

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Due Tuesday October 14 for class.

BIRTH RATE MAP INSTRUCTIONS - Read through before beginning.

This assignment will introduce thematic map construction and how to show demographic data on a thematic map. Each student will make a map showing birth rates of the world. This map is required for in-class work and to use on the midterm so prepare it carefully. **See page 66** in the text for an example of what your map result should resemble. Neatness and completeness count.

Step 1: Gather materials needed: birthrate data by country (handout); 8.5'x11' blank world map (handout); colored pencils; a ruler.

Step 2: Rank birth rates. To *“rank”* means to list all numbers from highest to lowest in one column on a piece of paper. Each country has a birth-rate associated with it and has been calculated as the number of live births with at least a 23 week pregnancy per 1000 people. You may use any computer spreadsheet to rank the numbers automatically or choose to do it manually. You may round to the nearest hundredth or tenth of a percent but no less.

Step 3: a. Create 5 to 6 Categories within the ranked column of numbers. Make sensible decisions about your categories. *Geographers often use objective methods by calculating the mean (average) and median (middle number meaning all other numbers are greater or less than) to understand the data clearly. Geographers also use subjective knowledge since we are trying to categorize “like birth-rate” places. When making categories, look to see which country(s) sits near the cutoff mark. Do I include country X? How does that change the map? for better? or worse?*

b. Important HINT 5 to 6 categories make the most readable maps. Too many categories (7 or up) are confusing and the reader can't make sense of the map. Each *category must have a range that includes at least 4 countries and preferably more. Check out the maps in the text.* Think in terms for your categories as *extreme high, moderate high, middle, moderate low and extreme low.*

c. Check! There should be **no gaps or overlaps** in category range (**Example of a gap:** category A=100-80; category B= 75-55; *note the gap between 80 and 75* or **Example of an overlap:** category=100-80 category B =80-55 *80 is in both categories (A and B)- a no-no.*

Step 4: Choose Colors to Represent Categories. Even though it sounds trivial it is **very important**. Good cartographers as well as designers (like Apple Inc.) look for intuitive ways to have the product convey information. If someone has to “work” at reading a map (for example, going back and forth many times between the legend and the map to understand the pattern) it is not a good map (i.e. product).

Think about dark to light colors or warm to cool colors. For instance your most active or highest birthrates (BR) may be “intense” colors and the least active BRs may be least intense. Review how the text maps in Chapter 3 use colors to convey information. They do it in several ways. One safe way for the BR map is to choose monochromatic colors or a gray-scale and/or patterns; heaviest, deepest patterns/color with high numbers and lightest most sparse pattern for the low numbers. Each map will be slightly different. The goal is make the map to be easy on the reader. **White is saved for NO DATA.** See page 66. DO NOT use highlighters or inks that bleed. The map will tell a story of world birthrates and raise questions about other cultural patterns and other demographic information.

Step 5: Design the Map Layout –Legend -Map Title -Source of data. At this point you begin working on the map itself. Draw a legend box with a ruler or use a computer to design it. You can cut/paste and photocopy the map before you color. Make sure the color boxes are large enough to show the colors accurately and each box has the number range printed next to it.

Step 6: Use the original data sheet to color each country with the corresponding legend. Some people mark each country name with the associated color on the data sheet in order to finish one color at a time. The maps do not have the names of the countries written in; countries are represented by color only, not name.

Step 7: Have a friend look at your map to see if they can read and understand it. Ask for feedback.