for clear land boundaries, the legend box and outlining the compass.*

## Detail Inking

After your basic inking, it's time to detail the most intricate parts of your map. Using your thinnest nibs and pen tips, go in and carefully define your mountains, cities, borders and all other parts of your map.



### ***Thin Line Tools***

*Thin lines are excellent for definition and detail work. Most lines on a map should be thin, or at least thinner than the heavy land boundary lines. The thinnest lines serve for the most intricate definition, such as detailing your cities, heraldry, mountains and hills.*

# Typography

Once the illustrative elements have been inked in, it's time to lay in all the text and type. "Tags" are labels for the various elements within your map, and each should be portrayed a little differently. Generally, ink and calligraphy pens are excellent for inking in tags, especially for clear and bold definition, though you may want to use a brush for regional and ocean tags to make them appear less hard and bold, especially if you elect to use washes.



## ***Capitals, Cities, Towns and Villages***

*Capitals and cities should be inked in all uppercase, while towns should start with a capitalized letter followed by lowercase. Villages should be done in all lowercase so they are pushed back and don't interfere with the other tags. City type should always be straight from left to right.*



## **Rivers**

*Rivers are often labeled in lowercase type, and should follow the contours of the river being labeled.*



## **Mountains**

*Mountains should also follow the contours of the mountain range, stretching as best it can to cover the entire range. Mountains can be labelled in either upper- or lowercase fashion, depending on the map.*





### ***Ocean, Sea and Bay Labels***

*Ocean and sea labels are usually all uppercase, and follow the contour of the area being labeled in a slightly curved fashion, while bay areas should be smaller and straight across. Bay labels should be capitalized, but not uppercase letters for the whole label.*

# Painting

Using paint and brush for cartography is a little bit different than using inks and washes, though both techniques can be combined for an excellent result. While ink serves to define boldly and gives a graphic element to a map, painting is good for giving a more organic and colorful look. Painting also overlaps directly into the digital realm, and both traditional and digital share most of the basic (and some advanced) painting techniques. There are several different types of traditional painting mediums that can be used, each with different techniques and looks. Most commonly, watercolors, gouache and acrylics are used in cartography for their layering capability.

## **Painting Tools**

### **Brushes**

Loew-Cornell no. 1 detail round Sienna nos. 1, 4, 10 and 14 round

Sienna no. 4 flat

Loew-Cornell ¾" (19mm) flat wash

Loew-Cornell 1" (25mm) flat wash

### **Winsor & Newton and Mo Graham Paints**

Gouache

Burnt Sienna

Ivory Black

Permanent Yellow Deep

Prussian Blue

Quinacridone Red

Raw Umber

Spectrum Red

Yellow Ochre

Zinc White

Watercolor

Azo Green

Olive Green

Masterson's Sta-Wet Palette

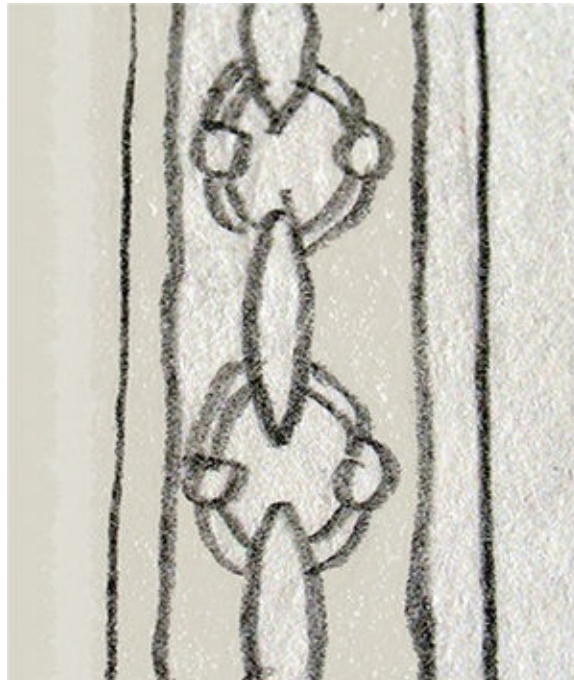




## Creating a Detailed Border

When you have your basic colors on your palette, it's time to lay in your base tones. Base tones are the medium tone of a color that you are using, and can be shaded with darks or highlighted with whites. Base tones should be the first colors painted onto a map, forming the foundation colors. For an example, let's work on a detailed border.

After the base tones are laid in, it's time to add some definition. This is the real meat and potatoes of painting, and it is a bit like sculpting. Darks are laid in to ground an image and give it depth, while highlights make it pop, adding contrast. Contrast is what draws the eye, and this is increased the closer the darkest darks are to the lightest lights. You want shadows and highlights to complement your base tones in a map, not overpower them.





## **STEP 1: Sketch the Border**

Start with a basic pencil sketch.



## **STEP 2: Add Base Color**

Using your flat brush, lay in your base colors. Try and stay within your pencil sketch boundaries, laying in color as evenly as possible.



### **STEP 3: Finish the Base Color**

Finish up your base tones, evening out any inconsistencies as best you can. Having your pencil sketch show through can be helpful, but be prepared to paint over your base tones for the next step.



#### **STEP 4: Apply Deeper Darks**

Using your shade tones, lay in your darks first before the highlights. Blacks should never be used without being mixed, as pure blacks are unnatural and are much too dark. For small areas, use your smallest round brush, though for straight edges use a flat brush.



### **STEP 5: Apply Highlights**

Once your darks have been painted, it's time to mix some highlights. Highlights will provide the border with definition, giving it a more sophisticated look. Highlights should be painted on top of your base tone, but not over your darks. Often, it's best to apply highlights with your detail brush, so you can better control the area being highlighted.



### **STEP 6: Add the Lightest Lights**

Once your basic highlights lighten the area, you can finish them off with a few well placed lightest lights. I use Zinc White with a small amount of the mixed color to pop out the image. Light and dark colors directly next to each other will create contrast and draw the eye. The lightest lights should be applied sparingly and in small spots.



### **STEP 7: Ink the Details**

When inking on top of base tones, use your medium brush or pen for outlining, and your thin nib for detail work. Brown inks are much more forgiving than black, though blacks are bolder. Ink first, apply final details and clean up.





### **STEP 8: Final Shading**

Using your small flat brush, add some water to Raw Umber, and gently apply shading to your piece. This will give the piece depth within the image itself, and allow it to meld in and not contrast jarringly.



# Digital Painting

Digital painting has really come into its own in the last few years, and with the advance in technology, it has the ability to combine the look of traditional painting without the setup and mess. Digital painting is quicker, and in some respects easier to use, turning hours of traditional decisions into mere seconds. Mistakes are instantaneously erased, while granting an artist the quick ability to explore and complete art along many different avenues. While there are proponents of both, I think of digital painting as both an art form and a tool. Knowledge of traditional techniques is very helpful, but not necessarily needed, though color theory in any medium is essential.

## Digital Tools

### Digital Brushes

Rough round bristle

Airbrush 75 round

Hard round 3 pixel brush

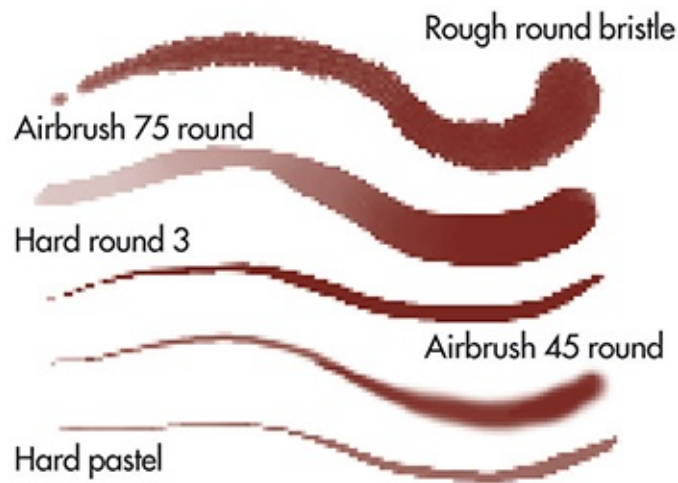
Airbrush 45 round

Hard pastel on canvas



### Stylus and Tablet

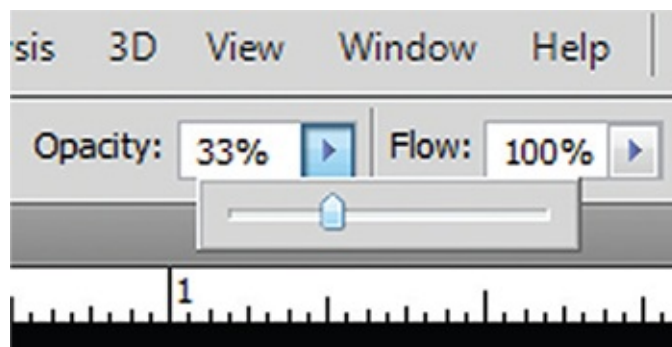
## Adobe Photoshop or GIMP software



### **Digital Tools**

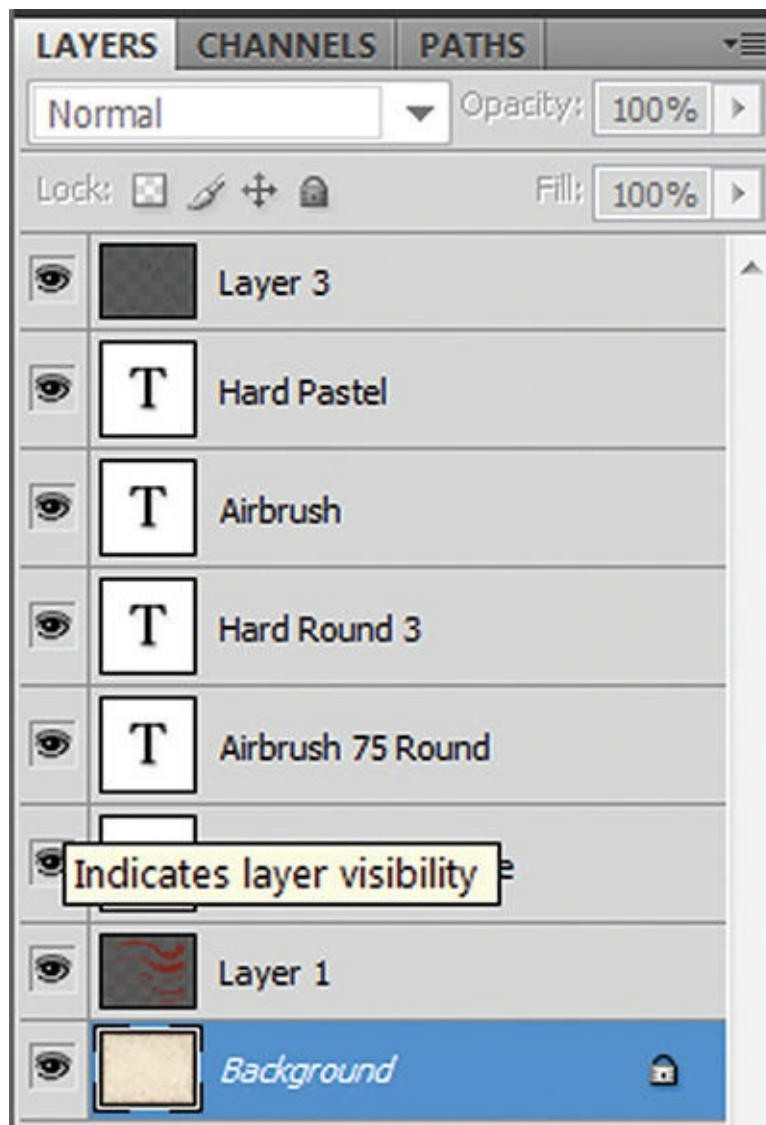
*To paint using a computer, it's best to have a tablet of some sort. A tablet acts as your canvas, and a stylus as your brush, and is excellent to simulate painting by translating your brushstrokes onto the screen. Tablets have a pressure sensitivity as well, so the harder you press as you paint, the darker or wider the stroke.*

*Programs such as Corel Painter and Adobe Photoshop use virtual brushes, and these brushes are each used to do different things. You can make your own brushes, or use the presets within the respective programs. For now, we will use some presets.*



### **Opacity**

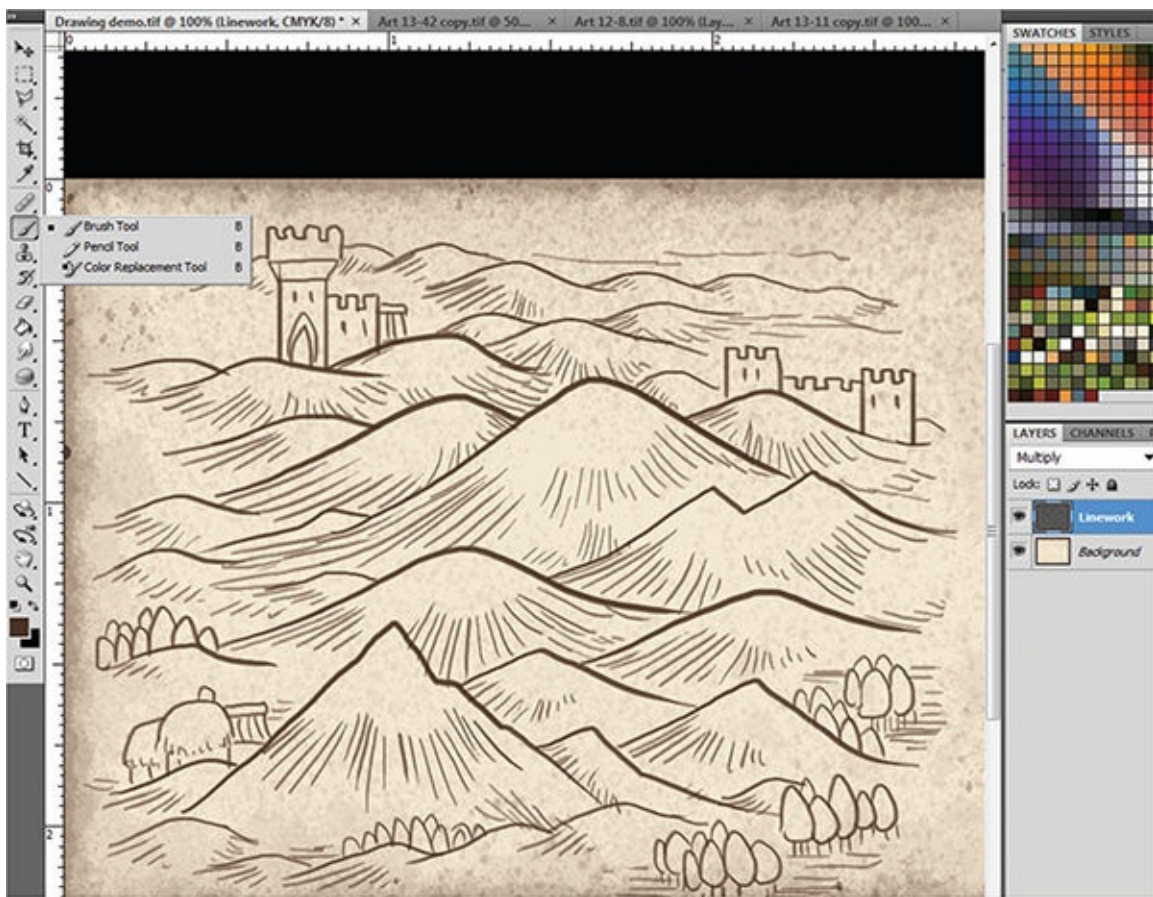
*Opacity is a tool for making colors and marks more or less translucent. The lower the opacity, the weaker the tone of the color is, and the more it can be layered on top of other colors. A color or layer can vary in opacity from 0–100 percent. For layering color and mixing colors, opacity is important. Layers can be reduced and faded by lowering the opacity of the entire layer. Try fading and strengthening your line work layers by increasing and decreasing the layer's opacity.*



## ***Layers***



*Layers are a unique element of digital painting. Layers can be overlaid over one another, like panes of glass, with each layer's elements showing through to the next. You may use as many layers as you'd like, and it's best to use multiple layers for the different elements of your piece. By using multiple layers, you may overlay textures, combining them all to make an image. To make new layers, go to Layers > Make New Layer. Type in an appropriate name, and the new layer will appear above the current layer. Layers are organized into a hierarchy, with any layer on top of another covering anything below it.*



## **Drawing**

*Digital drawing is a bit different from traditional drawing, but both obey some of the same precepts. With a stylus and its pressure sensitivity, you may make lines thicker or thinner, and erase quickly and efficiently. Before drawing make a new layer, and name it "Line work." This is where all of your drawing should be*



*done. When drawing, it's best to use brushes 4–8 pixels in size for basic terrain line work, and brushes 1–3 pixels wide for detail work.*



## ***Painting***

*Painting in the computer resembles traditional painting in some ways, but differs in many others. You can start by making a new layer under your line work layer. Then lay in your base tone layer using your broad brush. After making another layer, paint in your darks. Add another layer and lay in your highlights. A final layer over the top should be for detail work.*



## **Typography**

Laying in typography digitally is very different from traditional means. To apply type to your map select the Type tool, and select an area of the map to make a text layer for inserting type. You may also click and drag to make a text box, which will contain all text typed into that box. Once a text layer is made, you can type in your tag, and then alter its size and font type with a few clicks. When using type in a map, it's best to stick to one font type, and not vary the size too much. Keep similar elements the same size to emphasize uniformity. A text tag may be moved around at will, and each text tag will form its own separate layer. Once you are satisfied with your typography placement, you can group all of these tags together and merge them for one easy-to-manage layer.





## **Digital Finish**

*Here is a finished digital map I have done for my own world, Hyranden. Though this map uses some other more specialized techniques, many of the topics I have discussed in this chapter are put to good use here. Traditional and digital art have much more in common than people think, though their execution can vary.*

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Putting it All Together

Creating a fantasy map from scratch is a lot of work, and is much like weaving a complex tapestry from much simpler threads. Don't be overwhelmed! Now that you have learned the basic techniques, as well as the more advanced methods, it's time to put all of these elements together. In this chapter, I will construct a map from the ground up going step by step in order of execution, slowly piecing it together to form a cohesive whole. Before starting, collect all of your materials, and then ask yourself a few questions.

- How large of a map do I want my world to be?
- Is the map going to be in full color or monochromatic?
- What type of map do I want to make—county, regional, country or world?
- Do I have any maps to use for inspiration?

# Creating a Fantasy Map

I will be creating a world map of the fantasy lands of Aldriin. This map will use all of the elements included in the basic and advanced techniques sections to show you how they should be approached, and in what order elements should be tackled. Whether you are approaching the map from a traditional or a digital perspective, this basic rundown will show you how a map is made.



## STEP 1: General Sketch

The first step is to take a light pencil and gently draw your general sketch. Start with the large landmasses first, then island boundaries. From that, lightly draw in the basic mountain areas as well as marking the general areas of cities, rivers,

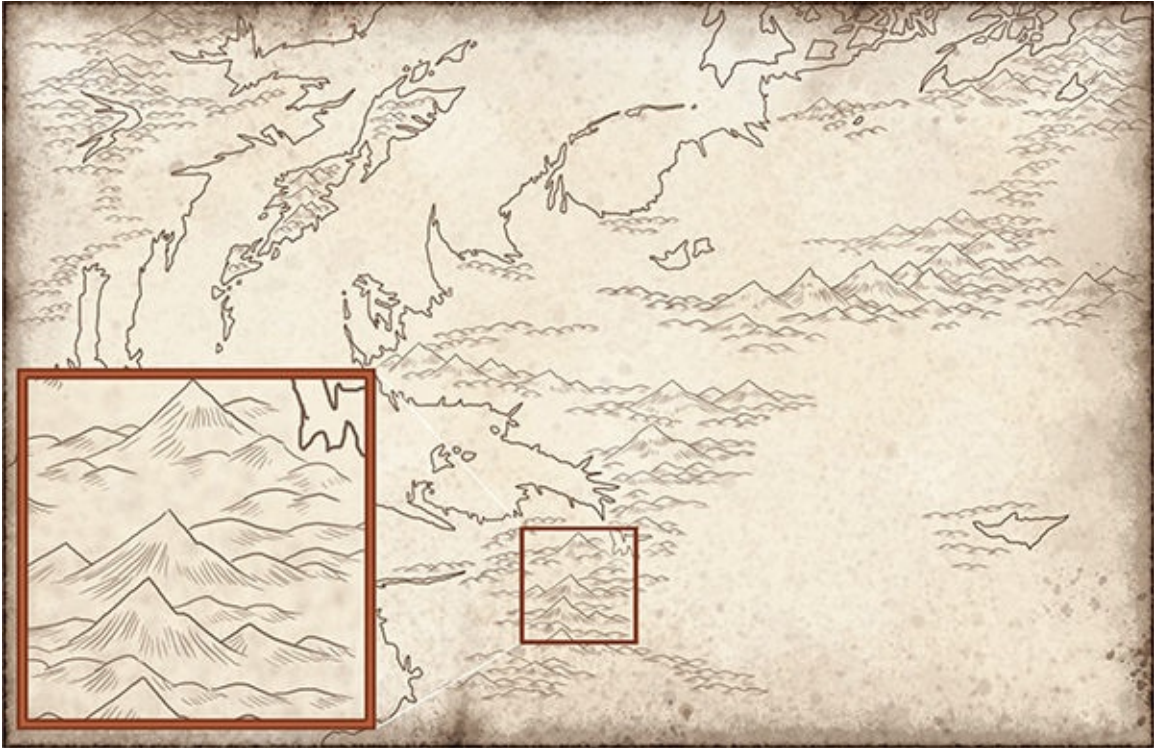
borders and corners. Your sketch should be light and very general, serving as a placeholder for the next step.



## **STEP 2: Coastlines**

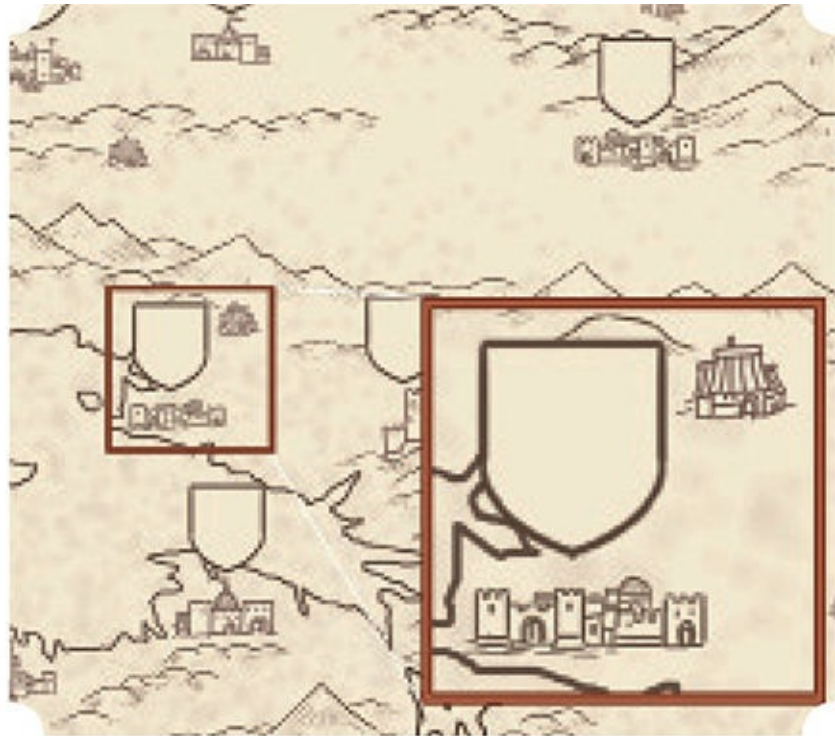
When your general sketch is complete, it's time to go in and detail your coastlines with a heavier line. This line work should be much darker and more sophisticated than the light sketch. Here is where you add inlets, bays and smaller island formations as well as interior lakes. Be sure to leave small openings where rivers run into the sea.





### **STEP 3: Hills and Mountains**

Always lay in your mountains first. Start with the general outline shapes, then go back in to detail each mountain with smaller detail lines, giving them each definition. When your mountains are finished, move on to your hills, smaller general shapes first, and then a few defining lines. The detailing lines should be thin, and drawn at the base of each hill.



#### STEP 4: Towns and Cities

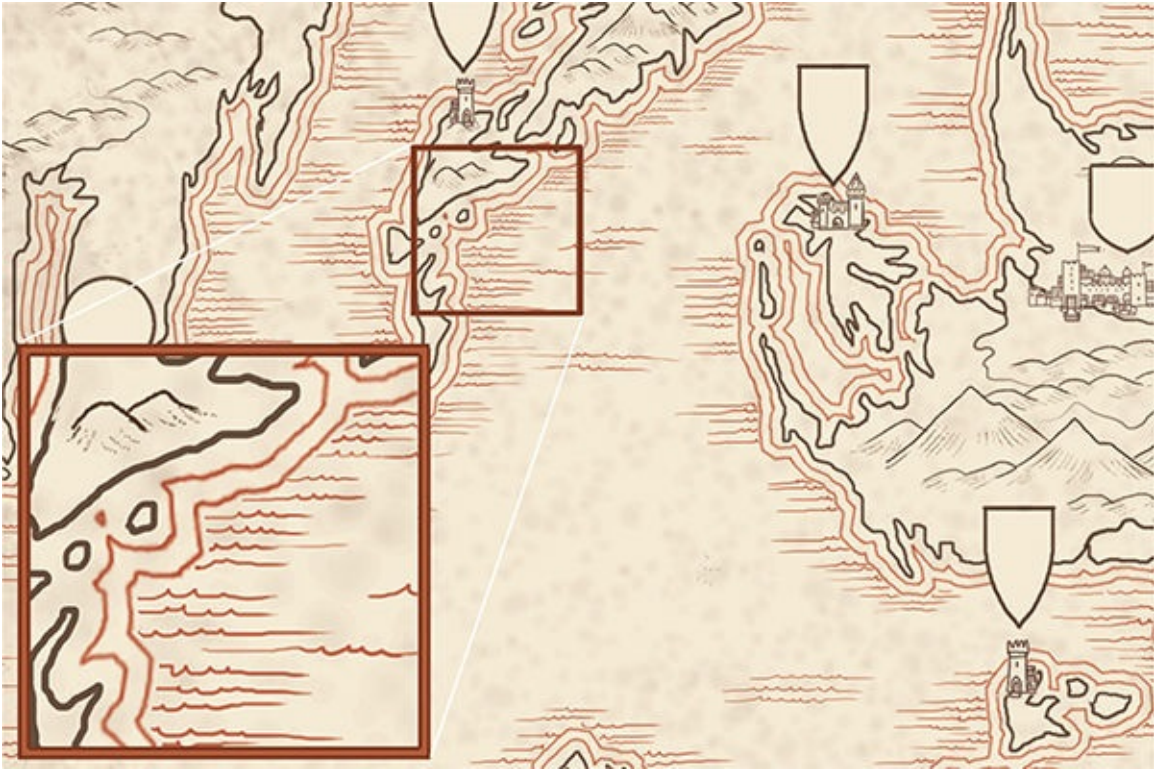
Draw in your capitals and cities, then your towns and villages, and finally your fortresses and holdfasts. Keep them as general as possible. If there are any shields or heraldry, draw the general shapes in to serve as placeholders.



## STEP 5: Rivers

After your towns have been drawn in, it's time to lay in all of your rivers. Start with the largest ones, then move on to the smaller ones. Rivers emptying into the sea should be integrated with the coastal borders. Draw in the river tributaries last, tapering from the mountains to the rivers they join.





## STEP 6: Shore and Water Lines

Now that your rivers and coastlines are complete, lay in your shorelines. The first line should run about  $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ " (6mm–13mm) out from the land, and hug the coast closely. The next line should be another  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) out, hugging the first line, and so on. Anywhere from 3–6 lines are good. These lines should never overlap the legend or border sketches, stopping when touching their edges. Lake lines should only have one or two of these lines at most to differentiate them from the sea.

For wave lines, group them together and lay them in random groups of three. Be careful not to place too many.



BORDER LINES

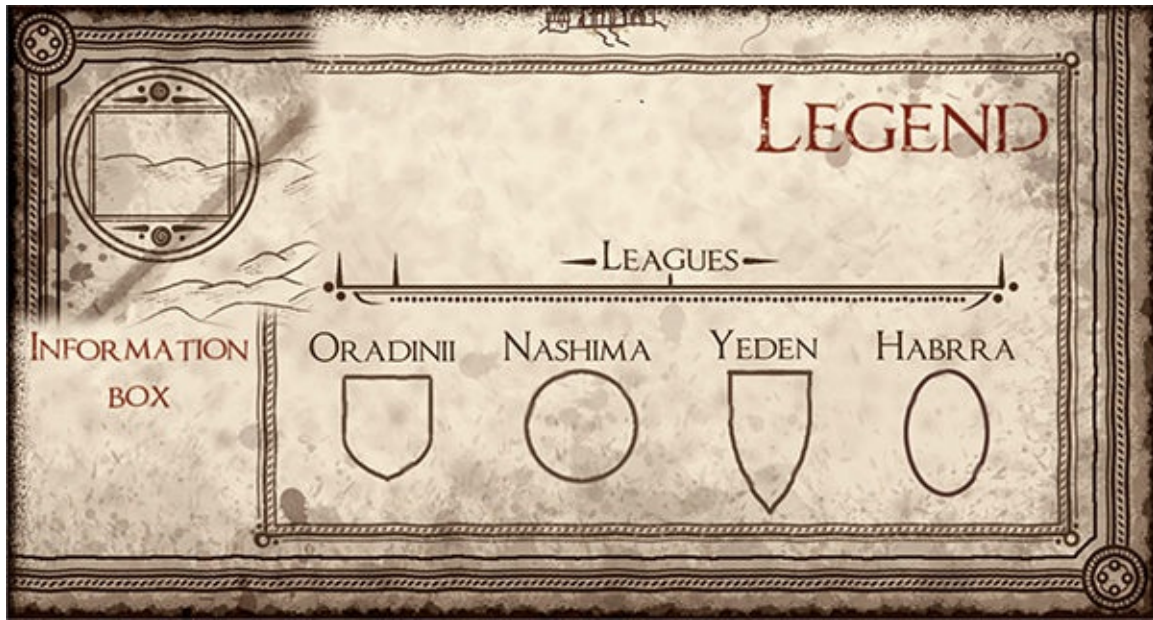
CORNERS



## STEP 7: Background Border

The border should be outlined first, tracing over your light sketch line, using a straightedge if needed. Draw in border corners, outlining each, then draw the interior and detail work. The outlines should be bold line work, while the interior of the borders should be thinner and more delicate. These lines are still relatively temporary, and will become permanent only in the inking stage later on.

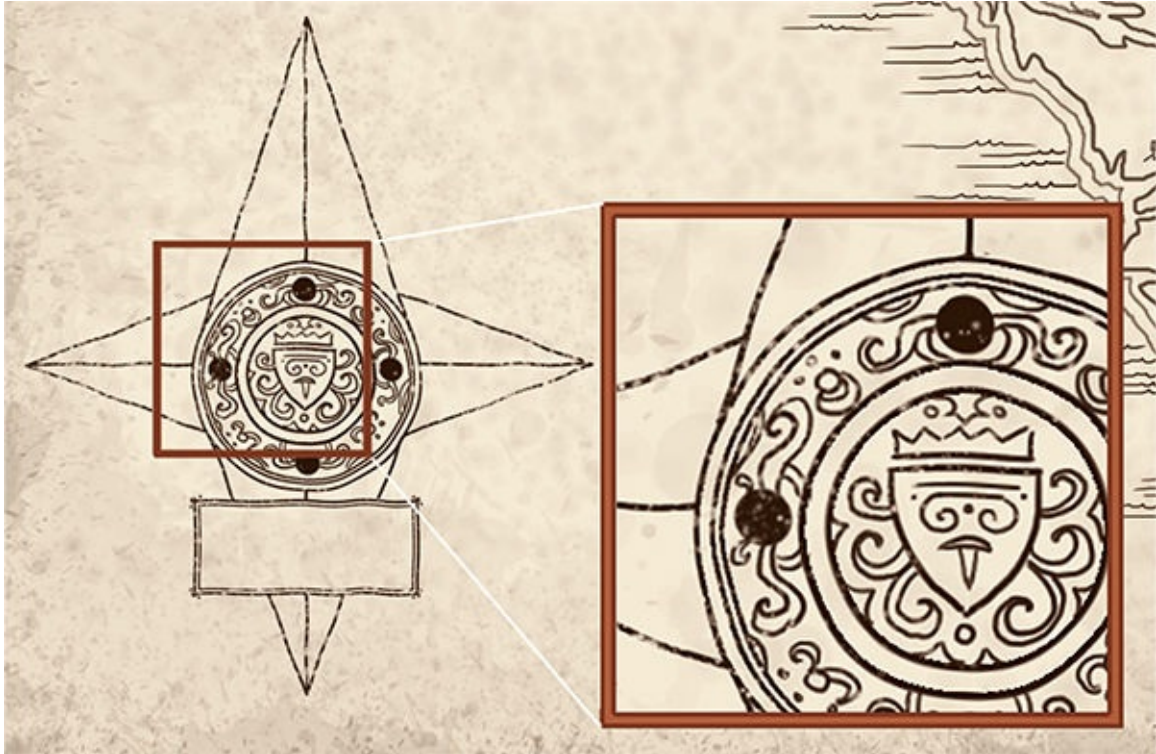




### STEP 8: Legend and Information Boxes

When your border and corners are laid in, draw your legend, and detail it. The outline of the legend should be strong, and the interior thinner and lighter. Lay out and arrange your legend, plotting out the title and the contents as best you can. It's not completely necessary to lay in your title yet, but any city icons and scales should be detailed or at least outlined and prepared for later inking. If you have any information boxes, lay them in as well and detail them.





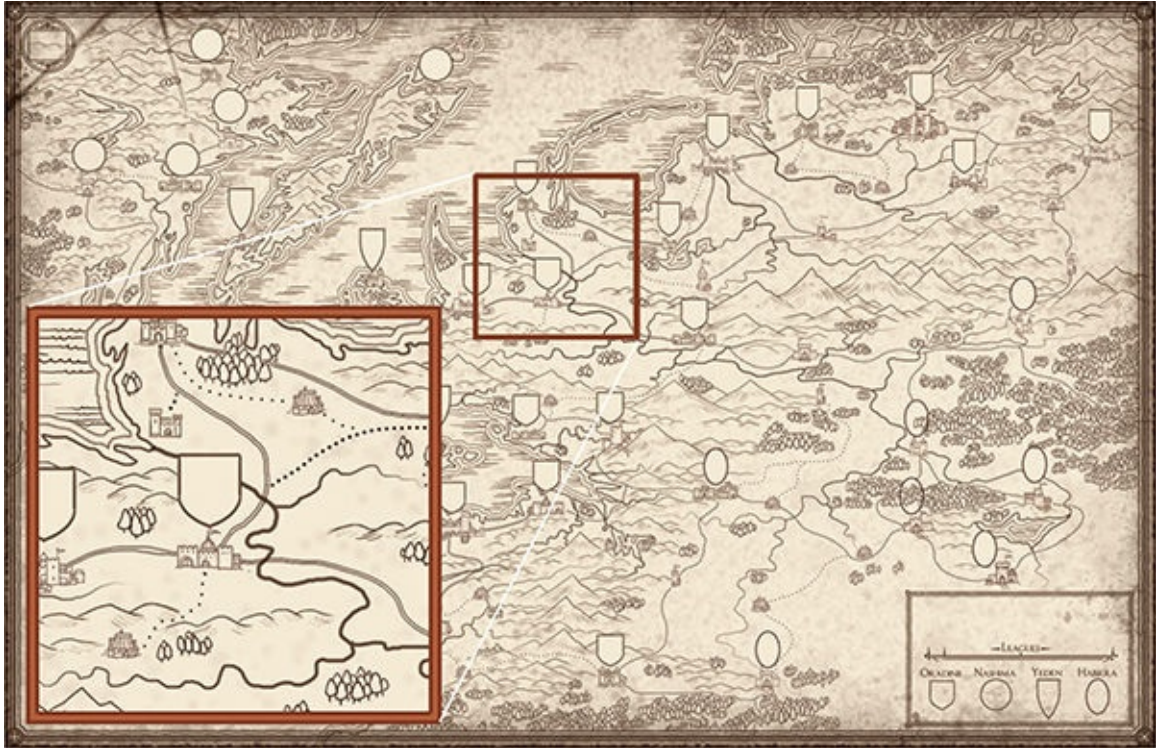
### STEP 9: Compasses

After your legend, draw in your compass rose, using any template or straightedge you need. Start with the central portion, then pencil in the points, starting with north. Then move on to the minor compasses. Draw in your compass lines, making sure not to intersect the ocean lines.



## STEP 10: Forests

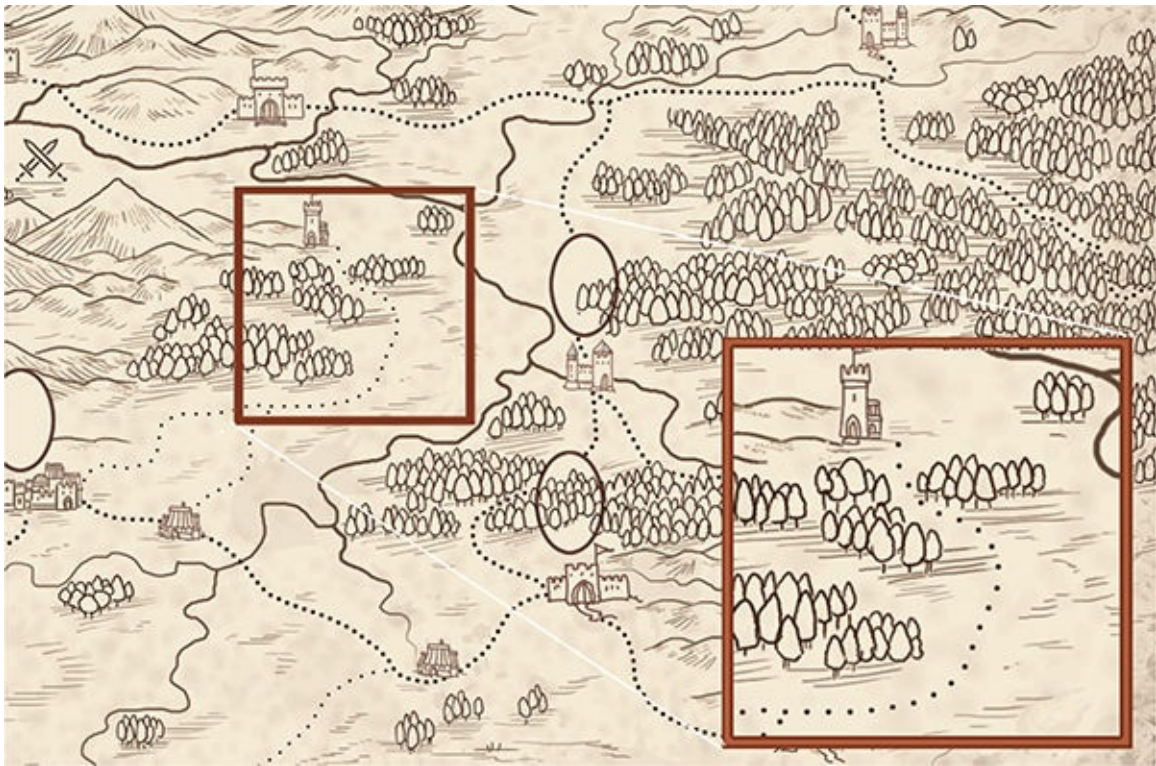
Now tackle your forests, laying them in group by group. Forests should flow around rivers, and be placed at the base of mountains. Leave gaps in the forest for your forest's labels. You may want to pencil the labels in now so you know what to ink in later.



### STEP 11: Roads and Boundaries

Now that your forests are drawn, lay in your highways, roads and paths, as well as any boundaries that you'd like to include to differentiate kingdoms and regions.





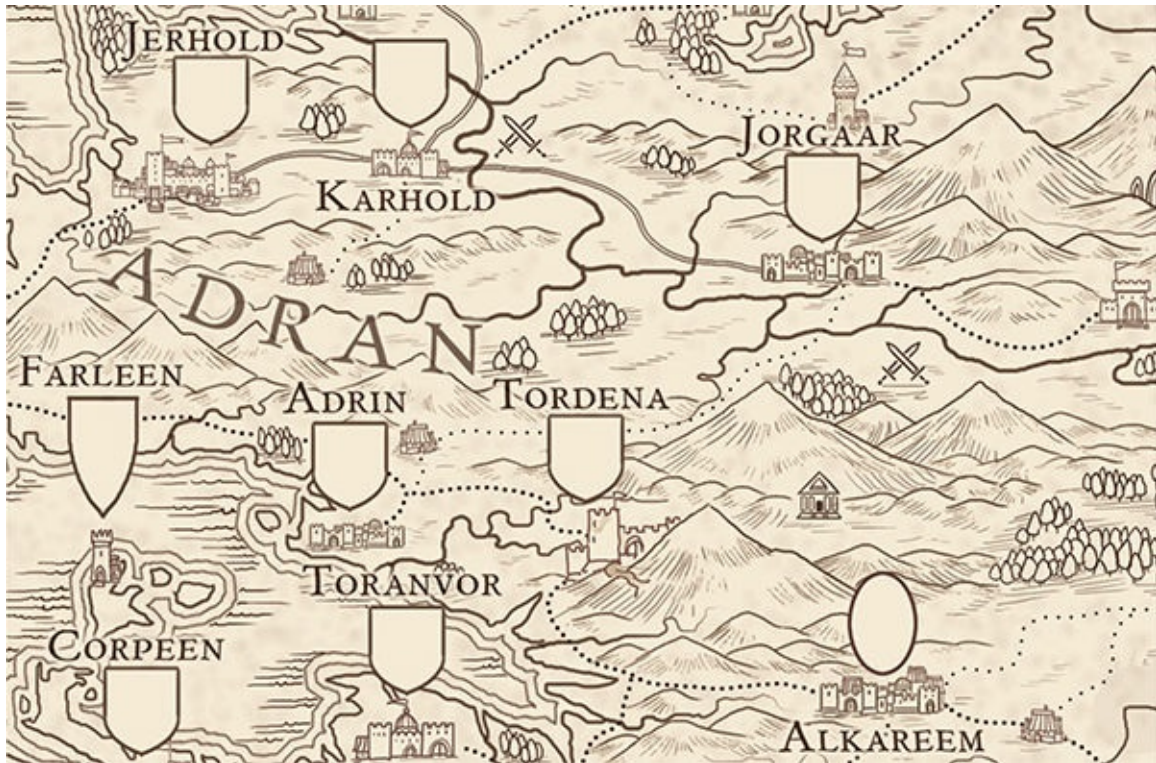
## STEP 12: Minor Details

Now that most of your major elements are in, it's time to add the minor details. Cities, towns and terrain elements should be fully penciled in now, as well as any shading for those elements. Icons should be placed and penciled in as well.



### STEP 13: Iconography

Add iconography to the map and start shading the terrain with line work.



### STEP 14: Typography

With the map almost complete, it's time to lay in your typography, erasing the terrain elements to make room. First, lay in capital, citadel and city tags; then town, village and holdfast tags. Once these are done, the lake, river, ocean and bay tags should be drawn in.





## STEP 15: Inking

By now, your entire map should be finished in pencil, and inking it is one way of completing it. Using your thick pens, ink in your coastal land boundaries, as well as your legend and border outlines. Move on to inking the terrain elements, and then the cities, heraldry and border interior elements with a small detail pen. Inking is the last step in an inked piece, but can be skipped if you are moving on to painting your piece in a traditional manner.

## Digital Inks

If working digitally, all of your line work should be on separate layers, and the piece should essentially already be “inked.” Your colors can be painted in behind your line work on a separate color layer. Digital work is very flexible in this respect.





## STEP 16: Heraldry and Other Details

Don't forget to add the heraldry designs to each of your shields as well as filling in the information boxes and other small details throughout the map.





## STEP 17: Finished Inks

Once you have laid in all of your various details that make up a map, you can then go in and do the final inks. Inking the map will give it a finished dynamic that is quite bold. Finished inked maps are quite pretty, and stand very well on their own. With a few light washes for some added depth, this map would be considered complete. However, for our purposes, we aren't going to stop here. Buckle up, because we are going to make this piece into a colored map!



## STEP 18: Water Elements

The first colors introduced into a map should be the water elements, usually a deep blue or bluish green. Seas and oceans need not be dark, however; it just depends on the map itself and how you'd like it to look. Paint in the ocean, starting at the land boundary and working your way out, painting around your compasses, legend and borders. If painting digitally, make a separate layer called "water" to keep it separate from the line work.



## STEP 19: Shading

To bring out some of your elements, apply darker shading around them. First, mix a dark shade to apply to the land boundary interiors, using washes to build



up tone. Add shading to the mountains and hills to give them more dimension. Leave some highlights at the top to look like snow on the highest peaks.

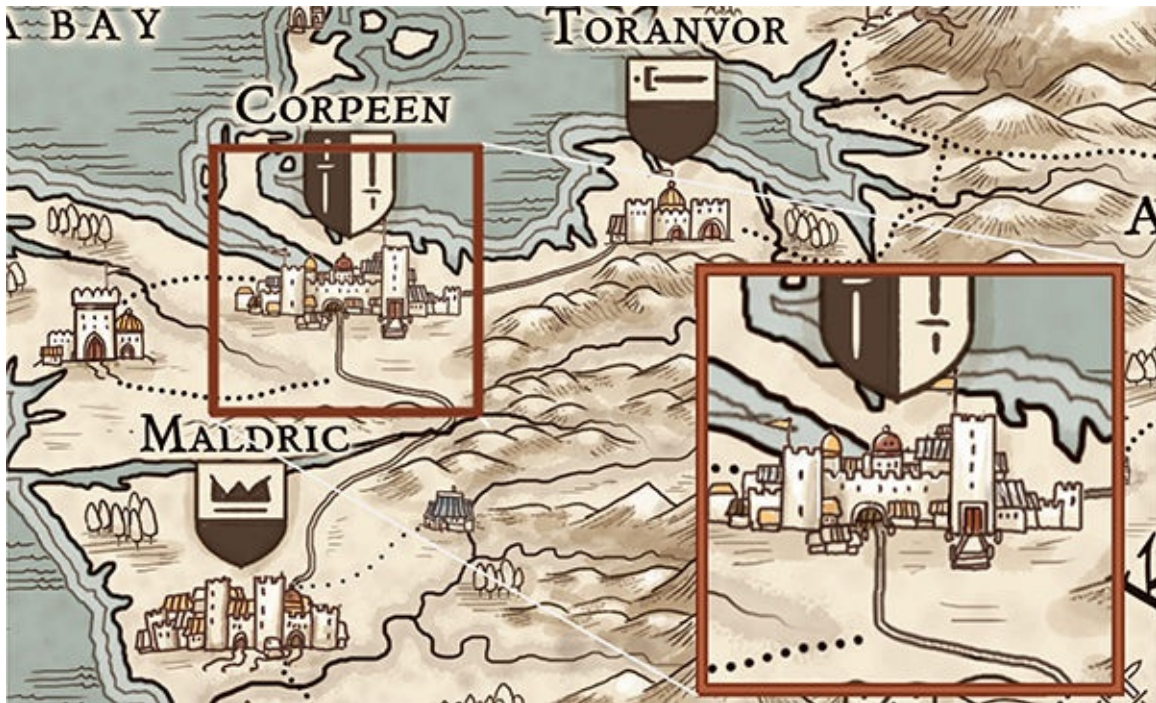
Forests, cities, icons and heraldry shields should be shaded by applying tones underneath the element. River lines should also be shaded, since the next step will involve painting them in.

Finally, shade the borders, corners and legend, making them pop from the rest of the map.



## STEP 20: Rivers

Start with a dark blue, and following your sketch lines, paint in your river lines. Then, with a smaller brush, paint in a much lighter blue to make them pop from the dark blue. Using a bit of white, highlight the river mouth that spills into the sea.



## STEP 21: Towns and Cities

Paint in your towns and cities, laying in off-white undertones first, then adding colored roofs and details using a thinner brush. Define each city with dark tones, and then apply highlights to each. Icons should be painted in as well, with solid tones overtop the icon shading. City icons should be painted in with a deep red, highlighted with a lightened red and finished off with a white for contrast.





## STEP 22: Trees

Trees should be painted in a dark green, overtop the drawing and shading. Apply a few light coats and build up the tonality as needed. Apply darks or lights to shade or highlight the forest. Don't make them too light or too dark. If painting digitally, make a separate layer and multiply it, painting in greens, or make your own paintbrush to paint in the trees.





## STEP 23: Background Borders

Borders should be painted by laying in your base tone first, being careful to keep your paint strokes within the line work. Start with your border first, and then work to the corners. When all of your base tones are in, lay in your dark tones with a thin brush. Once your dark tones are in, lay in your highlights. After both dark and lights are in, ink your piece with a detail nib, and finally apply your last highlights and lightest lights.



## STEP 24: Heraldry and Shields

When painting in shields and heraldry, lay in your base tones first, careful not to get paint outside of your line work. Next, add some shadows and highlights to your base tones, and outline the shield in a thin dark brown line to give it some emphasis. Paint in the symbol next, and detail it. Finally, add a few highlights of white and dark to finish it.





## STEP 25: Compass Rose

When painting your compass, it's best to use dark browns and reds. Lay in your base tones first, then move onto the points, adding darks first, and then lights. Highlights should be painted in last, after the details have either been inked or painted in. The compass should be outlined in dark blues or dark browns.



## STEP 26: Typography

Though most typography should be inked in with either browns or blacks, some other types should be painted in, such as large regional, country, sea or bay tags. Some types should be capitalized with larger painted letters for emphasis, such as capitals and citadels. Carefully paint over your line work, using either a flat brush or a small round. Ocean and sea tags should be white or light blue, while country and regional tags should be done in reds. Text may also be outlined with white to make it pop when the tag is in a hard to read area.



## STEP 27: Terrain

Farmlands, marshlands, deserts, plains and other terrain should be painted in with a flat brush. Applying multiple layers and building them up is best so you don't overwhelm the map. Start with a base tone, then darks and then lights. If you wish, add in some inks for a little extra definition or tidying up.





## STEP 28: Detailing

The final step in your map should be detailing. Add in any final elements you may have, such as scuff or fold marks and additional colors. Touch up shading and highlights. You should also paint in the typography or final colors for the legend, as well as any information or designs that you want to include in your information boxes. These should follow the same painting process: base tones, darks, lights and then highlights and detailing. Last of all, paint in any sea routes you may have.





## About the Artist



Jared Blando is a professional freelance cartographer and conceptual artist who works in the RPG, book and gaming industry. Though he is best known for his RPG fantasy maps, he is also prominent in the board game and publishing industry, producing artwork for both large and small publishers. He has a penchant for historical works and miniature gaming, as well as cats and gluten-free pizza. You can see more of his work on the web at [www.theredepic.com](http://www.theredepic.com). You may drop him an email anytime, though he also accepts messages via carrier pigeon.

# **Acknowledgments**

This book has been an incredible amount of work! However, there were certain people that came through in spades to help me out of the quagmire, namely my lovely Chelsea and my parents, John and Iris, and a few close friends and family. Without their support and appreciation, this book would have been that much harder to put out, leaving me in debt to a great many people. My thanks to you all!

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eISBN: 9781440340321

This e-book edition: July 2015 (v.1.0).