

## Critical Thinking Skills Activity

# Analyzing Visuals

## Learning the Skill

Your textbook is full of visuals—maps, photographs, charts, and graphs. Visuals communicate ideas to the observer in much the same way that words do. You just need to know how to “read” a visual.

Use these guidelines to help you analyze visuals:

- Ask yourself why the visual is there. What is it telling you?
- Determine whether the visual is communicating facts or opinions.
- Ask yourself how the visual compares with what you already know about the subject.
- Study every aspect of the visual. For a *map*, this would include the title, key, colors or patterns, and scale. *Charts* and *graphs* have labels along the side and bottom axes that tell you vital information. Source lines also should be noted. *Photographs* convey an impression. Not only should you study what has been included in a photo, but also what has *not* been included.



## Practicing the Skill

**Directions:** Study the map of the western United States on the next page. Then answer the questions below.

- 1. Listing** How many volcanoes are located in California, and what are their names?

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- 2. Locating** Find Mount Rainier on the map. What large city is located near it?

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- 3. Identifying** How many of the volcanoes shown on the map have erupted within the past 2,000 years?

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## Critical Thinking Skills Activity

continued

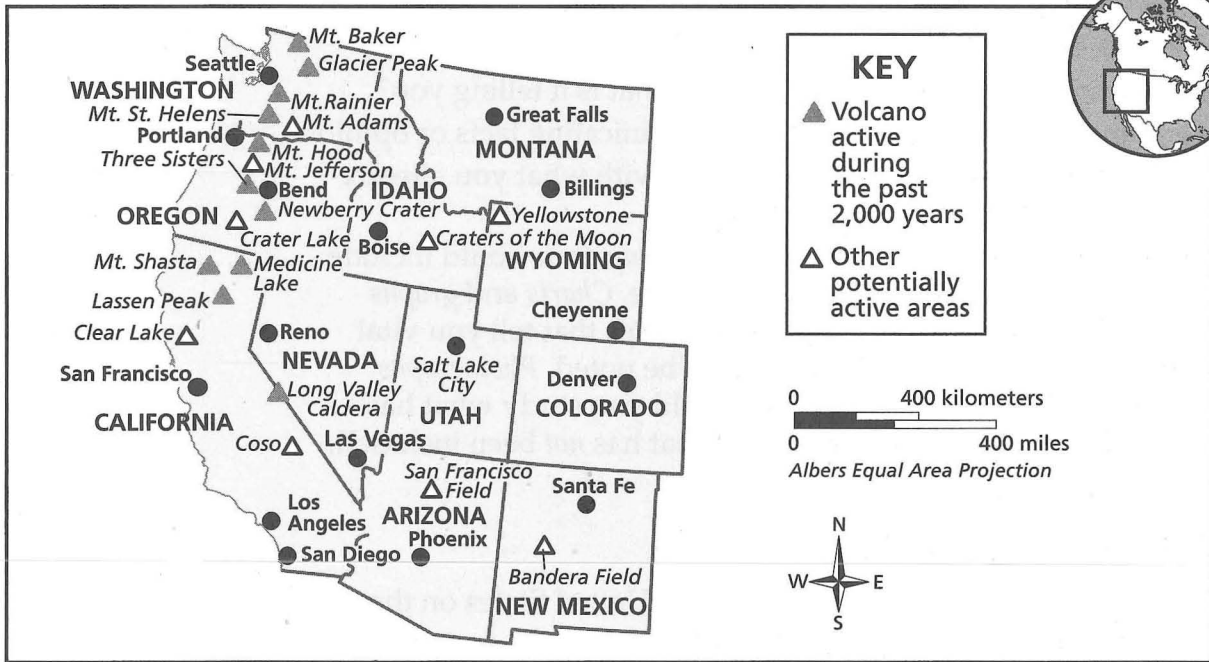
4. **Locating** How many volcanic areas are located within 100 miles of Portland, Oregon? Which ones are they?

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## Potentially Active Volcanoes of the Western United States



### ✓ Applying the Skill

**Directions:** Use the map above to answer the questions below.

1. **Stating** What is the title of this map?

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2. **Drawing Conclusions** What conclusion can you draw from this visual about the physical geography of the western United States?

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3. **Synthesizing Information** What do you think this map suggests about tectonic activity?

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