

Teaching About Maps

Lesson I in Geography Unit

OBJECTIVE: Students will develop map skills by recognizing basic map symbols, including land, water, cities and roads. They will understand that maps show land from above and are used to determine where places are located in relation to other places.

SCAFFOLDING: Students will need to understand the concept of **above** and be able to understand relationships between symbols and photographs.

MATERIALS: 2-3 maps and/or books with pictures of maps in them and a computer with Google Earth (<https://www.google.com/earth/>) bookmarked, copies of visuals including: school, car, bus, walk, street, yes, no, land, water, cities, roads and corresponding photos of each.

LINK: Ask the students the following questions, using visuals as necessary to help them answer:

How do you get to school? How do you go to the store, playground or to visit friends? How do you know how to get there? Have you ever been in an airplane and looked out of the window?

ENGAGE AND EDUCATE: Get out a computer and go to Google Earth. Show your school area, pointing out the land water (if any), city and roads. Explain that they are seeing the school from above (like from an airplane). Use Google Earth to show other familiar landmarks (library, pool, park). Always make sure to point out the roads, buildings, land and water. Put the computer away.

Bring out the maps and give the students the opportunity to look at them. Explain to them that maps are drawings that show what places look like from above, just as you were looking at the school from above using Google Earth. Point out the land, water, cities and roads. Explain to the students that maps help you know where you are and where other places are. Explain that maps show you how to get to different places that you want to go.

Tell the students that you will now read a book about maps. As you read the book, use the provided visuals to clarify and reinforce learning.

ACTIVE LEARNING: Bring out the visuals and have students identify land, water, cities and roads. Ask the students to identify each using a field of 2 to 5 visuals as appropriate. Next show the students a map and help them identify the land, water, cities and roads.

Allow the students to further explore the visuals and maps. Time permitting, use Google Earth to show the students their home.

As you collect the materials, repeat that maps are drawings that show what places look like from above and that we use maps to see where we are and where other places are, and that we use maps to see how to get places.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT

1) Make a treasure map. Make copies of the blank treasure map and visuals of land, water, road, city, treasure chest and the skull and crossbones. Students should color the map, starting with the land and water. Have the students cut out the visuals and then direct them to find individual symbols to glue to their map. This will serve as an informal assessment of their ability to identify land, water, road and city. According to their abilities, students can draw in details. When the map is completed allow them to crumble the paper to make it look old.

2) Make copies of the visuals (both the symbols and the photographs). Ask the students to match symbol to photo and photo to symbol.

3) Make enough copies of the symbols and photographs to allow students to play the memory game. It may be best to limit the groups to three students with one adult to monitor.

4) Read/watch: Follow That Map! A First Look At Mapping Skills by Scot Ritchie. YouTube video There's a Map on My Lap! All About Maps by Tish Rabe. Sesame Street Map Song (for k-2nd graders, not age-appropriate for older students).

5) Using the assessment provided, test students understanding of what a map is and their ability to identify land, water, roads and cities on a map.