

MAPPING IDENTITY

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We are all shaped by the environment, just as we shape it. From the earliest days of our life, a mix of environmental factors help us to create significant memories linked to place, which in turn contribute to our sense of who we are. We can start to unpick these many interlocking influences on 'who we are' with young pupils. Here are some quick ideas to get you started.

1. What's my story?

Ask pupils to map the different places where they have lived: while some young pupils may have travelled from other parts of the world, others may not have moved very far, if at all, so they might choose to map their parents' places. Choose an appropriately scaled map and add annotations and even images.

2. What is my everyday geography?

Ask pupils to draw a schematic or freehand map showing their house as a central point and link all the different places they normally visit in a typical week (e.g. school, shops, play areas, perhaps relatives' and friends' houses, swimming pool). Can they select symbols to represent the different kinds of places visited (e.g. shops, school, homes) and indicate (using colour-coded lines) how they travel to and from each place (on foot, by bicycle, car, bus, etc)? Discuss the kinds of places visited in a typical week and why this might be so.

3. My geography glasses

Using an outline of a pair of glasses, ask pupils to draw or write in the left 'lens' a list of all the things they can do in and around their home area (e.g. skateboard, ride a bike, play football, go to the park/shops/cinema).

Then, in the other 'lens', draw or write a list of all the human and physical features in their local area (e.g. a hill, a park, a shopping centre, a river). Ask pupils to discuss how the geography of a local area affects what they do. For example, you need to live near the beach to go beachcombing, or near a park to regularly play in one. This helps pupils understand how an environment influences, and is influenced by, human activity. What about the differences between urban and rural settings? Could you compare your 'glasses' with those of pupils from another school in a contrasting locality?

4. My favourite spot

Ask pupils to draw the location of their favourite place freehand, showing some of the key features and giving directions as to how to get there. They could explain why they like to go there and how they get there, then locate and map it using digital software (such as Digimap or Google Maps – see web panel). Pupils could take the class on a virtual trip to their favourite spot and provide a commentary (using a package such as TripGeo – see web panel).

5. Emotimaps

Do some quick fieldwork either around the school grounds or in the immediate local area using large-scale printed maps at either topographical level, or at 1:5000 (these can be printed from Digimap for Schools – see web panel). Ask pupils to show how they feel in different locations by sticking colour-coded spots on the map (e.g. happy, peaceful, safe, worried). They could talk about the most relevant emotions and select categories first. Back in school translate this to a digital map, and print out on acetate to allow pupils to compare overlays, or create one giant class map and look for similar clusters. How do feelings compare? Discuss why this might be so.

6. Me in the world

Prior to the lesson, ask pupils to make a list of ten everyday items they use at home (e.g. foods, clothes, toys), and where they were produced or manufactured. In class, use software such as Scribblemaps (see web panel) for pupils to mark the locations on. Ask pupils to compare their maps with others and discuss findings. Do they have similar global links to those of others in your class?

7. Fantasy places

Ask pupils what their dream landscape might look like and ask them to map it using appropriate annotations and geographical vocabulary. Will it be a coastal landscape or inland, urban or rural, mountainous or flat? What are the most popular kinds of landscapes chosen? Ask pupils to present a pitch on their fantasy place to others.

8. Community maps

Divide a map of the local area into kilometre square grids, enlarge these, and give one to each class in the school. Ask the class to recreate that portion of the map in whatever style they wish, using their own choice of design and annotation. Put the squares back together as a wall display. It will provide a starting point to talk about how we all interpret places differently and how maps show different biases.



WEB RESOURCES

Download accompanying PowerPoint resource: www.geography.org.uk/pg
Digimaps for schools: www.digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk
Google Maps: www.google.co.uk/maps
Scribblemaps: <http://scribblemaps.com>
TripGeo: www.tripgeo.com

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