

Map Cartouches

A map cartouche (kar-TOOSH) is any decoration on the map that is self-contained. If you see words or pictures that are contained in a box or a circle or a seal, it is a cartouche! Here are two examples of map cartouches from maps of the San Francisco Bay. The cartouche on the left was drawn in 1803 when California still belonged to Mexico. That is why the text is written in Spanish.



Mapmakers are also called cartographers. Sometimes they will draw other designs on maps, such as a dragon or a sea monster. These pictures are not cartouches. A mapmaker could turn them into cartouches by putting boxes or circles or seals around them. See the example below. Now do you understand what a cartouche is?



NOT A CARTOUCHE!



A CARTOUCHE!

So, what kind of information do mapmakers put in their cartouches? They might write their own name, the date the map was made, the name of their leader, or their country's seal. Sometimes they also show products of the area represented by the map. Imagine a map of Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. A cartouche on that map might contain drawings of a tourist, a lobster, and an old sailing vessel. Draw a map cartouche for a map of your town, neighborhood, or school!



