

Mapping

Making maps in R

Maps can be tricky in R! There are many packages to choose from.

- ▶ `usmap` is compatible with `ggplot`
- ▶ `maps` is “Base R”
- ▶ Some require API keys (e.g., `ggmap`, `tidycensus`)
- ▶ Some are interactive (e.g., `leaflet`)

Data formats - boundary data

```
library(tidyverse)
head(map_data("county"))
```

	long	lat	group	order	region	subregion
1	-86.50517	32.34920	1	1	alabama	autauga
2	-86.53382	32.35493	1	2	alabama	autauga
3	-86.54527	32.36639	1	3	alabama	autauga
4	-86.55673	32.37785	1	4	alabama	autauga
5	-86.57966	32.38357	1	5	alabama	autauga
6	-86.59111	32.37785	1	6	alabama	autauga

Data formats - boundary data

- ▶ **long:** Longitude (x-coordinate)
- ▶ **lat:** Latitude (y-coordinate)
- ▶ **group:** Identifies unique polygons (each county may have multiple polygons if it contains islands or complex borders).
- ▶ **order:** Sequence in which points should be connected to form the boundary (polygons).
- ▶ **region:** State name (e.g., "alabama").
- ▶ **subregion:** County name within the state (e.g., "autauga").

Data formats - sf data

```
library(usmapdata)
head(us_map("county"))
```

Simple feature collection with 6 features and 4 fields

Geometry type: MULTIPOLYGON

Dimension: XY

Bounding box: xmin: -2590847 ymin: -2608148 xmax: -1298969 ymax: -2034041

Projected CRS: NAD27 / US National Atlas Equal Area

A tibble: 6 x 5

	fips	abbr	full	county	geo
	<chr>	<chr>	<chr>	<chr>	<MULTIPOLYGON [m]
1	02013	AK	Alaska Aleutians East Borough		(((-1762715 -2477334, -1761280
2	02016	AK	Alaska Aleutians West Census Area		(((-2396847 -2547721, -2393297
3	02020	AK	Alaska Anchorage Municipality		(((-1517576 -2089908, -1517636
4	02050	AK	Alaska Bethel Census Area		(((-1905141 -2137046, -1900900
5	02060	AK	Alaska Bristol Bay Borough		(((-1685825 -2253496, -1684030
6	02063	AK	Alaska Chugach Census Area		(((-1476669 -2101298, -1469831

Data formats - sf data

This data is “Simple Feature” (sf) data used for spatial analysis.

These objects store geometric shapes (like points, lines, or polygons) along with associated attributes (metadata).

the `geom` column is a `MULTIPOLYGON` — a geometry type representing complex shapes, which may consist of multiple polygons (e.g., islands or non-contiguous regions).

ggplot has spatial functions

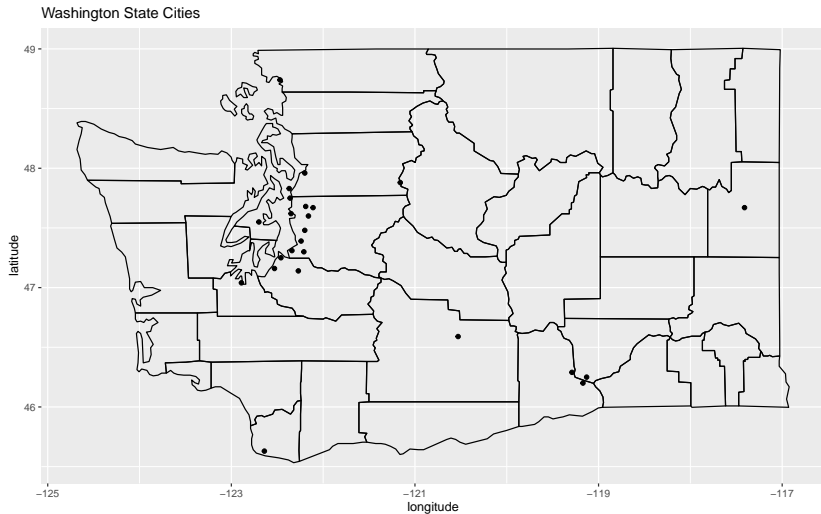
`geom_polygon()` works with boundary data

```
library(tidyverse) # `map_data()` from ggplot2  
library(maps) # `us.cities` data
```

```
wa_county <- map_data("county") %>% filter(region == "Washington")  
wa_cities <- us.cities %>% filter(country.etc == "WA")
```

```
plot_1 <-  
  ggplot() +  
  geom_polygon(data = wa_county, aes(x = long, y = lat, group = group),  
              color = "black", fill = NA) +  
  geom_point(data = wa_cities, aes(x = long, y = lat)) +  
  labs(title = "Washington State Cities", x = "longitude", y = "latitude") +  
  coord_fixed(1.3)
```

ggplot has spatial functions



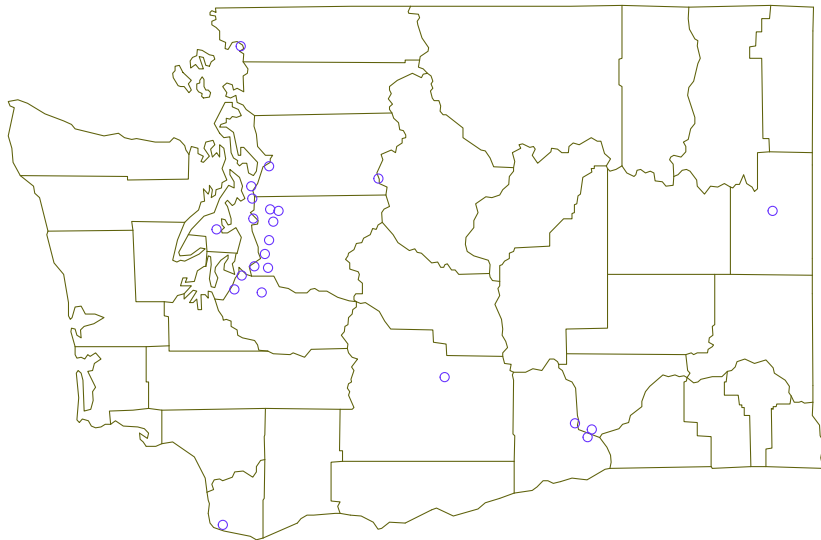
maps package is more similar to Base R

```
library(maps) # `map` and `map.cities` functions and `us.cities` data

map('county', region = 'washington', col = "#5E610B")
map.cities(us.cities, country="WA", col = "#642EFE", cex = 2)
title(main = "Washington State Cities")
```

maps package is more similar to Base R

Washington State Cities



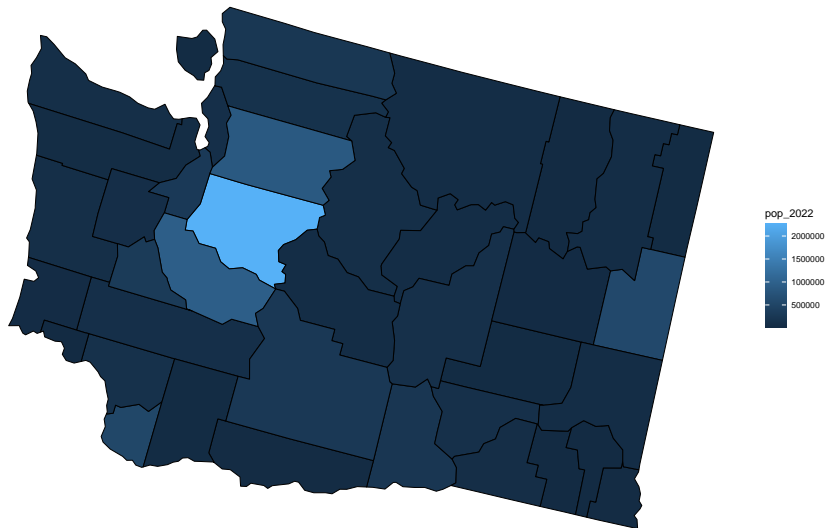
usmap is compatible with ggplot

```
library(tidyverse)
library(usmap) # `countypop` data and the `plot_usmap()` function

wa_dat <- countypop %>% filter(abbr == "WA")

plot_3 <-
  plot_usmap(data = wa_dat, values = "pop_2022", include = c("WA")) +
  scale_fill_continuous() +
  theme(legend.position = "right")
```

usmap is compatible with ggplot



It can get complicated! ggplot fill by county

Sometimes a lot of cleanup is needed to join boundary data with attributes of interest!

```
library(tidyverse)
library(usmap) # `countypop` data
library(maps) # `us.cities` data

# Get county boundaries
wa_county <- map_data("county") %>% filter(region == "washington")

# Get county-level ("subregion") population
wa_dat <- countypop %>% filter(abbr == "WA") %>%
  mutate(subregion = tolower(str_remove(county, " County"))) %>%
  group_by(subregion) %>% summarize(pop_2022 = sum(pop_2022))

# Combine the data
wa_complete <- wa_county %>% inner_join(wa_dat)

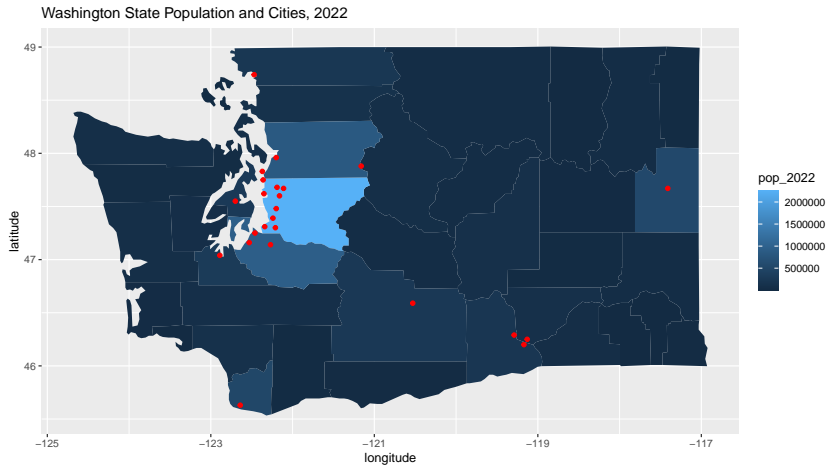
# Get WA cities and their coordinates
wa_cities <- us.cities %>% filter(country.etc == "WA")
```

It can get complicated! ggplot fill by county

Sometimes a lot of cleanup is needed to join boundary data with attributes of interest!

```
# Step 2: create the plot
plot_4 <-
  ggplot() +
  geom_polygon(data = wa_complete,
               aes(x = long, y = lat, group = group, fill = pop_2022)) +
  geom_point(data = wa_cities, aes(x = long, y = lat), color = "red") +
  labs(
    title = "Washington State Population and Cities, 2022",
    x = "longitude", y = "latitude") +
  coord_fixed(1.3)
```

It can get complicated! ggplot fill by county



tidycensus is helpful for tract level

Use `geom_sf()` function with SF data.

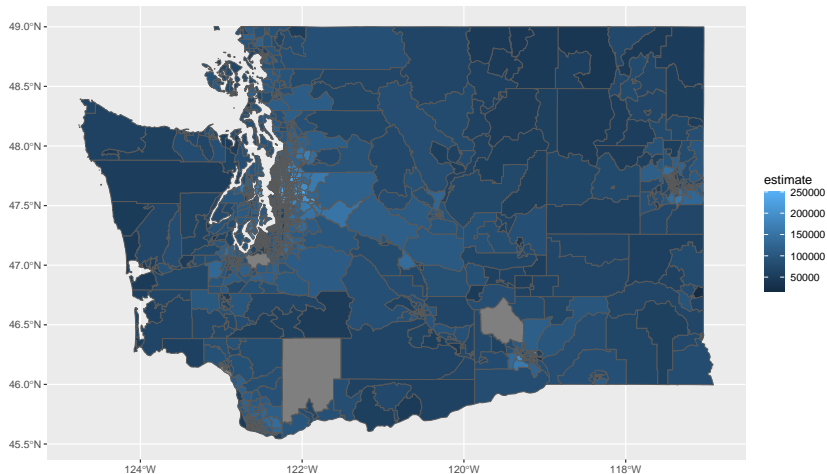
```
library(tidyverse) # `geom_sf()` from ggplot2
library(tidycensus) # `get_acs()` function for American Community Survey data

wa_income <- get_acs(
  geography = "tract",
  variables = "B19013_001", # Income key
  state = "WA",
  year = 2022,
  geometry = TRUE
)
```

|

tidycensus is helpful for tract level

```
ggplot(data = wa_income, aes(fill = estimate)) +  
  geom_sf()
```



Tips for Mapping in R

1. Know the functions: make sure your data going into plotting functions is similar to
2. Data Structure: Ensure column names match between datasets for `join()` operations
 - ▶ e.g., `subregion` needs to align in both `wa_county` and `wa_dat` to make `wa_complete`.
 - ▶ Make sure all datasets (like counties and cities) use the same geographic system, such as longitude-latitude pairs.
3. Clean Data to make life easier
 - ▶ Use functions like `tolower()` and `str_remove()` to standardize text (e.g., removing "County").
 - ▶ Group and summarize data when plotting aggregates, like population by county.

More resources

<https://rfortherestofus.com/2024/06/us-maps>

<https://ggplot2-book.org/maps>

<https://walker-data.com/tidycensus/articles/spatial-data.html>

<https://walker-data.com/census-r/mapping-census-data-with-r.html>

<https://jtr13.github.io/cc19/different-ways-of-plotting-u-s-map-in-r.html>