Community Mapping 101
Assessing Community Needs & Potential Resources

Using a strategy called community mapping, students explore their communities to:
• Learn the geography and layout of their local area;
• Determine areas of need for people, animals and the environment; and
• Identify potential resources that may support efforts to meet community needs.

Community mapping can be completed in a number of different ways. Students can use many forms of research internet and print media sources, interviews with family, friends and community leaders, and even field observation.

The following activity is a simple activity that can be used to introduce students to the concept of community mapping, and get them started with a map of the area around their school or a central place in the community.

Integrated Learning
Community mapping can engage students in a number of different academic areas including social studies and geography, math, English/language arts and many more. See an alignment of community mapping with all of the subject areas on page 3.

Time Requirement
2 hours minimum, suggested multi-day/week project

Materials
Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
Regular writing utensil - pencil or pen
Large sheets of white paper
Glue or Tape
Stickers

Map (download, purchased or hand drawn)
Google Maps Engine Lite
Internet

Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.

- Dr. Jane Goodall
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Part One: Observing Your Community

One week in advance, discuss with students the importance of understanding and learning about mapping their community. Suggest that they begin taking note of what is on their way to school while they’re on the bus, in the car, biking, etc. Have them imagine they are looking at their community from a birds eye view.

Guiding Questions
1. What are the roads around your school? Are there any major intersections near your school?
2. Notice the cars and people walking outside, imagine where they are going and what they do to have fun, where they work, eat, sleep etc.
3. Do you see animals, wild or domestic? Where do they go during the day? Where do they get their food, where do they play or go when they are sick?
4. Do you see any plants or trees on your way to school? Who waters them and how did they get there? What makes them important to your community?

Part Two: Preparing Your Map

Start by drawing, downloading or purchasing a map of your city. If you are drawing or downloading a map choose a specific radius around your zip code. Two to five miles is usually sufficient. If you are using a map that you have purchased, use a compass to draw a radius around your community.

For an extra challenge, start with a blank sheet of grid paper (or the one included in the end of this guide) and see if you can draw your community from memory. How big is two to five mile radius around your zip code? How is your community oriented—to the North, South, East or West?
Part Three: Marking Basic Community Characteristics

Once you have your map mark it with any of these characteristics that apply to your city or community. Distinguish the three categories on your map by assigning each a unique identifier (color, shape, stickers etc.).

For example:
- Human Characteristics – blue stickers or blue marker;
- Animal Characteristics – red stickers or red marker; and
- Environmental Characteristics – green stickers or green marker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Characteristics</th>
<th>Animal Characteristics</th>
<th>Environmental Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark your school/work</td>
<td>Are there any endangered species in your area? Mark these and write the name.</td>
<td>Mark the wild spaces in your community, for example areas of forest, prairie and desert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight major streets that run through your community and routes you commonly take</td>
<td>Mark important areas for domestic animal use (dog parks, dog friendly hikes etc.)</td>
<td>Mark any bodies of water, ocean, rivers, lakes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark areas of fun and enjoyment</td>
<td>Mark areas where you have seen wild animals. Next to the mark, list the types of wild animals you have seen.</td>
<td>Mark major environmental characteristics like mountain ranges, beaches, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark areas that are important to the human community such as: libraries, community centers and places of worship</td>
<td>Mark any zoos and aquariums in your area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Part Four: Marking Basic Community Resources

Mark any of these that apply to your community in your mapped radius. Draw a line from the marking and label the name of the facility or resource on the outside of your map. Continue using the same colors for each of the categories that you used above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Resources</th>
<th>Animal Resources</th>
<th>Environmental Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mark where you get your food from. (grocery stores, farmer’s markets, favorite restaurants, etc.)</td>
<td>• Mark local domestic animal shelters such as, your local humane society or SPCA.</td>
<td>• Mark the recycling center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mark the closest hospital/clinic</td>
<td>• Mark the local animal control facility</td>
<td>• Mark the water and waste treatment facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mark shelters and food banks</td>
<td>• Mark the closest animal hospital</td>
<td>• Mark the landfill/waste management site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mark the closest fire station</td>
<td>• Mark animal sanctuaries or centers that will take in injured wild animals</td>
<td>• Mark any nearby power sources, such as coal fired power plants, nuclear power plants, wind, solar and geothermal sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mark the closest police station</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mark areas that provide environmental services such as, the local watershed, a local reservoir, wetlands, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Part Five: Reflection

Take a look at your map when you reflect on the following questions. List your answers somewhere on your map:

Identify the following things you like about your community:
  • One quality about your community that makes it a great habitat for people
  • One quality about your community that makes it a great habitat for animals
  • One quality about your community that makes it a great environmental habitat

Is your community meeting the basic needs of people and animals? Is your community environmentally sustainable?

Identify areas of improvement for your community:
  • One quality your community could improve to make it a better habitat for people
  • One quality your community could improve to make it a better habitat for animals
  • One quality your community could improve to make it a better environmental habitat