

Map Design / Critique

1. The title of this map is *California Wildfires*.
2. The map can be accessed at <https://mapgallery.esri.com/map-detail/5d0aac6320766afa830d5294>
3. This map shows the Californian wildfires between 1900 and 2018 that were greater than 1,000 acres. There is a separate frame for each decade.
4. The level of measurement of the fire data is nominal and is shown in terms of location and area. Additionally, this same data is displayed in a quantitative way via the bar charts at the bottom of the map, which plot the acres burned and average fire size by each decade, respectively.
5. Since the information is nominal, the map represents the information using the visual variable shape. The acres burned can therefore be represented by a single color (in this case red). The fires are differentiated only by size and location, and can therefore share a uniform color.
6.
 - a. There is a high degree of visual contrast between the wildfire information (red), the base maps (black), and the background (dark grey). There is, however, poor visual contrast between the background and the text (light grey).
 - b. The high degree of contrast of the geographic information aids in the legibility of this information. The wildfire information is easily seen and understood.
 - c. Only the state of California is shown, so there is a high degree of figure-ground organization.

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- d. Each map frame is labeled by its corresponding decade to its bottom left. While there is a high degree of contrast between the base maps and the wildfires, there is a lower degree between the labels and the page's background. This helps to emphasize the geographic information being displayed, and creates a clear hierarchical organization.
 - e. There are 12 frames, each associated with a decade's worth of wildfires between 1900 and 2018. These maps take up the top 2/3 of the page. The bottom 1/3 of the page includes the bar graphs, a description of the information, the map scale, and the data sources. By both splitting each decade's information into separate map frames and giving these frames the majority of the page's area, a high degree of balance is achieved.
7. The background information comments on the trend of increasing wildfires over time. Information about this trend, as well as a source to back it, are provided. Combined with the scale and bar charts at the bottom of the page, this information helps contextualize and explain the 12 map frames and the differences in the information they display.
8. There are not any unimportant elements that could be removed from the page without losing information or context.
9. There is not enough contrast between the dark grey background and the light grey text. The text of the map labels is large enough to be easily visible, but some of the text at the bottom of the page is small and hard to read. Aiming for a higher degree of contrast and perhaps larger font size would make this text more legible, although it would take up significantly more room on the page.