Where Am I?
Mapping Skills

Grade: Upper Elementary

Purpose/Objective: Students will understand the purpose of maps and the role they play in their lives by following and making simple maps of their own. They will understand the role that maps played in the mountain men's lives.

Lesson Plan:
[Use Teacher Resource Information: The Mountain Man and Fur Trade Industry]

1. Introduction Discussion. Ask students the following questions: What are maps used for? What types of maps do you use on a regular basis? Where do you see maps? How do you read a map?
    a. Show examples of different types of maps, such as road, state, topographic, political, weather, maps featuring different things (such as agricultural products of different states/regions), or historical maps.
    b. Have students identify why they may use each different map and when they have last seen it.
2. Mapping Elements. Maps are a representation of features found on the Earth's surface (or in other cases, the universe). Maps provide information about where we are, what is around us, or information such as weather, types of crops grown, how a state voted, what the land is like, etc. Every map will include symbols, a legend, and landmarks.
    a. *Symbols*: Symbols are used to represent objects or features found on the surface/in the area of the space to be mapped.
    b. *Legend*: The legend identifies what the symbols represent. The legend will also provide information about the map, such as scale and direction (compass).
    c. *Landmarks*: Landmarks are features that stand out on the surface. They may be natural features such as rivers, lakes, mountains, etc. They may also be significant buildings, such as schools, churches, roads, etc.
3. Use of a Compass. (Optional) If the school has access to a classroom set of compasses, you may want to instruct students on how to use a compass.
    a. *Discussion element* (may use with or without compasses). What are directions? Some directions may be up, down, forward, backward, left, right. Are these always the same or always accurate?
    b. Explain that the directions used on a map are north, south, east, west. These are often more accurate because the directions are always the same no matter where you are. West is the direction the sun goes down. When facing west, north is on your right, south is on your left and east is behind you.

4. Maps and the Mountain Man. The Mountain Men didn't always have maps to follow when they were trapping. They were instrumental in exploring the west and making maps. These maps helped others as they came west. Often, the mountain men would receive information from the Native Americans in the area about where to go. (See Teacher Resource Information: The Mountain Man and Fur Trade Industry)
    a. *Optional activity*. Look at historical maps of the mountain men. Some resources to find these maps are:
        http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/HNS/Mtmen/mapgal.html
        http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/images.html
5. Mapping Activities:
    a. *Map Scavenger Hunt*. Hand sketch a simple map of either the classroom or school yard with defining landmark features. Use symbols to represent these features and include a legend on the map. Mark the place where a small prize/treat will be and have students locate it by reading the map. Students may work individually or in teams.
    b. *Map the Classroom/Schoolyard*. Students create their own map with symbols and a legend of either the classroom or the schoolyard. Optional activity: They may make it into a scavenger hunt by hiding prizes/treats and trading their map with another individual or group.
    c. Map of a Book. Read a story to class. Have the students draw a map of locations and events in the story. Some stories to consider (with mountain men themes):
        i. Swamp Angel, by Anne Isaacs
        ii. Git Along, Old Scudder, by Stephen Gammell
        iii. Sacagawea, by Liselotte Erdrich

Parts of this lesson were adapted from the following sources:
http://interactive2.usgs.gov/learningweb/teachers/mapadv.htm
http://interactive2.usgs.gov/learningweb/teachers/lesson_plans.htm
http://hea-www.harvard.edu/ECT/the_book/Chap4/Chapter4.html