

CORE

Lab 16: Direct an Earlier Map into Excellence

Use the full prompt cartography workflow to refine a previous map concept

Chapter Chapter 16	Level Intermediate	Time ~2-2.5 hr
Mode Individual or pair	Technology Any course-approved LLM	Deliverable Previous map concept

Why This Lab Matters

Chapter 16 integrates the Part II skill stack into a director workflow. This lab asks you to take a previous lab idea or map concept through framing, visual direction, layout, behavior, critique, and readiness.

Essential question

What cartographic decision should you be able to defend by the end of this lab?

Learning Objectives

- State the cartographic purpose, audience, evidence, and constraints.
- Use an LLM or assistant as a collaborator while preserving human judgment.
- Revise the artifact or prompt based on explicit critique.

At a glance

Inputs: Lab scenario, prompts, data notes, or map concept supplied in the activity.

Outputs: Previous map concept; Director framing; Visual direction.

Evaluation: Clear purpose, defensible cartographic judgment, concise prompting, and evidence of human verification where needed.

LAB WORK

Setup: Choose a Previous Map Concept ~15 min

Use a map idea from any earlier lab, preferably one with enough substance to revise. Do not use a copyrighted fantasy setting or protected fictional geography.

Previous map concept
Original purpose:
Audience:
What worked:
What felt generic or weak:
What should be excellent by the end:
Constraints:

PROCEDURE

Part 1 - Reframe the Map Concept Like a Director ~25 min

Reframe this map concept. Define audience, scope, narrative posture, ethical boundaries, exclusions, and the single sentence the map should communicate. Identify one ethical issue that could appear through naming, visibility, or emphasis.

PROCEDURE

Part 2 - Derive Style from Framing ~25 min

Create a visual direction from the framing. Specify style dialect, color tone, typography voice, symbology logic, and hierarchy. Explain how style follows from purpose rather than being applied arbitrarily.

PROCEDURE

Part 3 - Compose Layout as a System ~25 min

Create a layout specification. Define primary and secondary zones, reading order, legend/control placement, panel behavior, mobile behavior, and what must not compete with the map.

PROCEDURE

Part 4 - Specify Behavior and Confidence ~25 min

Create a behavior specification. Include interaction grammar, disclosure, tooltips/pop-ups, panels, controls, motion, accessibility, and what users should confidently know how to do without instructions.

PROCEDURE

Part 5 - Continuous Critique Pass ~30 min

Run a critique pipeline: description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation. Diagnose whether the map is drifting from its original intent aesthetically, ethically, behaviorally, or experientially. Recommend five precise interventions.

PROCEDURE

Part 6 - Readiness and QA ~30 min

Create a publication readiness checklist for this map. Include purpose clarity, mobile legibility, interaction consistency, accessibility, performance expectations, limitation visibility, reuse documentation, and a stop rule for when the map is ready enough to release.

DELIVERABLE

Submission ~20 min

- Previous map concept
- Director framing
- Visual direction
- Layout specification
- Behavior specification
- Continuous critique pass
- Publication readiness checklist
- 400-600 word reflection on moving from maker to director