

SKILLBUILDER

Reading an Elevation Map

►► Defining the Skill

When you learn to read an elevation map, you will be able to tell how high above sea level the land in a region is. Land that is at sea level is at the same height, or level, as the sea. Land rises from that point. (In some inland areas, however, the land is actually below sea level.) The highest point above sea level on Earth is the peak of Mount Everest. It stands 29,028 feet above sea level. Elevation maps use color to show the height of the land. The key gives a color code for level of elevation. Usually, darker green areas are at or close to sea level. Light yellow or tan areas are the farthest above sea level.

►► Applying the Skill

The elevation map at the right shows the country of Pakistan. Pakistan, a country in southern Asia, has its southern border on the Arabian Sea. Its northern border is in the Hindu Kush mountain range and the Karakoram range. Both ranges have mountain peaks higher than the highest peaks in the Rocky Mountains of the United States. Use the strategies below to help you read the elevation map.

How to Read an Elevation Map

Strategy 1 Read the key. Notice how land closest to sea level is a dark green. Land that is farthest away from sea level is dark brown.

Strategy 2 Look at the map. Find each of the elevation regions indicated on the key.

Strategy 3 Find the two highest mountain peaks. Follow the flow of the Indus River. Find the mountain pass. A pass is an opening in the mountain range where people have made roads or laid railroad lines because it is the easiest place to get from one side of the range to the other.

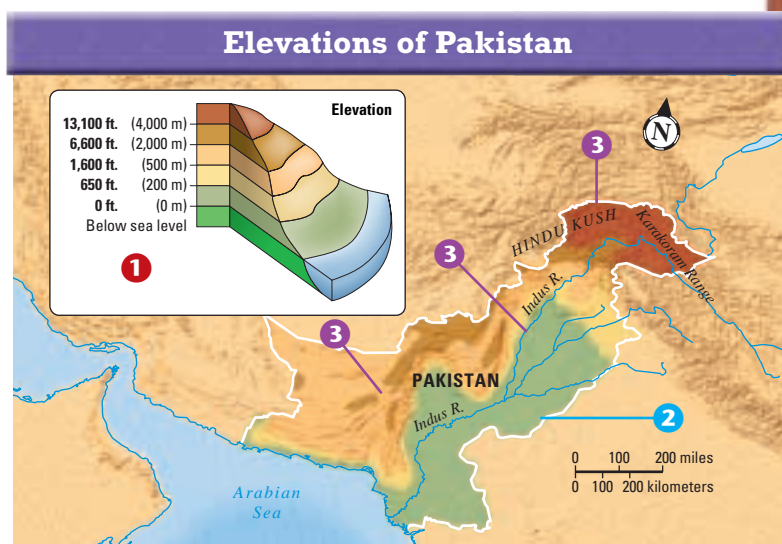
Write a Summary

A summary will help you understand the information found in the elevation map. The paragraph to the right summarizes the information found in the map of Pakistan.

►► Practicing the Skill

Turn to page 378 in Chapter 13, Section 1.

Read the map, "Elevations of South Asia," and then write a paragraph summarizing the information found in that map.



The southern border of Pakistan is on the Arabian Sea. Land along that border is at sea level and then rises dramatically to the northern regions of Pakistan, where some of the highest peaks on Earth can be found. The Indus River flows from an area of over 2,000 feet through a region of less than 500 feet, until it reaches the sea. In the west of Pakistan are several mountain ranges that reach up to 5,000 feet. Pakistan is a country of great variety in elevation.