

Chapter 4 Discussion Questions

1. Chapter 4 distinguishes workflows from pipelines. When does naming a sequence of decisions improve professional judgment, and when might it risk making a creative cartographic process feel too mechanical?
2. The chapter frames the data brief as an anchor for purpose, audience, scope, limitations, and ethical concerns. Which part of a data brief is easiest for students or professionals to leave vague, and how does that vagueness show up later in map design?
3. Interface planning asks designers to say no to features that do not serve the map's purpose. How can rejecting a filter, slider, popup, or exploratory option be as rhetorically important as adding one?
4. Specifications are described as contracts rather than commands. What should remain non-negotiable in an LLM-assisted cartographic specification, and what should remain open to model suggestion or human revision?
5. Pipeline autobiography: Think back to a map, GIS, data visualization, or design project you completed before learning prompt cartography. Reconstruct the hidden pipeline you actually followed: where did you define the purpose, evaluate data, plan visuals, plan interface or use, write or follow specifications, critique, and decide it was publishable? Which steps were explicit, which were improvised, and which were skipped? How might naming that pipeline have changed the quality, teachability, or accountability of the work?