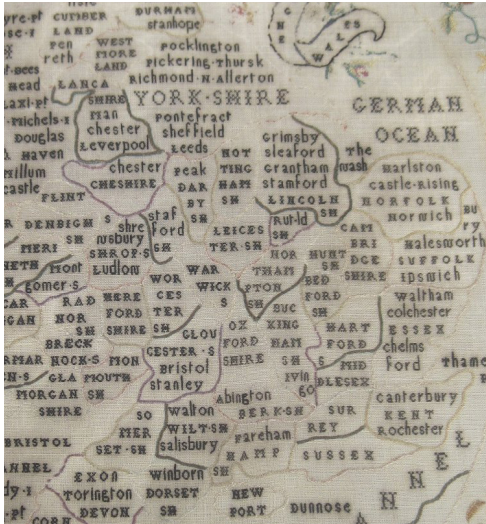
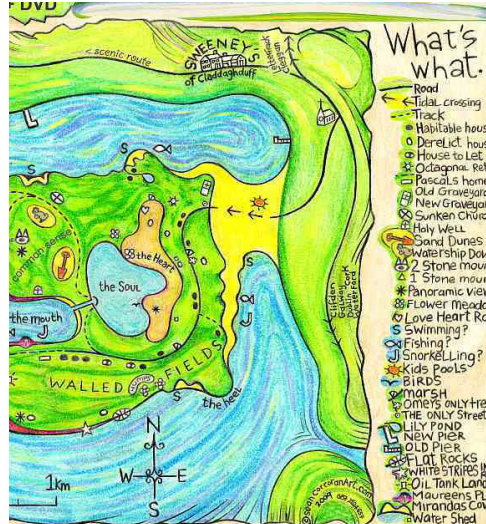


Memory Maps

Suggested by Jonathan Solomon, architect and Nathan Mason, DCASE



Map of England and Wales, early 19th century.
Brooklyn Museum collection



Map of Omei Island.
Sean Corcoran, 2009.



Kampement van de Pruisen te Barneveld, 1787.
Rijksmuseum collection.

From memory, design a map of a place that is important to you, that you enjoy, or that you visit often.

Learning objectives

- Test methods of communicating physical locations in an abstract way
- Practice information communication
- Develop visual storytelling skills
- Understand different reasons for making a map

Materials needed

- Paper, any size
- Pens, pencils, crayons, markers – something to draw with
- Your memory and imagination!

A map designer has a lot of power. They choose what important information their map communicates. Some maps focus on how far apart things are. Other maps focus on showing as many of one thing as possible, like how many donut shops are nearby. Some maps are very precise, other maps are very imaginative. In this project, you will be the map designer!

— **Step 1: Make a plan.**

First things first. What is the topic of your map? Pick a place that means a lot to you. It can be real, like your block, or imaginary, like Hogwarts.

Then, decide what you want to communicate with your map. What is the most important? How far apart things are? What places you visit most often? Where people can get milkshakes? Where your dog stops?

Next, we'd recommend making a list of places your map will show. Maybe those places are in the order in which you'd experience them in real life, to help organize your map. Maybe the list helps you see what are the most important things for your map. Maybe it's just random. It's up to you.

Reflect on what spaces stick in your mind well and why, and what spaces you do not know well and why.

— **Step 2: Start mapping.**

Where will you start drawing your map? From a central point working outward? From one end to another? Around a circle? Will similar things in your map all be represented the same way –so will all trees look alike, or will the pine trees look different than the maple trees? Will the restaurants look the same, or will McDonalds look different than Al's? (If they will all look the same, then you can include a Key in your map, which is a list of all of the symbols.) Don't forget to put a title on your map so people know what it shows!

— **Step 3: Share your map.**

Share your map with your friends or family, in person or online, and see how well your map design communicates your message. How did your readers interpret your map? Based on their feedback, what design choices you made worked the best? What design changes would you make in order to better communicate with your readers?

When you're done with your project, take a picture and share it with us too! You can tag us on social media (@designmuseumchi on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) or email us at info@designchicago.org. We're looking forward to seeing your work!

Sample projects



This illustrative map shows the location of the student's favorite rides and activities at Six Flags Great America.