

Science Lesson

“Investigating Place” Level 1-4

This lesson requires students to map their locality. Depending on the school's location and campus this can be restricted to the school grounds, or part thereof, or may include offsite work – either including the block of streets that bounds the school (for example) or some other local feature or place if this is thought more appropriate to the exercise.

The required level of precision can be determined on a class-by-class basis, depending on age and aptitude. But it is not necessary for tape measure accuracy to be insisted on. What will be produced is a reasonably scaled map of the chosen locale, and this can be achieved by pacing-out distances.

The important objective is to “map” – which means more than simply sketch a plan.

Lesson Description

The students need to map-out the chosen area – school grounds or block of streets. This drawn-up plan is the begging of mapping. As students will observe from study of any map, the physical outline of a place and even the inclusion of basic features (such as streets) tells us very little about the place.

Students need first to decide what characteristics and features have to be illustrated. They then design a series of icons appropriate to depicting these features on their map. Designing icons, rather than copying conventional ones, allows the featuring of local elements not usually included on maps.

The final stage in mapping the locality is naming all of those places for which names do not presently exist.

Lesson Aim and Objectives

Transferring distances – even when approximated – to a grid or graph sheet, and representing angles and curves, has obvious value as an exercise in both drafting and geometry. These perhaps less exciting attributes are concealed within the task of mapping “our place”.

Developing the map beyond the transfer of lines and features to paper by inventing icons to locate places that the students themselves feel worthy of featuring, then of finding names for places, will deepen the student's aware of their own place and the points around that have interest and significance to them.

In the question asking students to identify places from the supplied co-ordinates, the answers in order are:

Materials Needed

Work sheet. Sample map (a street directory will suffice). Mapping will require grid/graph paper and, if precise measuring is thought an appropriate exercise, measuring equipment.