

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 45 MINS

Mapping the Classroom

Students practice using the language of location and then apply that language when creating a map of their classroom. They use the map to locate hidden items in the classroom.

GRADES

Pre-K, K, 1

SUBJECTS

Geography

CONTENTS

1 Resource, 1 PDF, 1 Image

OVERVIEW

Students practice using the language of location and then apply that language when creating a map of their classroom. They use the map to locate hidden items in the classroom.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/mapping-classroom/>

DIRECTIONS

Preview the provided Mapping the Classroom pictures of practice to see photographs of a classroom teacher using this activity with students in Grades preK and K.

1. Prepare the map outline and contents.

Before class, draw the shape of the classroom on a large piece of butcher paper, leaving an open space for the door(s). Cut shapes out of construction paper, or use the provided

Classroom Cutouts worksheet, to represent the large furniture, rugs, and other permanent items in the classroom, staying as true to the actual colors as possible. Write each student's name on a sticky note. Have markers and removable tape ready to use in putting the map together with students.

2. Describe location in the classroom and in relation to other students.

Have students stand in a circle, arm's length apart. Ask them to look to the students on either side of them. Have them describe their location as "next to" their neighbor. Then help them practice concepts of near and far, by describing their neighbor as "near" and the students across the circle as "far." Next, pick two students who are not standing next to each other, and ask who is "between" them. Continue practicing this language using objects in the room. Tell students they are using special words to describe the location of people and things in their classroom. Tell students they will use these words again when they create a map of their classroom.

3. Talk about the purpose of a map.

Explain that a map shows where things are located. Usually a map shows a place from above. Have students imagine they have wings like a butterfly, and they can fly up to the ceiling of the classroom. Ask: *What do you see from up there? What shapes do you see?* Tell them that their map of the classroom will show what the room looks like from above. It will show where things in the classroom are. If helpful, project the provided image of the Classroom Map so visual and struggling learners can understand the perspective of a birds'-eye-view map.

4. Make a map of the classroom.

Show students the shape of the classroom drawn on butcher paper. Ask: *What do you think these lines are?* (the walls) *What are these openings?* (door[s], windows) Show students one of the cutout shapes and decide together which item in the class it looks like. Remind students they are looking down from above. Use the language of location to talk about where it is located in the room, and then place the shape in the correct location on the map. Emphasize that a simple map of the classroom is a small model that represents something that is really much larger. Another example is a model car, which represents a much larger real car.

5. Have students describe where things are in the classroom.

Talk about and count other items in the classroom that can be included on the map, such as desks, chairs, carpets, or bookshelves. Place cutouts of other features or draw them on the map. As you decide what to include on the map, use the words “next to,” “near,” “far,” and “between” to describe the locations of objects. Have students repeat statements using these words or think of their own statements using the language of location.

6. Practice reading and using the map.

Ask students to show how they move around in the classroom by walking their fingers on the map from one place to another. For example, have a student walk her fingers on the map from the rug to where she sits at the table. Then place sticky notes with students’ names in a few places on the map. Ask them to walk to that location. Other students can give them hints about where to go using the location words.

7. Use the map to have a treasure hunt.

Have students cover their eyes while you hide a few objects, such as marbles or small plastic animals, in different locations in the classroom. Return to the map and point to one location where students can hunt for the treasure. Have students point to the location in the classroom, and then send two or three students to find the treasure. Take turns so that everyone is able to look for a treasure. You can also hide a small treasure chest or plastic eggs with messages, pennies, or stickers inside as a reward for good map reading.

Modification

Consider creating the map more than once with a small group of students so they have additional opportunities to place items on the map and discuss location and movement in the classroom using the map. You can use removable tape to attach and remove items on the map.

Modification

Students may have difficulty with items on the map being represented only by shapes. To address this, print simple, black-and-white photos of items in the classroom on regular paper and have students color them and attach them to the map.

Tip

Students may think everything in the classroom should be on the map. Help them name the furniture and other things that are usually in a set place in the classroom. You can have them each draw a small item they think should be included on the map, and then everyone can attach the items to their appropriate locations.

Tip

Use removable tape to attach items on the map, so they can easily be moved and re-used with multiple groups of students.

Informal Assessment

- For younger students, have them orally describe places on the map of their classroom. Ask questions using “inside,” “next to,” “between,” “near,” and “far” with the sketched map. Make a list of students’ statements using language of location on the board or paper, and display it with the classroom map.
- Have older students write five sentences describing where they found treasures using the map of their classroom. Provide a word bank on the board with the words “inside,” “next to,” “between,” “near,” and “far” and places and furniture in the room as needed. For example, students might write “We found the treasure inside the bookcase. It was under the notebook. The bookcase is next to the door. The bookcase is near the teacher’s desk. The treasure was far from my desk.”

Extending the Learning

- As a class, make a map on large paper of the playground or other location in the school. Have students decide what objects should be included. Ask: *How can a map of the playground or the school be useful to people?*
- Read *Me on the Map*, by Joan Sweeney, to introduce how people can create and use maps, and also how maps represent places all over the world. As a homework assignment, have students create a map of their room at home with a family member’s help.
- Reinforce spatial skills and help with classroom organization by using the classroom map when you assign students to different locations or centers. Write students’ names on sticky notes, and post them on the map.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify items in the classroom that should be included on a map
- visualize the view of furniture in the room from above
- use the language of location in describing their location, items on the map, and locations in the classroom

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Visual instruction

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
- Geographic Skills
 - Organizing Geographic Information

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 3:**

How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY

- **Reading Standards for Informational Text K-5:**

Key Ideas and Details, RI.K.2

- **Reading Standards for Informational Text K-5:**

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, RI.1.7

THE COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

- **Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World: D2.Geo.2.K-2:**

Use maps, graphs, photographs, and other representations to describe places and the relationships and interactions that shape them.

- **Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World: D2.Geo.3.K-2:**

Use maps, globes, and other simple geographic models to identify cultural and environmental characteristics of places.

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Butcher paper
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Small objects to hide, such as marbles, plastic animals, or eggs
- Removable tape or glue
- Safety scissors
- Sticky notes

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

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

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

OTHER NOTES

Prepare items from Step 1 before beginning the activity with students. These include the classroom map outline, paper shapes for furniture, and sticky notes with students' names.

In Practice

Find resources that show best teaching practices and example student outcomes for this activity.

PICTURE OF PRACTICE

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Learning to use and create maps builds students' spatial thinking skills as well as language skills in the early years. Spatial thinking is important for students to develop as they connect the "why of where" in geography, Earth and environmental sciences, and history. Spatial

thinking is also positively correlated with success in math and science, as it involves knowing and understanding spatial concepts and relations, how we represent those concepts and relations in different ways, and also how we can reason with spatial information. Students who acquire robust spatial thinking skills will be at an advantage in our increasingly global and technological society and will also build a foundation for analyzing environmental issues and challenges.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
language skills	<i>noun</i>	skills including conventions of standard English, knowledge of language, and vocabulary acquisition and use.
location	<i>noun</i>	position of a particular point on the surface of the Earth.
map	<i>noun</i>	symbolic representation of selected characteristics of a place, usually drawn on a flat surface.
map skills	<i>noun</i>	skills for reading and interpreting maps, from learning basic map conventions to analyzing and comprehending maps to address higher-order goals.
spatial thinking	<i>noun</i>	collection of learned skills including the elements of concepts of space, tools of representation, and processes of reasoning.

For Further Exploration

Books

- [Sweeney, Joan. *Me on the Map*. Dragonfly Books: New York, 1998.](#)

Maps

- [National Geographic Education: Classroom Map](#)



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