

**RESOURCE LIBRARY**  
ACTIVITY : 30 MINS

## Important Places

Students navigate a map of a local mall, find the places there that are most important to them, and discuss what places are important to other people.

**GRADES**

4, 5

**SUBJECTS**

*Geography, Human Geography*

## OVERVIEW

Students navigate a map of a local mall, find the places there that are most important to them, and discuss what places are important to other people.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/important-places/>

## DIRECTIONS

### 1. Activate students' prior knowledge.

Ask students to raise their hands if they have ever been to a shopping center or mall. Have students brainstorm the kinds of stores and services that might be found in a shopping center. Use the following prompts, if needed:

- *What kinds of stores are at a mall?*
- *Can you eat there?*
- *Can you see a movie at a mall?*
- *What else can you do there?*

Tell students that they will look at a map of a mall to figure out what places there are important to different people.

## **2. Have pairs of students analyze a map of a mall.**

Divide students into pairs. Distribute maps of a local shopping mall, if possible. Tell students the name of the mall, and ask how many have been there. Explain that the map shows where everything is in the mall. Ask: *Why is it important for a shopping mall to provide maps?* Elicit from students that maps help people find their way around. Have pairs find a main entrance and circle it on their maps. Then have them look at the map key. Explain that a map key uses symbols to represent specific places or services. Point out the symbols for restrooms, bank machines, restaurants, an information desk, and security. Have pairs locate a restroom close to the entrance and circle it on their maps. Then have them find a restroom far away from the entrance and circle it. Discuss how long it might take to walk to each restroom from the entrance they circled.

## **3. Have students locate and vote on important places.**

Have students imagine that they are hungry and need to find a place to eat. Have them use the key to find the places that serve food. Discuss the different options available. Ask students which place they would choose to eat. Have students raise their hands to vote for each restaurant or food option. Tally the votes on the board.

## **4. Discuss why different places are important to different people.**

Discuss whether or not there was one place where most students wanted to eat, and other places where fewer students wanted to eat. Ask:

- *Why is the place you chose important to you?*
- *Would your friends choose the same place? Why or why not?*
- *Would your family members choose the same place? Why or why not?*

## **5. Have students draw conclusions.**

Ask students what conclusions they can draw about why different people value different places. They should recognize that personal experiences help to shape which places people value.

# Modification

Some local malls make their maps available online. If helpful, use a projector to display the online map for students and make this a whole-class activity.

## Extending the Learning

Have students check the map for as many DOGSTAILS as they can find and circle and label them. If needed, review DOGSTAILS with students:

**Date:** when the map was made

**Orientation:** direction (north arrow or compass rose)

**Grid:** lines that cross to form squares

**Scale:** map distance

**Title:** what, where, and when

**Author:** who made the map

**Index:** the part of the grid where specific information can be located

**Legend:** what the symbols mean

**Sources:** who provided information for the map

## OBJECTIVES

## Subjects & Disciplines

### Geography

- Human Geography

## Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify places that are important to them
- analyze a map and map key
- locate and vote on important places on a map
- draw conclusions about why different places are important to different people

## Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

# Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Discussions
- Hands-on learning

## Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Applying
  - Remembering
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information
  - Analyzing Geographic Information
  - Answering Geographic Questions
  - Asking Geographic Questions

## National Standards, Principles, and Practices

### NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- Theme 3:

People, Places, and Environments

### NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 1:

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

- Standard 4:

The physical and human characteristics of places

## Preparation

## What You'll Need

### MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Maps of a shopping mall
- Markers

### REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector

### PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

### GROUPING

- Small-group instruction

## BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

# Background Information

Places are important to people for many different reasons. By exploring a map of your local mall with others, you can discover what places different people value—and why.

# Prior Knowledge

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# Recommended Prior Activities

- [Important Places in Your Community](#)

# Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
key	<i>noun</i>	an explanation of symbols and abbreviations used on a map, also known as a legend.
map symbol	<i>noun</i>	representation of one piece of data displayed as part of a larger representation of spatial information.



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