READING A TOPOGRAPHIC MAP - A*

The most obvious way in which topographic maps differ from other maps is that they contain many thin, curved lines that appear to wrap around certain areas. These lines are called contour lines. They connect points of equal elevation. Places where the lines are close together are very steep. Where the lines are far apart, the land is relatively flat. The actual elevation is written on every fifth line. In the United States we measure elevation beginning with 0 feet at sea level.

Contour lines have four important characteristics.
1. All points along the same contour line are at the same elevation.
2. All contour lines eventually connect with themselves.
3. Contour lines never cross each other.
4. Contour lines never split or branch.

Each drawing below violates a rule of contour lines. Match each rule with the drawing that violates the rule.

A.  

B.  

C.  

D.  

*adapted from Penn State / 4-H publication Trees + Me = Forestry

READING A TOPOGRAPHIC MAP - B*

PART 1 Match each image below with the appropriate word description.
1. _____ Gentle slope on all sides.
2. _____ Round hill with two peaks.
3. _____ Steep south side.
4. _____ Two peaks, with east side higher.

A.  

B.  

C.  

D.  

*adapted from Penn State / 4-H publication Trees + Me = Forestry
PART 2. Match each side view image with the appropriate set of contour lines.

1. ___
   ![Image of a side view with a single peak]

2. ___
   ![Image of a flat area with a single depression]

3. ___
   ![Image of a side view with two peaks]

4. ___
   ![Image of a side view with a flat area and a depression]

A. 
   ![Contour lines of a depression]

B. 
   ![Contour lines of a depression with two inner depressions]

C. 
   ![Contour lines of a depression and multiple inner depressions]

D. 
   ![Contour lines of a depression with a single inner depression]

* adapted from The Language of Maps, 1983 by Pitman Learning Inc.