

Middle Earth to Panem

Maps of Imaginary Places as Invitations to Reading

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Hogwarts, Panem, Middle Earth, and the Hundred Acre Wood . . . these may be fictional places, but they are brought to life in books. While J. K. Rowling and Suzanne Collins chose to leave their worlds up to the imagination, for decades youth have been poring over the maps made famous by J. R. R. Tolkien and A. A. Milne.

According to Ricardo Padron (2007), maps found in works of fiction are much more than pretty illustrations and reader's aids—they have the ability to delight, reveal truths, whisper secrets, and unsettle readers. Padron states, “Not only do

[maps] allow us to picture places and spaces, but by telling stories that take place in them, or by sculpting characters associated with them, they give those places life and meaning” (258).

Unfortunately, a map found in a book is limited in its ability to convey the beauty of a landscape or the hazards of a war zone. Technology can enhance the map by providing satellite images, interactive maps, and other tools to help readers visualize complex imaginary worlds.

In addition, since many book maps appear on the endpaper of first editions, they may be missing from paperback and e-book editions. The Internet is a great way to locate these useful visuals.

Dora the Explorer can always be found with her trusty map.



A. A. Milne's Hundred Acre Wood.

Use a combination of books and technology to bring the world of maps alive for your students.

BOOKS WITH MAPS IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

School librarians can use the maps in popular books for children and young adults to jumpstart twenty-first-century skills related to analyzing primary sources, using online map and satellite image resources, and constructing maps. The *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* stress the importance of understanding text in all formats, including maps.

Maps play a supporting role in some books for youth, but in others they are an integral part of the story line. In a study of children's books, Jeffrey Patton and Nancy Ryckman (1990) identified a continuum of purposes for maps, from simple to complex. At one end of the spectrum, maps were used to illustrate the general setting of the book. At the intermediate point, maps showed where the story occurred or how characters were connected to a setting. At the complex end of the continuum, the map explained spatial elements of the story line, such as a character's journey or clues in a mystery.

Regardless of the author's approach, book maps can be exciting tools in teaching, learning, and promoting the joy of reading.

BOOKS, MAPS, AND IMAGINARY PLACES

Today maps play a central role in many fantasy works for children and young adults. However, the use of maps to excite and assist readers is a relatively recent invention (Brogan, 2004). Books like *Robinson Crusoe* didn't contain maps. It wasn't until the late nineteenth century that they were introduced in works for youth.

While some authors create entirely new worlds, others incorporate alternative versions of our own universe. For instance, the new fantasy series *Mapmakers* by S. E. Grove contains maps with familiar geographic features. Set in an alternative 1891, where continents have been flung into different time periods, thirteen-year-old Sophia Tims must travel into uncharted lands in search of her kidnapped uncle. In this series, mapmaking has become a fine art including elements of science and magic. Readers can download copies of the maps at the series website at <http://www.theglasssentence.com/>.

While some incorporate wonderful maps in their works, many au-

thors, like J. K. Rowling, Suzanne Collins, and Veronica Roth, leave the map creation to their fans. Fandom may expand the reading experience through their own interpretations of imaginary worlds portrayed in series like *Harry Potter*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Di-*



Mapmakers series by S. E. Grove.

vergent, which don't contain maps. The social network DeviantArt (<http://www.deviantart.com/>) is a great example. A search for the fictional world of Panem yields over one hundred user-created maps. Involve students in evaluating and discussing how these maps match their ideas about the Hunger Games series. According to David Sobel (1998) in *Mapmaking with Children*, by "cultivating fantasy mapmaking with children we are developing the graphic skills that engineers, landscape planners, clothing designers, graphic artists, novelists, and teachers need every day" (125).

Although the Harry Potter books don't contain map illustrations, the Pottermore (<http://www.pottermore.com/>) companion site uses an interactive map to guide participants through the world of Harry Potter.



Pottermore map.

The Marauder's Map from Harry Potter is a different type of interactive map—it's a magical document that can only be read by wizards. Use the Harry Potter Wikia page (http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Marauder's_Map) to explore this map as well as learn more about wikis and collaborative writing communities. Think about ways students can use wikis to share their excitement about book maps.

IMAGINARY WORLDS

Like the map of Middle Earth found in *The Lord of the Rings*, many books for children and young adults incorporate entire imaginary worlds. Some book series websites even provide interactive maps that expand on the maps provided in the books. Examples include *The Inheritance Cycle* by Christopher Paolini (<http://www.alagaesia.com/alagaesia.php>) and *The Land of Elyon* series by Patrick Carman (<http://www.scholastic.com/elyon/>). When users click locations on *The Land of Elyon* interac-

tive map, information about the location is provided.



Interactive map from *The Land of Elyon*.

In some cases fans have created interactive maps that expand on the original paper map published in the book. Wikia Map (<http://maps.wikia.com/wiki/Special:Maps>) encourages users to create their own interactive maps based on an existing image or an uploaded picture. Users then create pins to mark and identify locations. Students could draw images on paper, scan them, and make them interactive with Wikia Map. Many youth have already uploaded their own books and computer game maps, which others can use. For instance, fans of *The Lord of the Rings* are creating their own stories based on a map called Fan Fiction Tales from the Black Gate (http://maps.wikia.com/wiki/Portal:_Test_Shadow_of_Mordor).

In *The Expeditioners* series by S. S. Taylor, a beautifully designed map is woven directly into the story line. Three siblings go off in search of unmapped lands that aren't on the "old" computer-generated maps. Use this idea of unmapped areas to challenge youth to investigate places that are censored on Google Maps. Some areas are blurred out or distorted for security reasons, while others may simply be errors. A simple Google search for "censored Google maps" yields lots of interesting results.

L. Frank Baum drew dozens of maps of Oz, but the first published map appeared in the endpapers of *Tik Tok of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. Since there are very few original print copies of the book around, the Internet is an easy way to locate the maps of the Land of Oz (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Oz).

Some imaginary worlds have even been "re-imagined," such as *The Land of Oz* by Gregory Maguire for the book *Wicked* (http://www.woodge.com/books/maps/map_maguire_oz.jpg).

Other great books with maps of imaginary worlds include *The Earthsea Trilogy* by Ursula K. LeGuin, *The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau, *Tricker's Choice* by Tamora Pierce, and *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman. Use tools like Glogster (<http://edu.glogster.com/>) to annotate a book map such as the one in *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster. In this case, the annotated map (<http://www.glogster.com/mgronek/phantom-tollbooth/g-6m1f0od4qkles2626lduaa0>) includes arrows to key locations and quotes from the book.

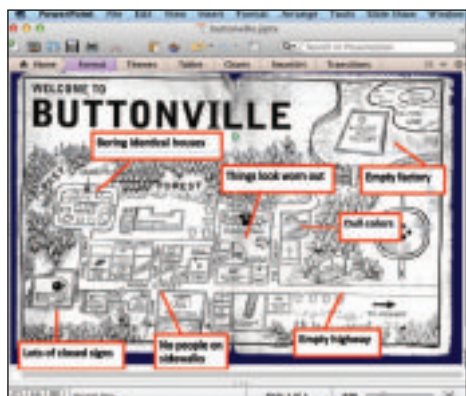
IMAGINARY TOWNS

While some books explore entire worlds, others focus on smaller areas like villages and towns. *Three Times Lucky* and *The Ghosts of Tupelo Landing* by Sheila Turnage contain a map that shows the fictional town of Tupelo Landing in North Carolina. By visiting the author's website (http://www.sheilaturnage.com/SheilaTurnage/Tupelo_Landing.html), readers can view a full color version with additional detail.

Neighborhood MapMachine (<http://la.scholastic.com/en/neighborhood-map-machine>) is a commercial software package that allows students to create maps of their own community or imaginary places. Ask youth to create a map for a fiction book that doesn't currently contain one. Share these on an imaginary neighborhoods bulletin board featuring books with and without maps.

Buttonville is an imaginary town in the new *The Imaginary Veterinary* series by Suzanne Selfors. In *Book 1: The Sasquatch Escape*, the map shows what ten-year-old Ben describes as the "saddest town on Earth." Readers can download the map at the series website (<http://www.suzanneselfors.com/imaginary.html#map>). Use this map to practice some basic technology skills. Ask students to copy it into

Microsoft PowerPoint, then use the shapes tools to label areas that they think reflect the idea of the “sad town.” Finally, use the audio to record their thoughts about the map and the town.



Labeled map from Suzanne Selfors’s *Buttonville*.

Random City Map Generator (http://www.inkwellideas.com/roleplaying_tools/random_city/index.shtml) can create a randomly generated city or town that can be used for students’ own stories.

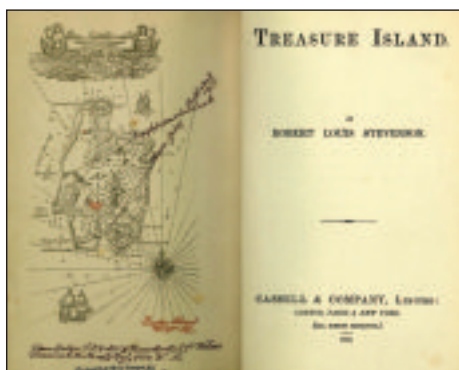


City created using the Random City Map Generator.

IMAGINARY ISLANDS

Islands have always fascinated fantasy readers. One of the first maps in a book often read by youth is *Treasure Island*. Unfortunately, the map has been removed from many subsequent versions. Because maps are often placed on the endpapers of books, they may be missing in paperback editions. Use online book archives sites to

seek out these missing maps. For instance, it’s possible to find different versions of *Treasure Island* at Archive.org, including an 1883 edition (<https://archive.org/details/treasureisland02stev>).



Treasure Island map.

The 1949 Newbery Honor book *My Father’s Dragon* by Ruth Stiles Gannett is now in the public domain and available online (<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/gannett/dragon/dragon.html>). The endpaper contains a beautiful illustration of the Island of Tangerina and Wild Island. The map is filled with interesting real and fictional creatures. Involve youth in drawing their own island and filling it with their own imaginary creatures. Use online creature creators for ideas, including Creature Creator (<http://www.scholastic.com/underlandchronicles/creaturecreator.htm>). Do a Google search for “creature creator” for other tools.



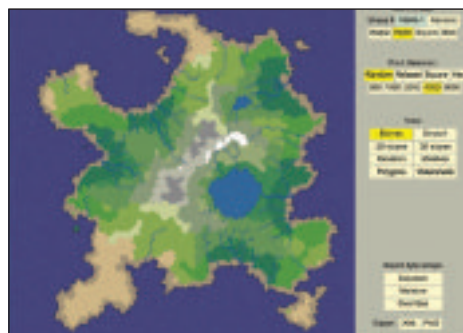
Wild Island map from *My Father’s Dragon* by Ruth Stiles Gannett.

Focus on terms associated with land forms, such as *archipelago*, *cape*, *cliff*, *estuary*, *isthmus*, *waterfall*, and *peninsula*. This is a great opportunity to practice using painting and drawing tools. Online tools like Sumo Paint (<http://www.sumopaint.com/>) work well for designing an island.

Another option is to use the Polygon Map Generation tool (

Underland Chronicles Creature Creator from Scholastic.

dents.stanford.edu/~amitp/game-programming/polygon-map-generation/demo.html) to create your own island. Users can choose their island’s shape, points, and views.



Polygon Map Generation tool.

Both open source and proprietary software are available for creating fantasy maps. AutoREALM (<http://autorealm.sourceforge.net/>) is a popular tool for creating maps of cities, castle, caves, and other fantasy elements. For high-quality commercial software to create worlds, cities, and other types of imaginary places, try Pro Fantasy Software (<https://secure.profantasy.com/>).

MAPS THAT MIX FACT AND FICTION

While many fantasy books contain maps of imaginary worlds, others mix real locations with fictional ones.

The park in the Elliot’s Park series by Patrick Carman is based on a real park. Readers can examine the book’s park illustration then watch a video with images of the real park (<http://www.patrickcarman.com/books/elliots-park/>).

ELEMENTS OF THE REAL WORLD

Mixing reality with fantasy is particularly popular with speculative fiction, alterna-

tive histories, and steampunk works.

Some works of fantasy incorporate real cities and other places into their maps to provide connections. *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame has a map that combines reality and fantasy elements along the River Thames. In *Wildwood*, author Colin Meloy uses the “wilderness” area of Forest Park in Portland, Oregon, as the inspiration for an entire imaginary world.

Gabriel Finley and the Raven’s Riddle by George Hagen contains a pictorial map of Brooklyn and Manhattan along with the fictional city of Aviopolis deep underground. Youth enjoy exploring pictorial maps of both real and imaginary places. The world that Hagen envisioned bridges these two worlds. Do a Google search for pictorial maps of Manhattan and compare them with Hagen’s version. Ask students to create a pictorial map with fantasy elements of their favorite city. Rather than producing it from scratch, consider modifying an existing pictorial map.

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George provides an example of a pictorial map with a labeled image drawn by the main character, Sam, of a fictional place near Delhi, New York. Ask youth to locate photographs taken near this area and match the images to the book’s map.

HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

Many books incorporate maps based on real places with a historical twist. In some cases the ties to real locations are strong. In others they are based on mythology or alternative histories.

Some series, like *The Clockwork Century*, provide an alternative version of a real place. In Cherie Priest’s *alternative Seattle*, the 1879 map (<http://theclockwork-century.com/?p=285>) shows a wall to keep out zombies. Compare this map with an actual historical map from the same time period from the David Rumsey Collection (<http://rumsey.geogarage.com/maps/g4653000.html>) overlaid on today’s satellite image of Seattle. Involve students in thinking about the modified map. What elements of the map have been changed for the fantasy book? Why did the author

make these decisions? How does the map reflect the story’s plot?



Map of alternative Seattle and historical map of Seattle.

The *Sea of Trolls* series by Nancy Farmer builds elements of Norse mythology into a map that includes real locations. Do a Google search for Norse mythology maps for lots of examples to compare with the book’s map. Involve youth in creating their own Norse maps and diagrams of the cosmic ash tree and nine worlds.

The Arthur Trilogy by Kevin Crossley-Holland is set in 1199 and includes both a manor map and an area map. Although based on real locations, the book is a work of fantasy. An online interactive map (<http://www.ecastles.co.uk/ukmap.html>) allows visitors to explore castles all over the United Kingdom, including Stokesay Castle, referred to by the book’s author.

Scott Westerfeld’s *Leviathan* series is set in an alternate 1914. The book’s endpapers include a stunning allegorical map of World War I era Europe (<http://scottwesterfeld.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/LeviathanGrandMapBIG.jpg>). During this time period, picture-rich political maps were used as propaganda campaigns. Many examples of these types of maps are available at *Satirical World War One Maps* (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bibliodyssey/sets/72157606480801396>). Ask youth to compare the book’s map with the his-



The allegorical map from *Leviathan*.

torical maps from the time period.

CONCLUSION

Maps are an invitation to reading. Often found on the endpaper of books, they invite youth to ask questions and read. When combined with technology resources and tools, these book-based maps can promote twenty-first-century skills and ignite a passion for reading and graphic inquiry.

Looking for more ideas? Pinterest is a popular place to organize and share both real and imaginary maps. For example, a map of Forks Washington shared in Pinterest was inspired by the *Twilight* books (<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/186758715770210106/>). Children’s Literature Maps (<http://www.pinterest.com/joshuanashillus/childrens-literature-maps/>), Maps Are Cool (<http://www.pinterest.com/viviiien/maps-are-cool/>), and Maps from Book World (<http://www.pinterest.com/bluehairhero/maps-from-book-world/>) are a few other examples school librarians can use to jumpstart students projects.

For a list of more than one hundred fiction books for children and young adults that contain maps, go to <http://eduscapes.com/sessions/maps>.

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