

# NOTES ON IMHOF (1975): POSITIONING NAMES ON MAPS

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## General Principles

- Names should be easy to read
- The name and object it belongs to should be easily recognisable.
- Avoid covering, overlapping, and concealment. Names should not disturb other map elements. You can use a stroke or glow though to ensure that the names are more legible and the lines of the symbols don't run through the names.
- Names aid in making the spatial situation, territorial size, connections, importance, and differentiation of objects clear on the map.
- Use arrangement, style, and size to show classification and hierarchy of components.
- Names should not be too spread out or too clustered.

## Label Categories

- **Position:** Names related to points or symbols e.g. city and town names. You can also treat small islands and individual mountain peaks as points rather than areas but it depends on scale.
- **Linear:** Used for lines or ribbon like objects e.g. name of a building or river. Don't put the text inside a building if it looks ugly. In that case, treat the building like a symbol/point. You can treat mountain passes as linear or as a position name depending on how it looks.
- **Areal:** Names of all kinds of areas e.g. countries, mountain ranges, woods, deserts, etc. Names should be positioned so as to reveal the form and extent of the area. Furthermore, in large scale rivers and lakes can be treated like areas.

## Position Labels

### General

- Should be next to, over, or under the object.
- Do not spread them out.
- They should be horizontal to the map coordinates on large scale maps and follow the latitude lines on small scale maps. In short, don't curve these labels if your map lines are straight.
- The best position for a position label is to the right and slightly above the symbol, space allowing. Where space is not available it's preferable to put the label next to the symbol and on the right rather than to the left of it but slightly above.
- If space is only available above or below the symbol, it's better to put the label above the symbol rather than below.

### Names for Places on Linear Features e.g. Rivers or Borders

- For symbols to the left of a river or border, place the name on the left side.
- For symbols to the right of a river or border, place the name on the right side.
- If the object spans both sides of the line, then split the name between both sides or place it to the right.

### **Names for Places on Ocean Coasts or Lake Shores**

- Names should be placed on the land and not on the water surface or half in and half out.
- Names on the coast should be written completely on the water surface while names of places near but not on the coast should be written on land.
- In small scale maps which have a lot of names, put the labels all on the water surface.

### **Names on Small Scale Maps**

- Should be narrowly spaced

### **Names of Cities and Other Places Names**

- Where a city or place has two names, one in the native language, and one more international, go with the internationally accepted version. For example, the city Cairo rather than El Quahira, and the river Ganges rather than Ganga.
- If desired, you can place the native or alternate name in a lighter type and in brackets next to the internationally accepted version.

### **Linear Labels**

- Place names on the lines to which they refer e.g. following the curve of a river.
- Put such labels on unoccupied map areas for increased legibility.
- Repeat the names at suitable intervals especially for rivers since their names often change at junctions.
- Don't put labels too close or too far from the feature.
- Put river names where the river bends the least.
- If the river runs vertically put the name with the first letter towards the bottom of the map (the coast).

### **Areal Labels**

- Map surfaces must be large enough to easily fit areal labels inside the area.
- Areas of higher order can overlap areas of lower order.
- Bend and stretch the name so that it spreads as much as possible over the horizontal axis (the longest part) of the area but leave a space on either end equal to 1.5 times the size of the letters on either end of the word.
- Sometimes it's better to divide long names into two or three horizontal lines but each line should be a whole word not just syllables. Plus, use hyphens when doing this and capitalise words on every line.
- Names that are tilted i.e. not horizontal should never be straight. They should always be slightly curved, and the curvature (no greater than  $60^\circ$ ) should follow the lay of the land (bend towards the nearest coast).
- If you treat rivers as an area, do not space them out as such. Keep the letters spaced closely together.
- Lettering should stand as upright as possible and be written normally i.e. from left to right and not upside down with respect to the reader.
- Adjacent area names should run in the same direction.
- Ocean names should follow the shape of the coast and be upright in relation to the reader.