

RESOURCE LIBRARY | ACTIVITY : 30 MINS

Places in the Park

Students explore a map of a park and use map symbols, a map key, and cardinal directions to analyze it.

GRADES

Pre-K, K, 1

SUBJECTS

Geography

CONTENTS

2 Images

OVERVIEW

Students explore a map of a park and use map symbols, a map key, and cardinal directions to analyze it.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

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

DIRECTIONS

1. Talk about favorite parks and what students do there.

At the start of the activity ask students if they have a favorite park. Ask: *What types of things are in the park?* Accept students' responses and then ask each one to draw on the board one of the pieces of play equipment where they like to play. Next ask the students if these are the real pieces of equipment. Then explain that we call these drawings of things that are in the real world *symbols*. It is important that students ground this activity in their real world. They will more easily then make the transition to the map activity.

2. Introduce symbols on the map key.

Project the simple Map Key. Explain that the map key tells what the symbols stand for, or represent. Read together as a class the words that match the symbols.

3. Practice using the language of location with the map.

Next, show the map of Post Park and its map key. Point to the symbols one at a time, having the students all say out loud what the symbols mean. Ask: *Do you think this park sells food? How do you know?* Ask students questions to help them practice using location vocabulary, such as: *What is between the benches?* (the fountain) *What is near the food?* (slide and trees) *What is far from the swing?* (the food, the slide) *What is next to the fountain?* (the benches)

4. Use cardinal directions.

With the map of Post Park still projected, explain that another way to talk about where things are is to use the cardinal directions north, south, east, and west. Ask students to imagine taking a walk in this park. Point at the swing and ask students to start here. Explain that if you walk in the direction of the north arrow, you would be walking north. If you turn left and walk in the direction of the west arrow, you would walk west, and so on. Ask questions using cardinal directions: *What is south of the slide?* (the seesaw) *What is east of the swing?* (a tree) *Is the slide on the east or west side of the park?* (west) *Is the fountain east or west of the slide?* (west)

5. Have students create a map of their playground or a park nearby.

Have students choose a playground or park nearby and create a map of it with a key on drawing paper. Have them use at least three symbols in the map key and on the map. Have them use crayons or colored pencils for coloring. Help them to add arrows for the cardinal directions. Have them write five sentences about where things are located in the park, using the words *near, far, next to, between, north, south, east, west*, and other words that help with describing location.

Informal Assessment

Assess students' park maps, their three symbols, and the sentences they wrote to describe items in the park for understanding and correct use of location language and cardinal directions.

Extending the Learning

- Once students have used N, S, E, W in this activity, have them pass their papers in to the north, to the south, and so on. They can also line up on the north side of the room, the west side, and so on.
- Have students use the maps they have drawn of the playground as the basis of a treasure map. Divide the class into treasure hunting teams. Hide a box with treasures, such as pencils or pennies, at different locations on the playground (one treasure box for each team). Each team should be given a set of cardinal directions to follow in order to find their treasure, such as "from the playground gate walk east 14 steps, then west 20 steps." The treasures can also be located where there are symbols on the map. After the first try, let teams rotate hiding and finding the treasure.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- name the meanings of symbols on a map and map key
- describe the location of items on a map in relation to other items
- use cardinal direction to describe location of things on a map
- draw a map of familiar places using symbols and cardinal directions

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Modeling
- Visual instruction

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Understanding
- 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:**

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, RI.1.7

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

Key Ideas and Details, RI.K.2

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

- Colored pencils
- Crayons
- Drawing paper

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

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

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Introducing students to the concept of maps as representations of places at a young age is important. Modeling the use of maps in and out of school can help students to recognize the value of maps and gain confidence with them. Using maps of places that are familiar to students will strengthen their spatial thinking skills before learning about states, countries, and continents.

Prior Knowledge

Recommended Prior Activities

- [Mapping the Classroom](#)

Vocabulary

| Term | Part of Speech | Definition |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| cardinal direction | <i>noun</i> | one of the four main points of a compass: north, east, south, west. |
| key | <i>noun</i> | an explanation of symbols and abbreviations used on a map, also known as a legend. |
| 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. |
| symbol | <i>noun</i> | something used to represent something else. |

For Further Exploration

Books

- Leedy, Loreen. *Mapping Penny's World*. New York: Square Fish, 2000.
- Sobel, David. *Mapmaking With Children: Sense of Place Education for the Elementary Years*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.



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