Focus Question: What is the difference between reference maps and thematic maps?

**General Reference Maps**—maps that show a variety of basic information on one map. Some examples are physical maps, political maps, road maps, tourist maps and classroom maps. They are usually a summary of the landscape and their primary purpose is to aid in the discovery of a location.

**Thematic (Special Purpose) Maps**—maps that usually highlight only one kind of information on one particular topic. Examples are land use, population, recreation, resources and weather maps. The details may be physical, statistical, measured, or interpreted, and may require special knowledge by the map user.