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## SPATIAL SKILLS/ACTIVITIES

### GRADE 1:

### PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENTS: THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

#### ABSTRACT:

This exploration focuses on the use of maps as tool to explore life in the community.

#### GUIDING QUESTION:

- Why are maps a useful tool to help us learn about our local community?
- How can we represent the layouts and characteristics of our community?

#### SPATIAL SKILLS FOCUS:

- Extracting information from maps

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## LEARNING GOALS

- We are learning to identify some of the natural and built features in our community (e.g., rivers, parks, roads) on a map
- We are learning to create a map of a place we visited using symbols
- We are learning to explain how people use the natural and built features in the community to meet their needs

#### CONCEPTS OF DISCIPLINARY THINKING:

##### Patterns and Trends

This concept requires students to study the characteristics that are similar and that repeat themselves in a natural or human environment (patterns) and characteristics or traits that are consistent in a particular setting and/or over a period of time (trends). The characteristics may be spatial, social, economic, physical, or environmental.

##### Significance

This concept requires students to determine the importance of something (e.g., an issue, event, development, person, place, process, interaction, etc.). The significance of something is generally determined by whether it has a short- or long-term impact.

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## OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

**B3 Understanding Context** – describe significant aspects of their community, with reference to different areas, services, and natural built features, demonstrating an understanding of some basic ways of describing location and measuring distance.

## SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

**B3.4** Demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of a map (e.g., title, symbols in the legend, direction, scale, and colour) when reading and constructing simple maps showing personally relevant locations (e.g., their classroom, the school, their immediate neighborhood)

**B3.3** Describe the location of some significant places in their community, using relative location (e.g., near, far, up, down), relative distance (e.g., close, far, farther), and relative direction (e.g., right, left, in front, behind) Student talk: “The playground is close to my home.” “The swimming pool is behind the library.”

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## PRIOR TO THE SPATIAL SKILLS ACTIVITY

- Show students simple maps to develop the vocabulary related to maps / location/ direction. The maps may be a bedroom, house, yard or school year. As the maps are examined encourage students to generate questions.
- Spend time discussing where items are in the school and how you explain directions to reach these places. Vocabulary includes beside, near, far, close, room 202, in the office. How do you get to the water fountain? Begin recording these terms on a word wall.
- Look at the school area from different perspectives (photographs, satellite images from above)
- Discuss and investigate the activities and facilities (natural, built) in the school yard.
- Discuss and investigate activities and facilities in the community
  - Why do we build things? How do they meet our needs?
  - Use a Concept attainment activity: work with pictures of built and natural elements and students for students to sort.
- Focus questioning on connecting places that are familiar to students with those places located on a map so students can begin to develop an idea that maps are representations of objects or places on earth. Go outside the classroom and connect where they are to a central location i.e. classroom.
- Collect images of common areas in the school, classroom or community to use in creating maps. Construct symbols as a group to represent the images. Then begin to ask students to describe the location of these items, how to get there? How long would it take? Is it far? How far? Record some of these ideas on notes that are placed beside the images. The vocabulary developed will become a spatial word wall.

- Explore maps locating different symbols. (Looking at the symbols is looking for patterns. For example, water is blue. How are all parks represented?)

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## SPATIAL SKILLS ACTIVITY

- Begin with the framing question, how do we recognize patterns in the natural and built features of our community?
- Read *Maps of My School* by Matthew Frank (Benchmark Education Geography series big book)
- Read *Bird's Eye View of a Neighborhood* by Matthew Frank (Benchmark Education Geography series big book) to teach that places look different from the ground than they look from above.
- Read *Map Skills* by Matthew Frank (Benchmark Education Geography series big book) to understand the world in spatial terms. Maps are drawings of real places shown from above.
- Provide students with a simple map of the school. Ask students to point to or colour specific objects (e.g., locate the library or their classroom)
- Record the language of maps that evolves through the lessons including the symbols that are used.
- Begin to co-construct a success criteria that will help them understand map skills:
  - I can identify some of the natural and built features in our community (e.g., rivers, parks, roads) on a map
  - I can create a map of a place that I have visited using symbols
  - I can explain how people use the natural and built features in the community to meet their needs.

### 1. National Geographic: Using the Language of Location

In this activity, students will use the language of location to describe where objects and people in the classroom are located, decide where objects in the classroom should be placed on a map of the classroom, and use the map to describe where objects in the room are located (copy and paste link)  
[http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/activity/using-the-language-of-location/?ar\\_a=1&ar\\_r=999](http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/activity/using-the-language-of-location/?ar_a=1&ar_r=999)

Construct a map of the classroom using the language developed above.



## 2. National Geographic: Exploring Maps and Models

In this activity, students compare miniatures to real items; then they explore maps and globes and miniature versions of places and the Earth.

(copy and paste link)

[http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/activity/exploring-maps-and-models/?ar\\_a=1](http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/activity/exploring-maps-and-models/?ar_a=1)

As a class, make a map of your classroom:

<http://alliance.la.asu.edu/model/geoliteracyCD/LessonFiles/Knowler/KnowlerComeT.pdf>

Complete mapping skills game using:

[http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/multimedia/interactive/maps-tools-adventure-island/?ar\\_a=1&force\\_AR=True](http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/multimedia/interactive/maps-tools-adventure-island/?ar_a=1&force_AR=True)

Discuss why maps are useful and students can generate evidence based on their learning. Discuss when we need to use maps.

Consolidation task - students can discuss the key map reading skills that they have used and discuss how these approaches help them to understand their community. They could construct an anchor chart that will help them construct and read maps. (The anchor chart will be used in future lessons and added to as more knowledge is built.)

Students can share ideas and vocabulary related to their community using relative location.

Ask students to think about when they would use this information? Why is it important to understand how to describe our community using words and maps?

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## ASSESSMENT



Record anecdotal notes that track student progress through the activities using the generated success criteria. Observe students as they use the language of location and provide feedback. Watch for misconceptions. Co-construct an anchor chart.

Assess how students discuss the key map reading skills that they have learned and how these approaches help them to understand their community. Encourage students to refer to the anchor chart.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

My World Atlas, Ethel Johnston

Mapping Penny's World by Loreen Leedy ISBN # 0-8050-6178-9

Maps and Mapping for Canadian Kids <http://www.scholastic.ca/books/view/maps-and-mapping-for-canadian-kids>

BookFlix online books: Types of maps and We Need Directions,

Elliot, David. *Henry's Map*. New York, NY: Philomel, 2013. Print.

Gonzales, Doreen. *Are We There Yet?: Using Map Scales*. Mankato, MN: First Facts, 2008. Print.

Gonzales, Doreen. *Up North and down South: Using Map Directions*. Mankato, MN: Capstone, 2008. Print.

Jackson, Kay. *Ways to Find Your Way: Types of Maps*. Mankato, MN: Capstone, 2008. Print.

Meister, Cari, and Adam Record. *The Lost Treasure of Larry Longfoot: Learning to Use a Map*. N.p.: Picture Window, 2014. Print.

Ritchie, Scot. *Follow That Map!: A First Look at Mapping Skills*. Toronto: Kids Can, 2009. Print.

Sandvold, Rolf. *Reading Maps*. New York, NY: Crabtree Pub., 2009. Print.

Shores, Erika L. *If Maps Could Talk: Using Symbols and Keys*. Mankato, MN: Capstone, 2008. Print.