

# Ideas for Teaching Continents and Oceans

"I have a great activity for continents. My students love it. They blow up white balloons. Then, using a permanent marker, they draw the continents, north and south poles, equator, etc... on the balloons. (Keep in mind most of the time the continents don't actually look accurate, but they are in grade two and they give it their best.) I demonstrate first as always.

Then I take a small thin stick and run it carefully through my sample from north to south pole. If you slide it through gently, it will not pop; but the students are covering ears, etc. Be sure to leave a bit of colour (thickness) at each end: near the tip and where the balloon is tied. Because of the thicker layers of balloon the small pointed stick will slide through easily. Practice first! Then you have an axis to demonstrate to the class. Air will eventually leak out of the balloon you use, but the activity is always very enjoyable."



"We just finished a continent project this week. We used paper mache over a balloon to create a globe. Students then painted it blue. We taught the following activities to go along with the globe.

Probability and prediction - Land versus Water. Does the earth have more land or water? Each student predicts before the game begins. Toss the globe to each student. They check under their right thumb to see if it is on land or water. Discuss results. We also did a flip chart with the *Me on the Map* book. This was a great way for them to understand different maps, sizes and relationships.

After painting the globes the students attached cut out outlines of the continents with the names. We said a poem as each child handled and pointed to continents on their own globe."

"I find my children have a problem with understanding the terms city, province, country, continent. Every day in our morning meeting we played the 'Where is it?' game. We began with ourselves.... Where am I? In my classroom, in the school, on \_\_\_\_ street, in \_\_\_\_\_ (town), in \_\_\_\_ (province), in Canada, in North America, in the world. Some wanted to continue.... in the solar system, in space, infinity....

We found each of the places on Google Earth, beginning with the school and gradually going further and further out until the whole hemisphere could be seen. Then we did the same on a flat map and a globe.

When we read a book about another part of the world, we put the character through the

same sequence. If a student was going to visit another city, province or country - we placed the student in the sequence.

My class really loved doing this, and they soon became quite good at the different parts of the world."

"We play a very simple map game. I think I first saw it in one of the early magazines from Primary Success! I put up a big outline map of Canada and taught the province names and where they are. Then I asked a student up to choose a province and whisper it to me. Then he said, "I am in a province. Where am I?" The children raised their hands and he chose a player who walked up to the map and guessed a province by asking, "Are you in \_\_\_\_\_?" and touching the map correctly. When a student finally guessed correctly, he became 'it' and the game continued. The children soon learned all the provinces and had fun, too. We then did the continents, and then larger countries of the world."

"I teach maps, maps, and more maps! To begin, I bring in a doll house with furniture. The students look at it, play with it and rearrange it for a few days. Then we work with a map of our classroom. I have an outline on felt and desks and tables as cutouts that stick on it. We work together to see the position of things.

Then I bring in a compass and we learn the cardinal directions. We say:

When I face the north pole,  
South is out of sight.  
West is to my left  
And east to my right.

The kids point in the directions as they say the poem - over their heads to the south. We learn what direction each wall of our classroom is, and play a game where they turn in a circle and stop when I call a direction and face that wall.

Then we connect the directions with a flat map. North is at the top, south at the bottom, etc. I show them a land feature, and say, "This is China. What is to the east of China?" (or another direction) - and they find it on the map."



"When teaching children about physical maps, I begin with drawing a simple plan of the classroom on the blackboard and then on a worksheet, including cupboards, blackboard, desks, chairs etc. The children have to colour the plan using the colours from a physical map: green for floor level, yellow for mid level (desks, chairs etc.), orange to brown for the highest objects in the room.

Then we used paper mache on a piece of plywood to form mountains, a lake and river. We painted the scene as physical maps are coloured.

When you begin to study physical maps, the children have an excellent understanding of the colours used."

"We read 'The Gingerbread baby' by Jan Brett and then made a 3-D model of the journey. I found this was a good introduction to map reading."

"I send home a request for family or friend addresses in other parts of the country or the world. My class writes and sends letters to the addresses, requesting a postcard showing the place where the addressee lives. We get lots of replies. I put up a map of Canada and also a map of the world, and we put pins to show where the cards come from. It is a great entry to studying other places!"

"In my Grade Two/Three classroom I teach the continents and the oceans. We do one hour each week, and that time is set aside always for this unit that lasts all year. In the beginning we do an overview of the earth, learning to read maps and learning the names of the continents and oceans. Then we make a passport (I bring mine in to show them) and 'travel' to each continent. We discuss the plane travel and how long it takes and where we would pass over on the trip. After an overview of each continent, we 'visit' at least three countries within each continent (except for Antarctica and Australia). I always have good videos of the areas and the students like these. The students love learning about how people around the world live and new cultures. We make flag and maps, try foods, learn about the plants and animals and read stories from the countries. At the end the students have a passport of all the continents and countries they have visited."

### **Mapping Activity:**

1) Introduce cardinal directions:

- explaining the four cardinal directions
- writing the words north, south, east and west on cards
- placing the cards correctly in the classroom
- having the students stand and practice facing in the cardinal directions

2) Give each student one sheet of 8 x 11 paper and tell them to write the four cardinal directions on their paper following your instructions. Write the word north at the top of your paper, west on the left edge, east on the right edge and south on the bottom edge.

Instruct the students to listen carefully and follow these directions:

- Draw a river from the north side of the paper to the south side of the paper.
- Draw a tree on the east side of the river.
- Draw a house on the west side of the river.
- Direct the students to add the elements necessary to make the drawing a

map. (scale, compass rose, key, border)

3) Draw a sketch of the school grounds. Put in the various buildings and have the students add other features.

(restrooms, playground structures, lawn, etc.) The students could even number the classrooms



if you added those details on the map.

4) Go outside and mark off the shape of the classroom. Ask the students to find out where they should be. Create a Human Map by having students wear signs that are labeled with the different parts of the classroom.

5) Read *Hansel and Gretel* to the class. Allow students to retell/reenact the *Hansel and Gretel* story. Discuss why Hansel and Gretel used pebbles and breadcrumbs to find their way through the forest. Draw a map of the forest from the route the characters took.

1. *Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney. Read the story, *Me on the Map*. Check to see if everyone knows the difference between their left and right. If not, use the mnemonic device. (Have the children put their hands out in front of them with the palms of their hands facing away from them and their thumbs pointing to each other. Have them put all their fingers down except the thumbs and pointer fingers. The hand that makes an L is their left hand, and the one that does not is their right hand.) Explain what a compass is - a device used to show north, south, east, west. Have the children become compass kids. Ask one child to come up to the front of the room to model the cardinal directions. (Have children stand up with their arms straight out to each side. Everything to their left would be to the west, in front of them would be north, etc.) Label the volunteer with cards that say north, south, east, and west. Look at the map and explain to students that everything above a certain point on the map is to the north, everything below is to the south, everything to the left is to the west, and everything to the right is to the east. Review what a map is. Show a map of the classroom and discuss where things are on the map.



2. Show the class a map of our neighborhood. Point out and label (with pictures) local landmarks on the map (our school, churches, grocery stores, etc.) To tie in with other grade levels on the unit, we will also locate some local industries.

3. Name streets on the map and have children stand when you say their street name. Place a small house with child's name and address on the street.

4. Take a walk around the immediate neighborhood and plot landmarks on the map.

5. As a homework assignment, children will create a floor plan to their house to share with the class. When the maps are brought in, discuss the differences and similarities in the children's maps. (This is also a good way to find out more about the children. What was important enough for them to put on their maps?) Select a book, story, or poem that you know is a class favourite, and help the students create a simple map that shows the movement of the story's plot in geographical terms. Students can draw their own maps at their desks, work together in cooperative pairs, or contribute ideas as an entire class to help you draw one large map on the chalkboard or bulletin board.

## **Map Skills**

Maps are very abstract. Many adults have problems reading maps! Small children need to be led into map reading by concrete examples, familiar places and gradually expand to maps of larger areas.

Kindergarten teachers can teach beginning map skills by using play doll's furniture. Set up a room and then look down on it. Draw the room on large paper, and have the children pretend to be in the room and go from one feature to another. Draw a map of the classroom on large paper and let the students use it as a play center with dolls.

Dora the Explorer has simple maps in each episode, with graphic items on the map.

Grade One students can make maps of the classroom, the school or their bedrooms. When they understand these examples, the teacher can make a big map of the town or local area of the city. Find streets and familiar buildings. Label the map. You can also make a local map on a table, making models of the buildings and local sites. Discuss the different ways you can go from the school to your home, from your home to the grocery store, etc.

Grade Two and Three students should be ready to learn more abstract map skills. They can learn about their province, their country, the continents and oceans.

### **Ideas from Teachers:**

"We created a class character that took a trip around the world. I wrote the first "chapter" and got our character from our school to the first country. Then each child was assigned a country and would write another chapter that told what our character did and saw in that country and got him/her to the next country."

This website has lots of poems and songs to learn the continents and oceans:  
<http://teachers.net/gazette/DEC02/continents.html>

"Read the book 'How to Bake an Apple Pie and See the World' by Marjorie Priceman. The little girl travels all over the world to get her ingredients. The children love the book and we end up making apple pies."

There are lots of books that involve maps. The Winnie the Pooh books have a map of the Enchanted Wood, My Father's Dragon has a good map for the students to follow, and there are lots more. You could even do a map to illustrate Goin' on a Lion Hunt! As you read books to the students, make maps of the characters' travels.

"We created salt dough maps. I checked out a bunch of books that had the characters going from one place to another. The students read the book, drew a map to show where the character went (like through a meadow, over a stream, past a forest, mountains in the distance, through a field, etc.), and then made their salt dough maps."



# Me On The Map

"We make individual books. I use some of the cute notepages that you can buy at the Teacher supply store and they add words and or pictures to make it special. They must be able to find where they live on each of the maps.

Cover page: Me on the Map... Picture of the Earth and a picture they drew of themselves or a photo.

Page 1- I live on the planet Earth. Picture of the Earth.

Page 2- I live on the continent of North America. Map.

Page 3- I live in Canada - a map of Canada

Page 4- I live in the province of \_\_\_\_\_. Map of your province.

Page 5- I live in the city of \_\_\_\_\_. Map of the city.

Page 6- I live at (address of the student). Neighbourhood map

Page 7- This is my room in my house. The children draw a map of their house.

We staple these together and put out for open house."



"I happen to be the class at the beginning of a hall with lots of unclaimed wall space. What I usually do is: Map of the universe, showing the sun and the planets, next - moving right, a map of the world (earth), then a map of North America, then a map of Canada, then a road map of our province, then our area, then our city map, then a map of our school. Then they draw maps of their homes, then their bedrooms, finally showing themselves sleeping in a bed, and these are put up in our classroom.

What has worked out well is that the maps in the hall can be used by any class. The maps that would be personal to my children are in the classroom."

## Lessons:

### 1. What are the characteristics and purposes of maps?

Examine a variety of maps to see how maps are used and what basic elements are included on the maps.

What similar characteristics does each map have? Discuss Legend, cardinal directions, and title of map.

Use symbols to locate, identify, and mark features of the local school and community (i.e., shopping areas, restaurants, fire stations, schools, post offices) on a prepared based map.

Use a map grid (alphanumeric system for local maps) to find locations in your map of your community and state map.

Use a world map to find the continents and oceans.

Categorize maps by world, country, province, and community.

Generalize by writing or dictating what the purpose of maps are.

### 2. How does my classroom look? my school? my community? province? country? world?

Draw a sketch map from memory of the classroom showing important landmarks. Mark and label the locations of places that are significant.



Do the same for the school, communities, etc.

(Maps become increasingly abstract with each succeeding grade, reflecting the developmental changes in students' abilities to represent spatial and symbolic information. However, students still need to be given opportunities to create and interpret maps.)

Draw a sketch map from memory of the province, country, and world showing important physical and human characteristics. Your students may need to look at a map.

### Part 3:

Make a book called *Me on the Map*.

Photocopy the book with the maps needed, and the student can place himself on the map.

Have lines at the bottom of the page for printing the sentence.

Page one is a picture of the student...This is me.

Page two is a picture of the school...This is me at (name of school).

Page three is a picture of the town...this is me in (name of town).

Page four is a picture of the province...This is me in (name of province).

Page five is a picture of the country....This is me in (name of country).

Page six is a picture of the continent. This is me in North America.

Page seven is a picture of the earth. This is me on the earth.



# Mapping Skills

## Around the World in 180 Days

### September

We made a map of our classroom and the children used the computer to create very simple maps of their bedrooms.

### October

We went for a walk up and down the street and then created a map of our street, but this time we made it 3-D, adding construction paper houses, trees, people, traffic lights, cars, etc.

### November

We talked about our province and our country. Each child was assign a province to do a simple report on and also they were given a pattern to place on top of a cake and to cut out so we could create an edible Canada. (This is always a big hit everyone!). Pairs of children ice a province or territory and add an m and m for the capital. We add upside down Bugles for the mountain ranges and then we eat! We learned about continents and learned about animals in North America. We had a class tadpole that turned into a frog and we learned about puffins, butterflies and bears.

### December

Each child was issued a passport because now we were leaving North America and traveling to Europe. We studied reindeer, and learned about Christmas traditions in Sweden. We did an author study on Jan Brett. We baked cookies and dressed up with paper hats for the boys and paper candle wreaths for the girls and served cookies to all the faculty for St Lucia Day.

### January

We traveled to the South Pole and Antarctica to learn about Penguins. We created a 3-D map of Antarctica. We tried to walk balancing an egg on our feet and we drew life size penguins around the room to see how tall they really are. We read *Mr. Popper's Penguins* and after completing KWL charts each child wrote a report about penguins.



### February

We were off to Africa where we once again created a map and each child made an African style house. We drew a full size baby giraffe to compare to the size of our penguins. We learned about giraffes, hippos, lions, elephants and ostriches. Several parents who had either lived in Africa or had traveled to Africa visited with lots of artifacts, pictures, food, and dress. The children began making African flags from the pictures they found in the atlas. Soon our hallway was a parade of flags.



### March

We were off to Asia where we zeroed in on India and the Philippines because the class had students from both of those countries. Again parents visited with lots of artifacts, money, tasty treats, traditional dress, and samples of money. We read about the banyan tree so we decided to create one from cardboard and the tubes from inside a rug. The children added the leaves and soon we had created a coconut tree complete with a stuffed monkey! We added paper coconuts but did get to see and taste the real thing. The children continued to create flags now including the countries of Asia as well. We studied the monkey, the Asian elephant and the water buffalo.

### April

We arrive in Australia and plan to create an eucalyptus tree. We will learn about the koala bear and the kangaroo. We will learn about islands and the children will get to create an island map again using KidPix. We will definitely be drawing a full size kangaroo to join our penguins and giraffe. One child has a relative in Australia so we will be e-mailing them during the month to ask questions. At the end the kids will get to pick to write a report about the koala or the kangaroo.

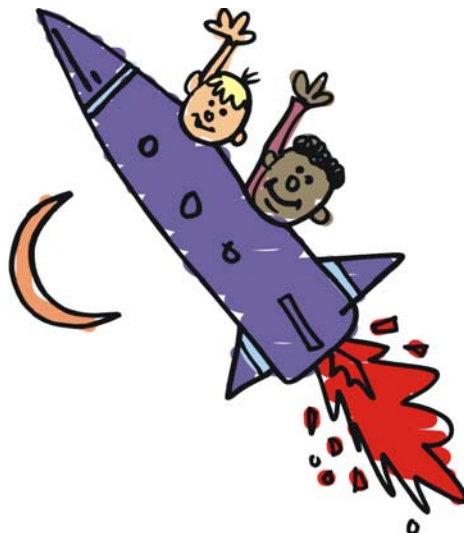
### May

Last stop will be South America where again several parents will be visiting and I am planning a piñata and a party for Cinco de Mayo. We will learn about the rain forest and the animals that live there.

### June

We will blast off for space!

Each time we leave a continent we stamp our passports, draw a picture of the place we are leaving, write about something we have learned and get a sticker related to that place. At each stop we compare the weather thanks to the internet.



# Continent and Ocean Poems

*(He's Got the Whole World In His Hands)*

We've got the whole globe in our hands.  
We've got the whole globe in our hands.  
We've got the whole globe in our hands.  
We've got the whole globe in our hands.  
We've got North and South America  
In our hands.  
We've got Europe, Asia, Africa  
In our hands.  
We've got Australia and Antarctica  
In our hands.  
We've got the whole globe in our hands.

## Oceans

*My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean*

The earth is all covered with ocean  
The earth is all covered with sea  
The earth is all covered with ocean  
More water than land don't you see.

## CHORUS

Water, water there's water all over the world  
the world  
Water, water there's water all over the world.

So salty and cold is the ocean  
So salty and cold is the sea  
So salty and cold is the ocean  
Too cold and too salty for me.

## CHORUS

Atlantic, Pacific, the Arctic  
And then there's the Indian too  
These oceans all cover our planet  
I named all of them now can you?

## CHORUS

## Continents

*Three Blind Mice*

Continents, continents,  
There are seven,  
There are seven,  
North America, South America,  
Antarctica and Australia,  
Asia and Africa,  
And Europe too.  
That's all seven, that's all seven.

## Seven Continents

*Row Your Boat*

To learn the seven continents  
Think of the letter A,  
And when you're down to only one  
An E will save the day.  
There's Africa, Antarctica,  
Australia, Asia, too;  
The oceans run between them  
With their waters deep and blue.  
There are also two Americas -  
North and South, you see.  
Now we're coming to the end  
Europe starts with E!

## Oceans

*(My Bonnie)*

Atlantic's the name of an ocean.  
Pacific and Indian, too.  
The Arctic is often forgotten.  
I can name the oceans, can you?  
Oceans, oceans, oceans of beautiful blue.  
Oceans, oceans, I can name the oceans.  
Can you?



North America (Hold up left hand)  
South America (Touch left knee)  
Europe (Nose)  
Asia (Right hand)  
Africa (Middle- equator)  
Australia (Right knee)  
Don't forget Antarctica (Feet)  
North Pole (Top of head)  
South Pole (Touch feet)  
Equator (Hands around waist)

### The Continent Song

*(Take Me Out to the Ball Game)*

Let's name all of the continents.  
There are 7 on earth.  
There's Europe and  
Asia and Australia,  
North and South America.  
Now don't forget about Africa  
And Antarctica, too.  
For there's 1...2...3,4,5,6,7 continents!

### Continents

*(Tune: Pop Goes the Weasel)*

Asia, Africa, Antarctica  
Australia, Europe, too  
North America  
South America  
Seven continents for you!

### Continents *(to Three Blind Mice)*

Continents, continents,  
There are seven.  
There are seven.  
North America, South America,  
Antarctica and Australia,  
Asia and Africa,  
And Europe too.

### I Can Name All the Oceans

*(Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)*

Oh, I can name all of the oceans.  
Oh, I can name all of the seas.  
Oh, I can name all of the oceans.  
Now why not sing them with me?  
Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, and Indian, too.  
Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, and Indian, too.

### Continents and Oceans

*(Tune: Love and Marriage)*

North America, South America (clap)  
Europe, Asia, and Africa,  
Don't forget Antarctica,  
Or way down under in Australia.  
Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean  
Indian, Arctic they're all oceans.  
North Pole, South Pole, Equator  
I know all about maps and globes.

### Continent Tour

Zebras live in Africa  
Tigers and elephants, too.  
Australia is down under,  
Home of the kangaroo!  
Clap your hands for Asia!  
It's the largest one.  
Antarctica is covered in ice.  
The penguins sure have fun!  
North America is where I live.  
It's where I work and play.  
In Europe you'll find England,  
Where the queen rules every day.  
South America is home to Brazil.  
It's the largest country there.  
The world has seven continents,  
And I've just named them with care!



## The Continents

*Do You Know the Muffin Man?*

Oh, do you know the continents,  
The continents, the continents,  
Oh, do you know the continents,  
All around the world?

There's Europe and there's Africa,  
North and South America  
Asia and Australia  
And Antarctica.

## Directions

*(When Johnny Comes Marching Home)*

The sun is rising in the East, uh huh, uh huh.  
The sun is setting in the West, uh huh, uh huh.  
My nose is North, my tail is South,  
The east is right and the west is left  
And I'll always know the north, south east and west.



## Earth Is The Name

*(Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean)*

Earth is the name of our planet.  
It's shaped like a ball or a sphere.  
It's covered with land and water.  
A globe makes this picture quite clear.

Chorus

Seven continents, four oceans, on our planet, Earth.  
Seven continents, four oceans, on our planet, Earth!  
On Earth there are seven continents,  
They're the largest masses of land.  
Four large bodies of water are oceans.  
In fact, there's more water than land!  
Chorus