

Chapter 8 Discussion Questions

1. Chapter 8 argues that prompt cartographers cannot direct what they cannot name. Which visual qualities do trained cartographers often understand intuitively but struggle to express in promptable language?
2. Dondis-style dimensions such as balance, hierarchy, contrast, abstraction, motion, and texture shape interpretation before users read a legend. Which dimension most strongly changes the rhetorical force of a map, and why?
3. Aesthetic styles function like visual dialects. How can a map's dialect build credibility for one audience while undermining trust for another?
4. LLMs often revert to default aesthetics when prompts are vague or when style is not re-specified across iterations. What evidence should students provide to show that their style choices were intentional rather than inherited defaults?
5. When does an expressive or artistic map style clarify a geographic argument, and when does it become persuasion that overwhelms evidence?