

Map It Out

Introduction: Learning to read a map can be difficult for some children. There are symbols, directions, and grids that can be sources of confusion for the map reader. During this activity, the students will chart an obstacle course using maps that have the items mentioned above. The remainder of the class will have fun “running” through the map!

Grade Level and Subject: Third Grade Social Studies and P.E.

TEKS: Social Studies – 5B, 5C, 16E, 18A
P.E. – 1A, 1B, 1C, 3A, 3B, 7A, 7C

Materials: Student-created maps, and other items the students are responsible for providing

Activity: This activity should take place after the students have practiced using a compass rose, grid, and other symbols on a map.

During class time, the teacher should divide the students into groups of three or four. Each group of students is responsible for creating a map using the items listed above. The map will depict an obstacle course that the students will “construct.”

The teacher will take the groups out onto the playground, and each group will be assigned a particular area of the playground. All groups will go to their areas and map out an obstacle course. They are to use a compass rose, grid, and symbols on their maps to construct the obstacle course. For example, one statement from the group might say, “Take a left at the tree (using a symbol for the tree); run north until you reach the fence, and hop over the bench. Turn to the south, and take three giant steps over the box (which the children will have provided).” The statements should include as many directions, symbols, and actions as the space of their area will allow. The teacher might even want to give a minimum amount of physical actions the students should include in their map/obstacle course. Once the students are satisfied with their map/obstacle course, the designers of each map should complete the obstacle course to ensure that it will make sense to the rest of the class.

Once all maps have been completed, the groups will exchange maps and head to the appropriate areas of the playground. With a map in hand, the groups will complete their fellow classmates’ obstacle course. They will then get another group’s map and complete that obstacle course. This activity will continue until each group has used every map to complete all obstacle courses.

Evaluation: The teacher will check all maps for accuracy and the required number of items. While the students are on the obstacle courses, the teacher will monitor all activity. If the students are having a difficult time with a particular course, the teacher will want to re-teach any map skills that might be the cause of the confusion.



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