**Vocabulary:** **Reading** **Topographic Maps**



**Vocabulary**

* Contour interval – the change in elevation between adjacent contour lines.
* Contour line – a line connecting points of equal elevation on a map.



**Depression contours**

* Depression contour – a contour line with hachure marks to indicate a depression or hollow.
	+ Depression contours form closed curves.
	+ The hachure marks distinguish depression contours from contour lines that indicate a hill or mountain.
* Elevation – the height of a location above a fixed reference point, usually sea level.
* Gradient – the slope of a surface or line.
	+ To calculate the gradient of a surface between two points, divide the change in elevation by the horizontal distance between the points.
	+ Gradient can be estimated and compared using contour lines.
* Index contour – a contour line that includes an elevation label.
* Relief – the difference in elevation between the highest and lowest points in a landscape.
* Topographic map – a map that uses contour lines to depict variations in elevation across a landscape.
	+ Contours that form closed curves usually indicate hills or mountains but can also indicate depressions.
	+ Contours that are close together indicate steep slopes, while contour lines that are far apart indicate flatter terrain.
	+ Contour lines in a river valley or stream are often V-shaped, with the point of the V pointing uphill.

**Topographic map**