Subjects, Places, and Terms in Mandala

Subjects, Places, and Terms let you categorize content in Mandala using special labels called Knowledge Maps.

Knowledge Maps, or KMaps, can be crudely described as "labels in a hierarchal tree format." If you're familiar with the concept of **ontologies**, **controlled vocabularies**, or **semantic fields**, then KMaps won't be new to you. However, each Knowledge Map also has its own data (alternate names, descriptions, and more), visible through the Subjects, Terms, and Places viewers. A KMap's metadata, along with its position relative to other Knowledge Maps in the hierarchy, provides valuable **context** about a term.

Content created in different Mandala tools can use the same Knowledge Map: this joins content across tools.

Summary

Knowledge Maps are:

- subject and place controlled vocabularies…
- …represented in ontologies…
- ...with their own independent structured data (names, descriptions, illustrations, maps, and more)…
- ...that index content across Mandala, and
- …that connect:
  - content from one Mandala tool **with** content from another tool; and
  - a Mandala asset **with** information about a keyword; and
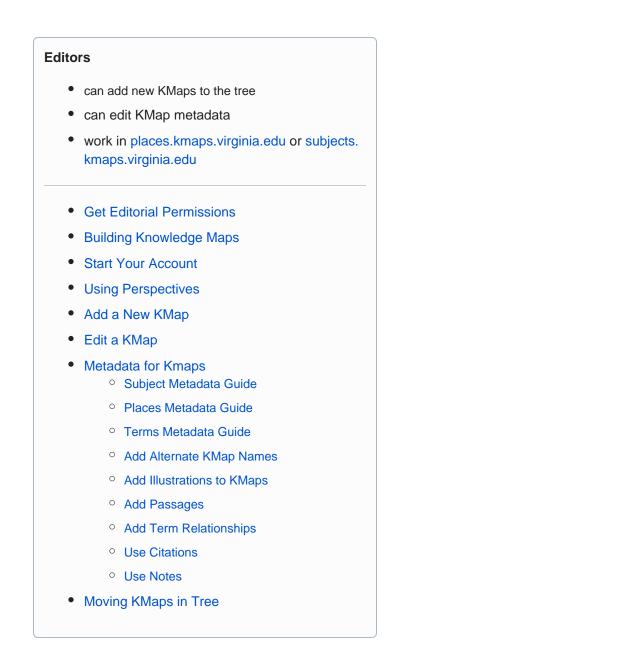 - a term **with** related Knowledge Map keywords.

Knowledge Map collaborators can either be general users or editors. These different types of collaborators work on different websites, though the information is shared between sites. Anyone with a UVa NetBadge account can be a general user, but the Knowledge Maps team needs to give you special privileges if you want to be an editor.

> ⓘ **Contact Us**
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> If you have questions about getting started with Mandala or would like to discuss a potential Mandala project, please contact Courtney Floyd, Associate Director of Learning Technologies and Digital Humanities, at courtney.floyd@virginia.edu.

General Users

- can explore existing KMaps
- can connect Mandala assets to existing KMaps
- work in mandala.shanti.virginia.edu/subjects or mandala.shanti.virginia.edu/places

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- Contribute to Knowledge Maps
- Places
  - Search Places
  - Browse Places
  - View Place Knowledge Maps
- Subjects
  - Search Subjects
  - Browse Subjects
  - View Subject Knowledge Maps
- Terms (General Use)
  - Browse Terms
  - Label Mandala Items with Terms
  - Search Terms

Editors

- can add new KMaps to the tree
- can edit KMap metadata
- work in places.kmaps.virginia.edu or subjects.kmaps.virginia.edu

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Types of Knowledge Maps

Places are for geographical features of all types, i.e. locations. They include descriptions, alternate names, maps, feature types, relationships between places, relationships between places and other Knowledge Maps, ids, altitudes, and more.

Subjects are for concepts or topics. They include descriptions, translated titles, relationships between subjects, relationships between subjects and other Knowledge Maps, citations, and more. Unlike Terms, they're best at creating nuance when describing relationships between subjects.

Terms are for defining words, like in a dictionary. Unlike Subjects, they focus on words, definitions, and descriptions, while only lightly focusing on relationships. Terms include nested definitions, citations, details on the term type, and more.

Should I use Subjects or Terms?

Think about Terms as dictionaries of terms, and Subjects as ontologies of subjects. The table below can help you understand how to think of each tool.

	Terms	Subjects
Names and descriptions	Definitions play a primary role. You can add nuance to descriptions: multiple definitions, quotes, pronunciations, dictionaries from different sources, and more.	Naming and describing play a minor role. You can add a simple description and alternate names, but no advanced features exist.
Hierarchies	Hierarchies (also known as trees or ontologies) play a very minor role. While very simple hierarchical structures are possible, you can't create very sophisticated relationships between terms.	In subjects, ontologies play a primary role. You can create complex relationships between subjects.

Video Overview

If you want to learn about Knowledge Maps in-depth, we've put together a mini three-part course. You can it in this Mandala Audio-Video collection.