

Chapter 11

MAPS GALORE

Activities and Projects



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Maps Galore Project #1

Sticker Geography

Kids love stickers! Stickers provide great visual interest to map projects. There's an amazing variety of inexpensive stickers available. Keep your eye out for those that may come in useful in your studies. Collect sticker packs as you travel. When we were in Arizona we found both iguana and tarantula stickers. Look for tiny little star and dot stickers at teacher supply stores. (Great for denoting capitol cities, travel, important places, etc.) Museum gift shops often sell unique stickers and of course, craft stores usually have a wide selection.

Stickers can be pulled out as needed to spice up your history or science maps or a "Sticker Map" can be your primary focus. Here are several "Sticker Map" ideas:

Tip

Stickers don't come off of laminated surfaces easily! Paper maps might be preferable for these activities.

Materials

- ♦ USA Outline Map
- ♦ Variety of "Place" or "Travel" stickers
- ♦ Atlas, almanac, reference material

Directions

Working with the stickers you have on hand, have students decide what place or event each sticker might represent. For example, a horse sticker might represent the Pony Express. Add some tiny dots to show its route. Or a horse might represent cavalry in the Civil War. Train stickers could be used for the Transcontinental Railroad or a canoe for Lewis and Clark. Native American style stickers can be used to denote a variety of tribes or current reservations as well as important historical events like the Trail of Tears.

Tip

Can't find just the right sticker? Make your own by cutting out pictures or drawing what you need and attaching it with two-sided tape.

Variations

- ☐ Food stickers -- crops grown, regional dishes, foods from earlier time periods
- ☐ Boats -- exploration, trade, and naval battles
- ☐ Animals -- habitats, Lewis & Clark's expedition, migration
- ☐ Plants -- cactus for the southwest, etc.
- ☐ Stars or dots -- original 13 colonies, capitols, trails & routes,
- ☐ Balloons -- birthplace of presidents or relatives
- ☐ There are even historic landmark stickers available -- Statue of Liberty, etc.

Sticker Geography (Continued)

Naturally, a sticker map can be made for any area of the world you wish to study. Just use the appropriate map and reference materials.

Using a sticker you already have and deciding what it represents frees the imagination as well as gives you a great excuse to pull out and use a variety of reference materials as you strive to find the right place or event for each sticker!

The final map will make a great addition to any wall -- sure to be admired by all who see it -- and a great reminder to the kids about everything they learned while compiling their Sticker Map!

Maps Galore Project #2

Hero Geography

Everyone needs heroes! Children especially need great role models in their lives. People of noble character and great deeds inspire us to do our best also. Who are your children's heroes? Who are yours? Choose five or ten heroes. They could be Bible heroes, heroes of the faith, missionaries, great leaders, astronauts, or everyday heroes like grandparents, police and firemen, etc. Where were these heroes born or where was their sphere of influence? Pick a map to use that would work best for your hero study. (For some, like missionaries, you may wish to use a world map in addition to other maps.)

Materials

- ♦ Map(s) to write on
- ♦ Color pencils or markers
- ♦ Atlas
- ♦ Reference materials

Directions

1. Learn about your heroes.
2. Assign each hero a color and color in their birth place and areas of influence
3. Make a Key (see below)

Key

Make a key explaining the colors for each person. The key should be located in an area of the map not being utilized for this study. (For example, pick an area of the ocean that isn't needed.) Write in each heroes name in the color you used on the map for that person. You might also draw a picture of the person (or an icon that represents them next to their name in the key. For explorers, military heroes, and great statesmen, their nation's flag would make a great addition. If your heroes traveled, don't forget to draw in their travels in their own color. Decide what symbol denotes travel and mark it in your key (i.e., green is for Amy Carmichael and little green footprints show where she traveled).

Keep this project fun and inspirational -- watch movies about your heroes, read interesting books, pretend to be them for the day! Use lots of color and the students' great ideas on this map -- hang the map as a poster when finished.

Maps Galore Project #3

Book Maps - A Book List with Pizzazz!

Read a good book lately? Probably. Have your students added it to their map? This is such fun -- and you end up with a colorful and exciting "Book List" in the form of a map rather than a plain old reading log.

Keep a large paper outline map just for books read. This can be a family map or each student might like to have their own. You can add to it for years! You might even want two -- a USA and a world map.



Every book takes place somewhere. Even fictional books have a setting -- whether real or imaginary. Some books lend themselves well to tracking the action on a map while reading the story. Use a sticker or drawing to represent the main character(s) and little dots to show where they traveled.

Other books may be added to the map after you've finished reading them. Draw a picture of a favorite scene, draw an icon that reminds you of the story, design a book cover or cut out pictures that represent the book. Add a picture to the map in the place most associated with the story. For example, a student might draw a picture of a silver goblet and place it near Boston to show he has read Johnny Tremain. If there is important travel in the book you can add that with little tiny dots.

Or add a key or legend in a corner somewhere to show what your pictures represent. For example, you put a silver goblet near Boston. The key would show the same picture, perhaps smaller, then the words "Johnny Tremain -- growing up during the American Revolution" and perhaps the name of the author as well. (You might want to place your key in the Atlantic Ocean where there is more room to make a drawing to represent the book.) Boston would then be colored in. At the end of the year your student will have a map that shows each book they've read that year -- way cooler than a plain old book list!

Maps Galore Project #4

Real Maps in the Real World

Introduce young children to simplified maps. If you can't find a map of your neighborhood or town, make your own. Some places to look for simple maps: Tourist offices, Chambers of Commerce, mall maps are often simple, Parks and Recreation maps, libraries. Help your child refer to the map and actually use it to "find" places on a regular basis. As the student matures and their map-reading abilities improve you can use more detailed, complex maps. Please don't frustrate them by trying to use maps that are too difficult for them. Map reading is a more complicated skill to learn than it might appear. Patience and practice pay off here in a desire to read and learn more about maps because it is fun, not frustrating!

When your student is ready, use a clear and easy-to-read city map to plan trips to the grocery store, library, church, etc. Have him highlight places on the map that are important in his life. Then he can highlight the best routes to use to get there.

Use this map occasionally as you run your errands with your young geographer helping you to follow it. Regular map usage will go a long way towards creating map-literate kids. Once they have a good grasp of the city map, invite them to help you plan longer trips using state or regional maps.

Although world maps are certainly important, finding Madagascar does not have the same connection to a seven-year-old as finding her way to her dad's office! Expose them to a variety of maps. Use real life occasions to consult a variety of maps: bus routes, mall maps, relief maps, weather maps, historical maps, etc.

Keep maps up on the walls of your home. One on the dining room or kitchen table covered with a clear plastic table cloth will go a long way towards promoting daily map reading. There are neat map shower curtains, posters, and "kid friendly" maps available with which you may plaster bedroom, bathroom, and school room walls. Backs of doors and ceilings are other fun places to stick maps. We rotate our maps and use a variety of styles, colors, sizes, areas, etc. to maintain interest and keep on learning new things. Old National Geographic magazines, widely available at yard sales everywhere, are great for special interest maps. We love the maps of whales and dolphins, ocean floors, the solar system, historical journeys, and the many others we have had posted in our home.

Of course, maps are flat and our world is certainly not. It does help to have a globe handy to teach about hemispheres, latitudes and longitudes, orbits, etc. Buy an inexpensive one at a big discount store during the summer back-to-school sales. Can your kids find the Equator, Prime Meridian, the South Pole, their state, and the continents?

Wide exposure to maps opens up the world!

Maps Galore Project #5

3-D Maps

Creating a tabletop map with items from your home makes a great hands-on project with strong visual appeal. Use a card table set up for this purpose as you'll want to allow at least a few days to work on it and several more to admire the finished outcome.

Materials

- ♦ Table
- ♦ Atlases & Maps
- ♦ Stickers
- ♦ Index Cards
- ♦ Icons -- some examples: Legos, clay, pipe cleaners, play mobile figures, farm animals, plastic people, Lincoln Logs, boats, trains, cars, little houses, forts, plants, and dollhouse miniature items.
- ♦ Posterboard
- ♦ Foam Board
- ♦ Tape
- ♦ Toothpicks
- ♦ Plasti Tak

Directions

1. Decide on your study - what will the map represent? Ideas: Family Tree, Animal Habitats, 13 Colonies, Exploration, Ancient Civilizations, Westward Expansion, Weather or Volcanoes, Missionary Journeys, etc.
2. Draw a map on the poster board depicting the area necessary for your study. Don't worry about it being perfect or even to scale for this project! For example, let's say you are concentrating on the 13 Colonies. Draw in the whole USA, but make the 13 Colonies much bigger. Add a smallish Atlantic Ocean and the edge of Europe to show from whence Explorers and Pilgrims, etc. came.
3. Tape the posterboard map to foam board.
4. Use the Plasti Tak to affix the small icons to the map on appropriate places.
5. Write a concise explanation of the person, place or event on each index card. Cut the index card as small as possible. Tape it to a toothpick and stick it next to the area to which it is referring.

Tip

Cut into the foam board to have "pop-ups" about places or extra tidbits of information that don't fit elsewhere.

Maps Galore Project #6

Geo Terms Map

Collect pictures from magazines that depict geographic terms (deserts, plains, volcanoes, bays, etc.). Tape them to the appropriate place on a world map. This is a map that can be added to all year. Or do this in a notebook along with the geographic terms your students are defining.

For example, the student defines “plateau” in his notebook. Then he draws a picture or cuts out a picture of a plateau and tapes it to the appropriate place on his map. (Where would one find a plateau?) The picture becomes a visual reminder for the word he has just learned.

Maps Galore Project #7

Current Events

Materials

- ♦ Large wall map
- ♦ Small stickers, pins with color heads, or Post-It Notes™ Flags
- ♦ News sources

Directions

At the beginning of the school year, hang a large world map somewhere very accessible. You may prepare an inexpensive paper map on which kids can attach stickers or you might use a laminated map and Post-It Note™ Flags.

Every day make a point of discussing one place mentioned in that day's news. Children find the spot on the map and mark it. Review the marked places weekly. At the end of each month, see how many current events can be recalled just from looking at the map. By the end of the year, many different places and events will have been covered. The hands-on aspect of marking the places coupled with the reviews ensure greater retention of the information discussed.

Optional

You may like for older students to keep a Current Events Notebook, in which they briefly jot down the name of the place and a one sentence synopsis of the news relevancy.

Maps Galore Project #8

Favorite Book Maps

Remember the Book Map idea on page 87? Unlike that activity which results in map that depicts where each book you've read takes place, this project maps out the plot of one specific book.

Directions

1. Pick a book your child has enjoyed hearing read or has read himself.
2. Decide on the type of map to draw. Some books lend themselves well to a map showing the main character's travels (*Around the World in Eighty Days*, *Hans Brinker* or the *Silver Skates*, biographies of Daniel Boone or Christopher Columbus). Other books are best served by drawing a map of the area in which it takes place (*Little House on the Prairie* or *Little Britches* series). Still other books may be best depicted by mapping important events in the story (*Johnny Tremain*). Non-fiction, historical fiction, autobiographies, and biographies work best. Fiction may be used if you'd like your child to draw a map of what the setting "looks" like based on the description in the book.
3. If you choose a book that is set in a real locale, an atlas or other reference will be necessary.
4. If the book takes place in a fictional land, begin with the first and take notes of geographical details and travel references.
5. Using these notes and your child's imagination, draw, color, and label your map. This is fun to do on an oversize piece of cardstock or posterboard.

Note

Children who complete this project learn quickly that they must listen and watch carefully for geographical information. This attention to detail will improve their overall comprehension level!

Maps Galore Project #9

Imaginary Island

Materials

- ♦ Paper
- ♦ Pencil/markers

Directions

Tell your child to pretend they've just discovered an Imaginary Island! Now they need to name it and draw it. Here are some points to consider, bearing in mind the age and ability of the student:

1. Where is their island located on the world map or globe?
2. What is its longitude and latitude?
3. What is its topography?
4. What plants grow there?
5. What animals and/or insects live there?
6. What is the weather like?

This is a great way to introduce terms such as:

- ☐ topography
- ☐ latitude/longitude
- ☐ climate

Encourage your students to fill in the appropriate items:

1. Compass Rose
2. Key/Legend
3. Physical features such as rivers and mountains
4. Older students may be able to add Scale, also.

Optional

Some children will enjoy writing or telling a story about this island, how it was discovered and what was found there. Have them think about how the physical features and climate affected the plants, animals, people, etc. living there. It's fun to draw a country flag, make up money, and even choose a form of government.

Maps Galore Project #10

Jigsaw Map

Materials

- ♦ Photocopy of a map
- ♦ Tracing Paper
- ♦ Color pencils or markers
- ♦ Contact paper (optional)
- ♦ Tag board or cardstock
- ♦ Gluestick
- ♦ Scissors

Directions

1. Trace a state, country, or continent*
2. Label it
3. Color it
4. Glue it to the cardstock
5. Cover it with contact paper for sturdiness (optional)
6. Cut it out into pieces. Younger students may cut their map into just a few pieces, older students might prefer to cut their map into many pieces. For example, the United States could be cut into regions or into individual states.
7. Put the jigsaw map together!

Tips

Map a jigsaw map collection. Store each map in a labeled zipped bag. Three-hole punch the bags and store in a three-ring binder. Or use a shoe box. Encourage regular play with the maps.

Older children can make maps for their younger siblings or friends. Trade maps.

By tracing, labeling, coloring, cutting and assembling these maps, the kids better remember the shapes and names of the places being studied.

*Use the continent maps in the back of this book.

Maps Galore Project #11

Map Hobbies

Materials

- ♦ Newspaper
- ♦ Map
- ♦ Paper & pencil

Directions

Choose a favorite hobby. Keep you eye out for newspaper or magazine articles related to this hobby. Pick interesting ones! Read the article yourself and see what tie in to geography you can find. Then read it aloud to your student.

Discuss it with them. Ask “why” questions. For example, “Why do the Atlanta Braves have spring training in Kissimmee? Where is Kissimmee anyway?” (Hint, think weather!)

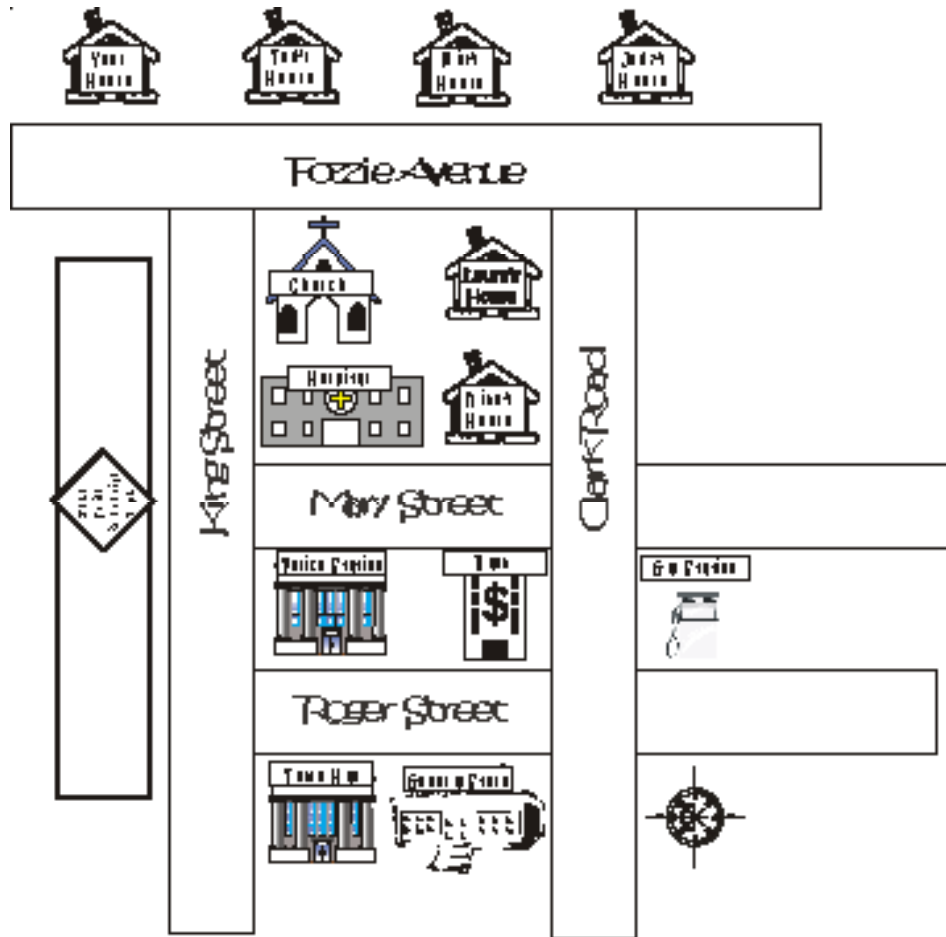
This requires more involvement on your part than many of the other activities in this book. Older readers can watch for interesting items themselves but for the most part the adult is going to be the one to dig up cool stuff about a hobby and make the effort to see the geography connection.

The side benefit to this is the time spent together in a pleasurable activity (which is why it’s important to pick a hobby the child likes!) with your child. When the interest wears off, move on to other things. Beating dead horses is a sure cure for enthusiasm!

Creative teachers are good at finding ways to bring children’s interests into the classroom. Obviously, geography is just one example of a subject that can be integrated with hobbies. Math, English, art, etc. can also be used.

Maps Galore Project #12

Neighborhood Map Activity



Directions

1. Using the above map, answer the following questions and plot them on the map.
2. What road do you take to get from your house to Laura's house?
3. Name all of the buildings south of the Church.
4. Ted wants to get a book from the Library and bring it to Mrs. Helms at the Hospital. What route should he take?
5. What would be the fastest way to get to the Town Hall from Will's house?
6. What road is between the Gas Station and the Bank?
7. Whose houses are on Clark Street?
8. When looking west from between Laura's and Mike's house, what two buildings would you most easily see?

Maps Galore Project #13

More Maps

Use this activity after your child has done other mapping projects and has a basic understanding of different types of maps.

Materials

- ♦ Tracing paper
- ♦ Atlas
- ♦ Encyclopedia
- ♦ Other reference books
- ♦ Color pencils or markers

Directions

1. Trace or photocopy several copies of the same map. You might prefer to use a country or continent related to your history studies.
2. Using the reference material, fill in each map with one of the following topics:
 - a. animals
 - b. population
 - c. religions
 - d. language
 - e. imports/exports
 - f. physical features
 - g. climate
 - h. other?
3. After doing several different kinds of maps of the same place, have the student display them on a poster board. What can he tell you about that place now? What kinds of deductions can he make about life there from reading these thematic maps?

Tip

By doing a number of maps about the same region, your child is learning what information different kinds of maps contain as well as becoming very familiar with the region itself.

Maps Galore Project #14

Mystery Map Ride

Learning to read maps is an important life skill, one that many adults unfortunately have never conquered. Teaching this skill to youngsters is very rewarding but plan on spending time working on it over the years. Be patient. Start very simply and don't move on until the child has a good grasp of the information. It's important to be patient and systematic. Pushing the child to try and read road maps without the skills necessary to do so is expecting them to do Algebra without having learned basic arithmetic! Here are some steps to take in teaching map-reading skills:

1. Introduce children to skills via a few good workbook style pages, draw your own, or use one of the outline maps in this book.
2. Terminology is very important. Left, right, straight, before, after, etc. must all be understood before moving on to east, west, etc.
3. Illustrate the idea of icons. The drawn picture of a bed stands for the bed. The single tree or two might stand for a whole grove. Even non-readers can decipher simple maps drawn with good icons.
4. Draw maps of the child's home environment to use in simple treasure hunt games. Once he understands these kinds of maps he might enjoy drawing them himself.
5. When the very simple map is mastered, move on to slightly more complicated maps involving backyards or neighborhoods. Use each new map several times until you're sure the child is confident in the use of it.
6. Eventually, you'll work your way up to the "Mystery Map Ride." This can be done as a "Mystery Map Walk" first, only going to the car ride when you're sure your student has a good chance for success.

Materials

- ♦ Homemade map or written directions
- ♦ Transportation

Directions

Using a real road map as a guide, draw a simple map from your house to a "secret" destination. (It could be to the park, the library, a friend's home, or anywhere that suits your fancy!)

The kids become the navigators. They read the map and give the directions. You might start out with a walking mystery map excursion before working up to a car ride. In the car, the kids will need to direct you when to turn, etc. This isn't easy! (How many adults do we know that are good at this?) But by starting out with simple, uncomplicated trips and using this "game" often, your students will become able map readers and navigators -- an important life skill!

Mystery Map Ride (continued)

Variation

A friend used this idea for a Mystery Bike Ride. She “planted” a special treat along the way. When they navigated their bikes correctly to a friend’s house they found a coupon taped to the front door with a lunch date and play time with their friends!

Tip

After you and your children have had good success with this in your neighborhood and town introduce them to real road maps and allow them to guide you with it on longer outings. (I met a man once who let his two teenagers do all the navigation on a road trip across country. They took him three days out of the way but he never corrected them. They learned from their mistakes and are much more careful map readers now!)



Maps Galore Project #15

Treasure Map

Tackle this activity after you have introduced and practiced mapping skills and terminology. This is a good hands-on way to see where your child needs direction in understanding map concepts.

Materials

- ♦ Treasure to bury (pack of gum, book mark, coins, etc.)
- ♦ Paper and pencils or markers
- ♦ Measuring tape (optional)
- ♦ Compass (optional)

Directions

Pick a spot to bury or hide a treasure -- this becomes "X." Choose a starting place -- "You are here." Draw a map from "You are here" to "X." Add physical features such as rocks, trees, houses, etc. Use a compass rose, legend/key, and perhaps a scale. The older and more experienced student will benefit from a more complicated map than the beginner.

Watch the student follow the map. Only help when actually necessary. Give them time to work it out but keep the frustration level at a minimum. Pay attention to their trouble spots. Are they having difficulties because they are rushing to get the treasure or are they encountering information they haven't learned how to process?

Variation

Write down the directions instead of drawing a map. For example: "From our front porch, go outside and walk 20 feet east. At the oak tree, head north for 5 feet."

Tip

Work with your student and together draw a treasure map for a friend or dad to follow. This gives practice in understanding directions, legends, scale, and in thinking through a problem.

Maps Galore Project #16

USA Regions

Materials

- ♦ Enlarged photocopy of a student map of USA regions
- ♦ Encyclopedia, children's atlas or other reference book about the USA
- ♦ Color pencils or markers
- ♦ Contact paper (optional)
- ♦ Cardboard (optional)

Directions

1. Photocopy map, enlarge it if at all possible.
2. Pick one region. Learn about what makes it a region. What is the climate like? What are the natural resources? What is it known for growing or making?
3. Look up each state in that region. What is its capital? Find one other place of interest in the state to learn about, i.e. Yellowstone National Park, the Statue of Liberty, etc.
4. Pick a geographical feature of each state to study. Rivers, lakes, mountains, deserts, etc. Draw these features on the map. Add them to the legend or key.
5. After you have finished your study, glue stick the map to a piece of cardboard, cover it with clear contact paper, and hang it on the wall!

Tip

This same idea could be applied to whatever part of the world you'd like to study. Divide the continent into countries or a country into regions and learn about them one section at a time.

Or use this activity for a state study. See resources on buying individual, laminated state maps.