

# Mapping Storybooks - National Geographic

Students use a map and cut-outs of a story's characters to follow their actions through space and time. They retell the story in their own words, using the map and positional vocabulary.

Discuss features on the map.

Choose one story: *Make Way for Ducklings*, *Rosie's Walk*, or *Curious George Gets a Medal*. Distribute a copy of the accompanying map for that story to each student. Ask: *What do you see on the map?* Talk about places students are familiar with that are like this place, and have them describe those. For example, students may have experienced a city with a lot of people, cars, trucks, building, noise, and things to do and see. They may describe the countryside or a farm as quiet and green, with animals in the fields or forests. Read aloud the title of the story and ask students to predict what they think will happen in the story. Ask: *How do you think places on the map will be part of the story?* Distribute crayons or coloured pencils and give students a few minutes to colour the features on their map. Take time while they colour to check understanding by asking individual students to identify the features on their map.

2. Read the story and have students follow the story on their maps.

Read aloud the story to the class and have each student participate by moving a small toy or marker or a cutout of the characters along the map. For each story, have students complete the following tasks:

Storybook 1: *Make Way for Ducklings*, by Robert McCloskey

- ☒ Have students determine the relative locations of landmarks on the map, using the language of location such as *next to*, *up*, *down*, *right*, *left*, *across*, *between*, *toward*, *away*, *near*, and *far*. Help students describe what they see in the illustrations: the island is in the lake, in the Public Gardens, near a bridge; the swan in the boat is behind the people on the benches; benches are around the trees; and so on.
- ☒ Focus on the words the author uses to show the ducks' movement over and through the city. Have students act out and describe these movements with the cutouts of the two large ducks and the group of ducklings: flying over Beacon Hill and the State House; crossing the highway and walking down Mt. Vernon Street; and turning on Charles Street. Ask: *Where did Michael ask the policemen to stop traffic?* (at Beacon Street)
- ☒ Have a discussion about the geography of the story. Ask:
  - ☒ *Why do you think there is a park in the middle of the city?*
  - ☒ *How have transport, dress, and buildings changed since this book was written in 1941?*
  - ☒ *What do the pictures show about the people in the story—their ages, occupations, and recreational activities?*
  - ☒ *How is the land in the city used differently from in the mountains or on a farm? How is it similar to or different from where you live?*
  - ☒ *What are some reasons that you and your family need to ride a car or bus from one place to another?* (for work, shopping for food and clothing, to go to school)
  - ☒ *How are the ducks interrupting how humans are moving in this place? How are humans interrupting how the ducks move?* (When the ducks fly over the city they move easily. When they look for a home they try to find a safe place where people and animals will not disturb them, but they also like how the people feed them peanuts. Once they lose some of their feathers they can only walk or swim, and it is harder for them to move because of the people and traffic in the city.)
  - ☒ *How do the people help the ducks?* (They feed the ducks and protect them from traffic. People also built the island in the pond where the ducks go to live.)
  - ☒ *How do the ducks help the people?* (People smile when they see the ducks in the park and walking through the city. People enjoy watching the ducks and feeding them peanuts.)

Storybook 2: *Rosie's Walk*, by Pat Hutchins

- ☒ Have students determine the relative locations of landmarks on the map, using positional vocabulary words

such as *next to, up, down, right, left, across, between, toward, away, near, and far*. Focus on the words the author uses to show the hen's movement from place to place on the farm: *across, around, over, past, through, and under*. Have students act out these movements with the cutout of the hen. Help students describe the fox's movement: he fell on the rake, in the pool, in the haystack, into the cart, under the flour, and crashed into the beehives. Have students act out these movements with the cutout of the fox.

- ☒ Have a discussion about the map and the story. Ask:
  - ☒ *Is this place near or far from a city/town? How do you know?* (far from a city/town; you can't see any other buildings, roads, cars, or trucks in the pictures.)
  - ☒ *Why would a farm like this one be far from a city?* (Farmers need a lot of open space for food and animals to grow.)
  - ☒ *What things on the farm are alive?* (hen, fox, birds, trees, flowers, grass, frogs, butterfly, goat, mice, squirrel, bees, insects)
  - ☒ *Which animals are wild?* (fox, bird, frogs, mice, insects, squirrel) *Which are farm animals?* (goat, hen, bees)
  - ☒ *What kinds of work do you think people do on this farm?* (taking care of animals, milking the goat, putting honey in jars, collecting eggs) *What tools do people use on this farm?* (rake, pitchfork, cart) As a whole class, make a list of all of the farm activities.
  - ☒ *What things were made or built by people?* (barns, house, tractor, fence, mill, honeybee boxes, tools for grinding flour in the mill)
  - ☒ *What does Rosie the hen want to do in this story?* (take a walk) *What does the fox want to do in this story?* (catch Rosie) *Why do you think the fox can't catch the hen?* (The fox is clumsy, unlucky, or both.)
  - ☒ *Do you think the farmer wants the fox on the farm?* (No, the fox could eat the hen.)
  - ☒ *Why do you think Rosie is not afraid of the fox?* (Rosie probably does not see the fox.)
  - ☒ *If you could be one of the animals in the story, which one would you want to be? Why?*

### Storybook 3: *Curious George Gets a Medal*, by H.A. Rey

- ☒ Have students determine the relative locations of landmarks on the map, using positional vocabulary words such as *next to, up, down, right, left, across, between, toward, away, near, and far*.
- ☒ Talk about the decisions Curious George made in the story. Ask: *Was it wise for him to let all of the pigs out of the pen? Why or why not?*
- ☒ Make a list of all the different types of transportation in the story. (Include the cow!)
- ☒ Have a discussion about the map and the story. Ask:
  - ☒ *What clues in the story tell you where Curious George's house is located?* (It's in a place where houses have yards, so probably is not a busy city with skyscrapers.)
  - ☒ *Where is the farm located in relation to the house?*
  - ☒ *Why is a museum more likely to be in a city than in the country?* (There are more people to visit a museum in a city.)
  - ☒ *How is a farm different from the place where Curious George's house is?*
  - ☒ *What kind of land would be best for a rocket launch? For a parachute landing?*
  - ☒ *How are the city and the farm different?*
- ☒ Have students think about whether they would like to live in the city or on a farm. Have them draw pictures of themselves in the city or on a farm doing something that Curious George did.

### 3. Check reading comprehension.

Check reading comprehension and understanding of map skills and positional vocabulary by having students retell the story in their own words using the map.

#### Informal Assessment

Let students choose one of the stories from this activity. Using the map that accompanies the story, have students tell short stories that further the adventures of the main character. Encourage creativity. For example, suggest that students tell original stories that continue to take place on the map. Listen for development of the setting; naming of map features; use of geographic terminology, concepts, and themes; and use of positional vocabulary. Tally the number of times each student uses these ideas to determine what aspects of geography the student understands and uses.

#### Extending the Learning

- Incorporate concepts from this activity as you read other familiar or favorite storybooks. Have students draw a map and use it to retell the story. Possible titles include:
  - Little Red Riding Hood*
  - The Black Rabbit*, by Philippa Leathers
  - Mr. Tiger Goes Wild*, by Peter Brown
  - Going on a Bear Hunt*, by Oxenbury and Rosen
  - Katie and the Big Snow*, by Virginia Burton
  - Harry the Dirty Dog*, by Gene Zion
- Read children's books that are set in real places, and map the locations of the action using maps from the [Nat Geo MapMaker Kits](#). Possible titles include:
  - Possum Magic*, By Mem Fox (use the [Australia MapMaker Kit](#))
  - Babar Comes To America*, By Laurent de Brunhoff (use the [United States MapMaker Kit](#))
  - Apples to Oregon*, by Deborah Hopkinson and Nancy Carpenter (use the [United States MapMaker Kit](#))
  - Rehema's Journey*, by Barbara Margolies (use the [Tanzania 1-Page Map](#) [you will need to enable Flash in your browser])
  - How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*, by Marjorie Priceman (use the [World MapMaker Kit](#))
  - Ducky*, by Eve Bunting (use the [World MapMaker Kit](#))
- Use the search tool on the MapMaker Interactive to find the locations of real places from children's books. Possible titles include:
  - The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge* (next to the Brooklyn Bridge, New York City)
  - Maybelle the Cable Car*, by Virginia Burton (San Francisco, California)
  - Madeline*, by Ludwig Bemelmans (Paris, France)
  - Adele and Simon*, by Barbara McClintock (Paris, France)
- Have students write their own stories, focusing on a place and how the characters move in that place. Have them create a map and other illustrations for their story.
- Have the entire class create a story, complete with a large map.

#### Tips & Modifications

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TIP

Have the class compare the map for *Make Way for Ducklings* to an actual road map. Look at whether and how the different maps show features such as bridges, parks, streets, and rivers.