

Educator Guide



TREASURE TRACKERS

A Map-Making Adventure



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TREASURE TRACKERS *A Map-Making Adventure*

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Welcome to **Treasure Trackers**! This guide provides four activities designed to introduce learners to the art and science of **cartography** — the practice of drawing maps. Learners think critically about how to communicate visually, work together to solve problems and refine their work based on constructive feedback.

Inspired by the thrill of discovery in our **Pirate Camp**, this lesson is a fun, low-prep way to practice essential skills and build strong connections.

Why You'll Love It

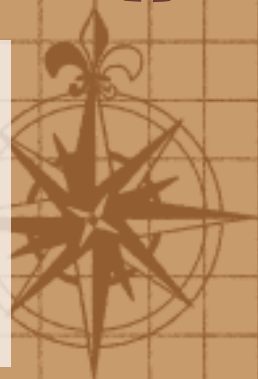
- **Quick and Easy Setup:**
Minimal materials are needed so you can focus on the fun.
- **Adaptable for All Ages:**
Designed for grades 1-3.
- **Interactive and Fun:** Packed with collaborative activities that get learners talking and creating.
- **Standards-Aligned:**
Connects directly to national standards and develops critical 21st-century skills.

Primary Objectives

- Learners will assess the effectiveness of a map and revise it for clarity.
- Learners will illustrate their own map to be shared with others and reflect on improvements based on feedback.

MATERIALS

- Student Booklet
- Pencils
- Markers





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BACKGROUND

What is Cartography? The Art and Science of Mapmaking!

Imagine trying to find hidden treasure without any directions, or trying to sail across the ocean without knowing where to go. That's why maps are so important! And the study and practice of making maps is called **cartography**.

Cartography is like being a detective, an artist and a scientist all rolled into one! Isn't that what STEAM is all about?

- It's an **art** because cartographers (that's what mapmakers are called) use colors, symbols and designs to make maps clear, beautiful and easy to understand. Think about the cool pictures of mountains or forests you see on a map – that's the art of cartography.
- It's a **science** because cartographers use careful measurements, **math** and special tools to make sure everything on the map is in the right place and is the correct size. They use things like compasses to find directions and even satellites orbiting in space to get super accurate pictures of the Earth.
- It's about telling a story because maps can show us so much more than just where things are. They can tell us about mountains, rivers, cities, even where certain animals live or where an old treasure might be buried!

Why are maps so important?

- **Navigation:** They help us find our way from one place to another, whether we're walking down the street, driving to a new town, or sailing on the open sea.
- **Exploration:** Imagine the brave explorers of the past! Maps were their most important tools for discovering new lands and charting unknown territories.
- **Understanding our world:** Maps help us see how different places are connected, how big countries are, and where important features like oceans and mountains are located.
- **Planning:** People use maps to plan everything from building new roads to protecting national parks.

From ancient times, when people drew simple maps on cave walls or clay tablets, to today's digital maps on our phones and computers, **cartography** has always been about helping us understand and explore our amazing world!

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ACTIVITY 1: CHART YOUR COURSE WITH A COMPASS ROSE!

Today, you will learn to navigate a grid map using cardinal directions (North, South, East, West) to find specific locations. You will follow **Captain Bluebottom's** clues to uncover exciting discoveries on our Pirate Island map.

Imagine you're standing on the deck of your pirate ship, looking out at the big, wide ocean. How do you know which way to sail to find that hidden treasure chest? That's where cardinal directions come in! We have four main cardinal directions, and they're helpful pointers on a compass:

- **North (N):** Think of North as pointing to the very top of your map, or towards the North Pole where Santa Claus lives (even pirates need to know that!).
- **East (E):** If you're looking at the sunrise, you're looking East! The sun always comes up in the East.
- **South (S):** South is the opposite of North, pointing downwards on your map, or towards warmer places where palm trees grow.
- **West (W):** If you're watching the sunset, you're looking West! The sun always goes down in the West.

To begin, let's label our **compass rose** with our **cardinal directions**. Open your student Activity booklet to the map on pages 2-3 and find the compass rose. Ahoy! It's missing the cardinal directions.

To help us remember these, pirates have a secret saying: **"Never Eat Soggy Waffles."**

Let's say it together:

- **N**ever (North)
- **E**at (East)
- **S**oggy (South)
- **W**affles (West)

Let's start at the top of our compass rose and add an N for North. Let's move clockwise and add E for East. S for South. And Lastly, W for West.

Now, we can use our compass rose to help us navigate our map!





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ACTIVITY 2: THE KEY TO THE MAP

Our compass rose is ready, but something else is missing? It looks like Captain Bluebottom was in a hurry and didn't complete the map. The map is missing a key part called the **Legend**. A Legend is like the map's dictionary. It's a box that shows us all the symbols used on the map and tells us exactly what each one represents. Without a legend, we're just guessing what those squiggles or 'X's mean. Let's finish the legend on our map, so we can identify points on the map.

On the map we see a skull and crossbones, what do you think that symbolizes?

Learner response: Pirate Hideout

Let's draw a skull and crossbones next to the Pirate Hideout in the legend and complete the rest of the symbols on the map.

LEGEND	
	Pirate Hideout
	Old Anchor
	Shipwreck
	Whispering Palms
	Buried Treasure
	Dangerous Shoals
	Captain's Spyglass
	Mystical Cave

Reflection Questions

- Why is it helpful to have a picture and a word together?
- If you were making a map for a friend, what symbol would you use for a swing set? How would you put that in your legend?



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ACTIVITY 3: CHART THE COURSE

Captain Bluebottom has left us his **captain's log**, a journal filled with entries about the amazing things he found on Pirate Island. He needs your keen navigation skills to help us follow his directions and uncover exactly what he found at each spot! Are you ready, **Treasure Trackers**? Turn to the treasure map on pages 2-3.

The Story & Grid Navigation

Listen closely to **Captain Bluebottom's captain log entries**. Each entry will give you directions to a new spot on our map. When you land on a square, tell us what you've found!

Log Entry 1

My journey began at the **Old Anchor** at grid square **A1**. From there, I headed **east 1 square** and then **south 1 square**. What did I discover hidden there?

Learner Response: "We found a **Shipwreck**!"

Log Entry 2

After inspecting the old wreckage, I remembered a rumor of a hidden gem. I set my sights from the **Shipwreck** [at B2] and moved **south 2 squares** and then **east 2 squares**. What glittering item awaited me?

Learner Response: "We found the **Captain's Spyglass**!"

Log Entry 3

With the spyglass in hand, I gazed towards a peculiar glow. I moved from my current spot with the **Spyglass** [at D4] **north 1 square** and then **east 2 squares**. What strange place did I stumble upon?

Learner Response: "We found the **Mystical Cave**!"

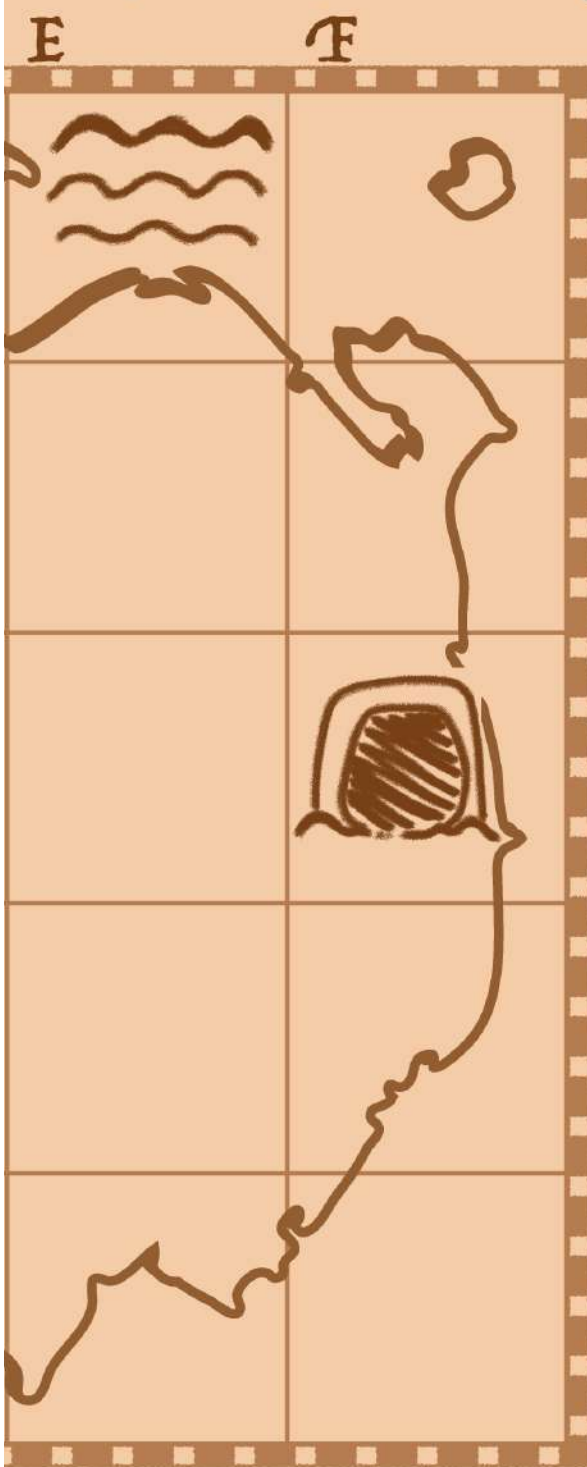
Log Entry 4

The cave hummed with ancient magic! But my true prize lay beyond. From the **Mystical Cave** [at F3], I navigated **south 2 squares** and then **west 3 squares**. What shimmering treasure did I finally unearth?

Learner Response: "We found the **Buried Treasure**!"

PIRATE ISLAND TREASURE MAP





Don't Forget!

Never Eat
Soggy Waffles

LEGEND



Pirate Hideout



Old Anchor



Shipwreck



Whispering Palms



Buried Treasure



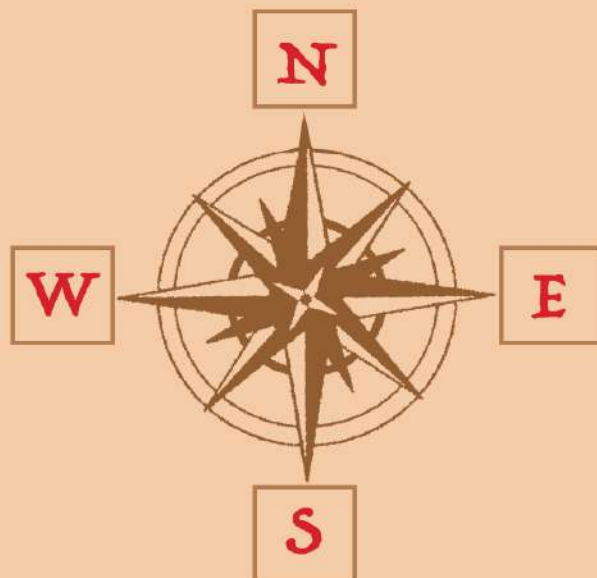
Dangerous Shoals



Captain's Spyglass



Mystical Cave





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X *Conclusion*

Excellent work, crew! You've successfully navigated Captain Bluebottom's **captain's log** and uncovered his hidden treasures. You used your mapping skills to find your way.

Let's imagine we want to go to the Whispering Palms from the Golden Doubloons? What directions would we use? Did anybody else think of a different way to get to the Whispering Palms?

X *Discussion Questions*

- What was important about the directions Captain Bluebottom gave us?
- Why do you think using a grid helps us find things on a map?

X **ACTIVITY 4: CREATE YOUR OWN TREASURE MAP!**

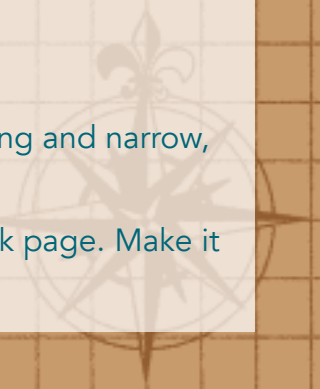
Alright, Treasure Trackers! You've learned how to read Captain Bluebottom's log, navigate with a grid and understand the importance of a compass rose and a legend. Now, it's time to create your very own masterpiece!

Open your student booklets to pages 4-5: My Secret Treasure Island. This is where your imagination takes the helm!

1. Design Your Secret Island's Outline!

First, imagine your own secret pirate island. What shape is it? Is it long and narrow, round like a coin, or maybe shaped like a fierce sea monster?

Use your pencil to lightly draw the outline of your island on the blank page. Make it unique!



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2. Add Amazing Features!

Now, let's fill your island with exciting landmarks and treacherous spots. What mysteries will your map reveal?

- Hidden Coves & Sandy Beaches: Where would a ship land?
- Jagged Mountains & Rolling Hills: What are the highest points?
- Winding Rivers & Sparkling Lakes: Where does the water flow?
- Mysterious Caves & Dark Tunnels: Are there secrets underground?
- Quicksand Pits & Slippery Bogs: Where should explorers be careful?
- Ancient Ruins & Forgotten Temples: What old secrets does your island hold?
- Shipwrecks or Pirate Camps: Are there signs of past visitors?

3. Place Your "X" Marks the Spot!

Where is the treasure hidden? Choose one secret spot on your island and mark it with a clear, bold "X". This is the ultimate destination.

4. Chart Your Course with a Compass Rose!

Every good map needs to show direction! Label your compass rose with the Cardinal Directions: N (North), E (East), S (South), and W (West). Remember "Never Eat Soggy Waffles."

5. Fill in Your Map's Legend!

For each unique feature you drew on your map (like a mountain, a cave, a shipwreck or quicksand), draw its symbol in the "Symbol" box.

Then, next to it, write what that symbol means in the "What it Means" box. This helps anyone reading your map understand your special drawings. Make sure all the symbols on your map are explained in your legend.

Use Your Imagination!





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ACTIVITY 5: CREATE YOUR OWN CAPTAIN'S LOG

Have learners write a story about their treasure maps and secret islands. Allow learners to share their map and story.

Write Your Captain's Log!

Open your student booklets to page 6: My Captain's Log.

Imagine you are the brave Captain of your own ship. Write a short story or journal entry about your treasure map and secret island.

Here are some ideas to spark your imagination:

- How did you discover your island? Was it after a storm, following an ancient legend, or by pure luck?
- What makes your island special? Is it full of mysterious creatures, ancient ruins, or hidden magic?
- What challenges did you face while burying or finding your treasure? Did you have to sneak past a sleeping sea monster, navigate a tricky maze or climb a treacherous peak?
- What sounds would you hear on your island? Whispering wind through ancient trees? The rushing of a waterfall? The chirping and crawling of undiscovered birds?
- What's the best part about having treasure hidden on your island?

Have fun being the ultimate storyteller, detailing the adventures on the map that only YOU know the secrets to!



*Snap a photo of learners' creations and share the fun!
Tag us on social media using **#STEAMinAction** and **#PCSedventures**.*



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X NOTES:



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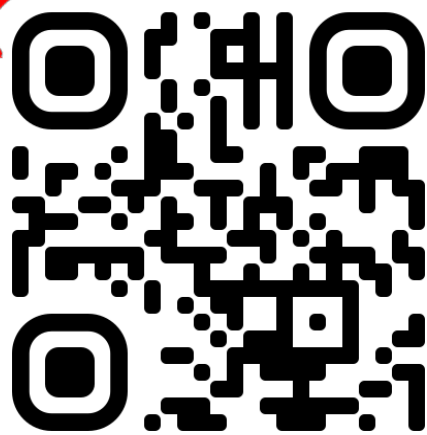
X NOTES:

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X EXPLORE PIRATE CAMP

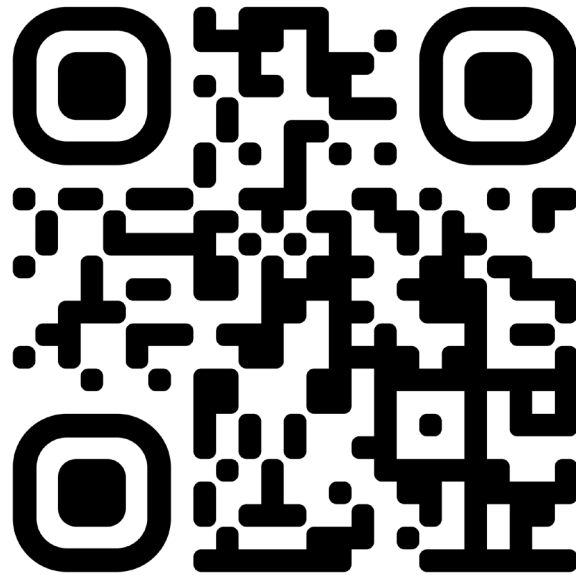
The map-making and collaboration in *Treasure Trackers* are just a glimpse into the full voyage that awaits in *Pirate Camp*.

This complete program expands on these concepts with more **hands-on STEM experiments, engineering design trials, and engaging group discussions** that bring the high seas to your learning space.



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