Reading, using and interpreting OS maps

Teaching pupils how to read and interpret different types of OS maps is a fundamental aspect of geography teaching. A trainee teacher needs to develop the ability to teach pupils how to use maps, alongside aerial photographs, and in a wide range of contexts including outside the classroom.

Teaching OS map skills.

Reading for trainee teacher


The latter text (p 146) sets our four essential aspects of map-work skills:

- Plan view (perspective, relief)
- Arrangement (location, direction, orientation)
- Proportion (scale, distance, selection)
- Map language (signs, symbols, words, numbers)

Discuss with your mentor the challenges these present to pupils; ways in which they can be taught; and the learning activities can be used to introduce these skills?

Carry out task 5.3 in Biddulph, Lambert and Balderstone (2015) p 148 to observe map work skills being taught and talk to pupils about their understanding of maps.

Ideas from teachers and resources to explore.

- Using Ordnance Survey maps Teaching Geography October 2004. gives a wide range of activities for using maps in a range of geography teaching topics

- Differentiating Mapwork Teaching Geography October 1996. This looks at a simple, three-level differentiation of map skills. You should look at the suggested tasks and decide on the level of challenge that each provides. Would these be appropriate for the Y7 pupils in your school? Discuss this with your mentor.

- Between the lines Teaching Geography Summer 2005. discusses the problems faced by pupils when drawing a river valley in cross-section

- Watch this video clip 3D Maps, Coordinates and Bingo to discover how a secondary school has developed Key Stage 3 pupils’ map skills in geography with the use of creative lessons to both invigorate teaching and inspire the children

gEOgraphy.ORG.UK/MENTORING
• The Ordnance Survey website has an interesting activity for pupils to match what they see ‘through the window’ with OS current and historical maps.

• Look at the Ordnance Survey mapping resource on the GA website and download Planning for Pupil Progress by David Gardner. This free publication from the Ordnance Survey has been written for the 2014 National Curriculum and provides a very thorough overview of planning, assessing and pedagogy for teaching map skills.

**Activities for pupils to find their way with a map outside the classroom.**

Many adults struggle to do this! It includes skills such as being able to locate your own position on the map; identify your destination; orient the map; plan an appropriate route and follow it; match landmarks to map. Read about activities to develop map skills out of doors in:

• **Learning outside the classroom: what can be done in lesson time?** Teaching Geography Autumn 2007

• **On the map** Teaching Geography Summer 2012 – a practical activity using GPS.

**Using aerial and oblique aerial photographs**

A versatile item of software is memory map from the Ordnance Survey which allows you to display aerial photos and OS maps side by side and will also display 3D images. For suggestions for classroom activities

Also, software such as Bing also allows you to display aerial photos and OS maps. Some estate agents web sites have the facility to overlay street maps with satellite images or aerial views.

Go to making my place in the world and scroll down for suggestions of classroom activities using maps and aerial photos.

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