

Lesson Plan: My Amazing Map Adventure: From Explorer to Map-Maker

Materials Needed:

- Large sheet of paper (e.g., construction paper, butcher paper, or just regular printer paper)
- Drawing tools (crayons, colored pencils, markers)
- A few different examples of simple maps (a park map, a weather map, a map from a children's storybook like Winnie-the-Pooh or The Hobbit)
- A small, fun object to hide (a favorite toy, a wrapped piece of candy, a special coin)
- A simple, pre-drawn map of one room in your house for the scavenger hunt

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify and explain the purpose of key map features, specifically symbols and a map key.
- Interpret and use a simple map to locate an object in a familiar space.
- Design and create a unique map of a real or imaginary place that includes a title, a map key, and at least three original symbols.

2. Instructional Strategies & Lesson Activities

Part 1: The Spark - What is a Map? (10 minutes)

1. **Hook:** Start with an engaging question: "Imagine you found a secret treasure and buried it in the backyard. If you wanted to make a secret message to help your best friend find it, how would you show them where it is without using any words?" Guide the conversation toward the idea of drawing a picture or a map.
2. **Examine Real Maps:** Show the student the example maps you collected. Ask questions like:
 - "What do you notice about all of these?"
 - "Why do you think they use little pictures instead of writing 'big tree here'?" (Introduce the word **symbol**).
 - "How do we know what the symbols mean?" (Point to the map key/legend and explain its job).
3. **Introduce "Bird's-Eye View":** Place a single toy (like a small car or animal figure) on the floor. Ask the student to look at it from the side. Then, have them stand up and look straight down at it. Explain, "This is a bird's-eye view! It's what a bird would see flying over the top. Maps are almost always a bird's-eye view."

Part 2: The Explorer's Challenge - Indoor Scavenger Hunt (15 minutes)

1. **The Mission:** Announce, "You've been given a secret map! Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to use this map to find a hidden treasure right here in this room."
2. **Use the Map:** Give the student your pre-made map of the room. The map should be simple, using squares for couches, circles for tables, etc., and a clear map key. An "X" should mark the spot where you've hidden the small object.
3. **Guided Exploration:** Let the student lead the way, but offer prompts if they get stuck. "Okay, the map shows the 'X' is next to the big rectangle. What does the map key say the big rectangle is? Let's go look there!"
4. **Discovery:** Celebrate when they find the treasure! This success provides powerful motivation for the next step.

Part 3: The Map-Maker's Workshop - Create Your Own World! (25-30 minutes)

1. **Brainstorm:** Offer a choice to empower the student. "Now it's your turn to be the map-maker! You can map a real place, like your bedroom, or you can invent a fantasy world. What do you choose? A Pirate Island? A Magical Candy Land? The Planet of Monsters?"
2. **Start Drawing:**
 - **Title:** "Every great map needs a title. What is the name of your world?" Have them write it at the top of the paper.
 - **Landmarks:** "Let's draw the big, important places first. Where is the Dragon's Cave? The Gummy Bear Forest? Your bed?" Guide them to draw the main outlines and features from a bird's-eye view.
 - **Symbols:** "Now, let's add symbols. Instead of drawing a whole volcano, what simple shape could be our symbol for a volcano?" (e.g., a red triangle). "What about a river?" (a wavy blue line). Encourage creativity and guide them to place at least three different symbols on their map.
 - **The Map Key:** In a corner of the map, draw a box. "This is your **Map Key**. Inside, you need to show everyone what your symbols mean." Have them draw each symbol again in the box and write (or you can help write) what it stands for.

Part 4: The Grand Reveal - Show and Tell (5 minutes)

1. **Present the Map:** Ask the student to present their map to you as if you are a new explorer visiting their world.
2. **Ask Guiding Questions:**
 - "Tell me about this amazing place you've created."
 - "What is this symbol for? And this one?"
 - "If I wanted to travel from the Lollipop Fields to the Chocolate River, which way would I go?"
3. **Display with Pride:** Hang the finished map on the wall or refrigerator.

3. Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For Extra Support:** If the student struggles with drawing, provide pre-cut shapes for common symbols (circles, squares, triangles) that they can glue onto their map. Focus on mapping a very simple space (one room) and assist with writing the labels in the map key.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Introduce a **Compass Rose**. Draw a simple four-pointed star in the corner and label N, E, S, W. Challenge the student to describe the location of objects using directions (e.g., "The pirate treasure is east of the spooky forest."). You could also introduce a simple concept of scale (e.g., "1 of your footsteps equals 1 inch on the map").

4. Assessment Methods

- **Formative (During the Lesson):**
 - Observe the student's ability to use the scavenger hunt map to find the object.
 - Listen to their explanations of symbols and a map key during the initial discussion.
 - Ask questions during the creation process ("Why did you choose that symbol? Where will your map key go?") to check for understanding.
- **Summative (The Final Product):**

Review the student's final map using this simple checklist:

- Does the map have a title?
- Does the map include a map key?
- Does the map key contain at least 3 symbols that match symbols on the map?

- Can the student use their map to explain where things are located in their world?