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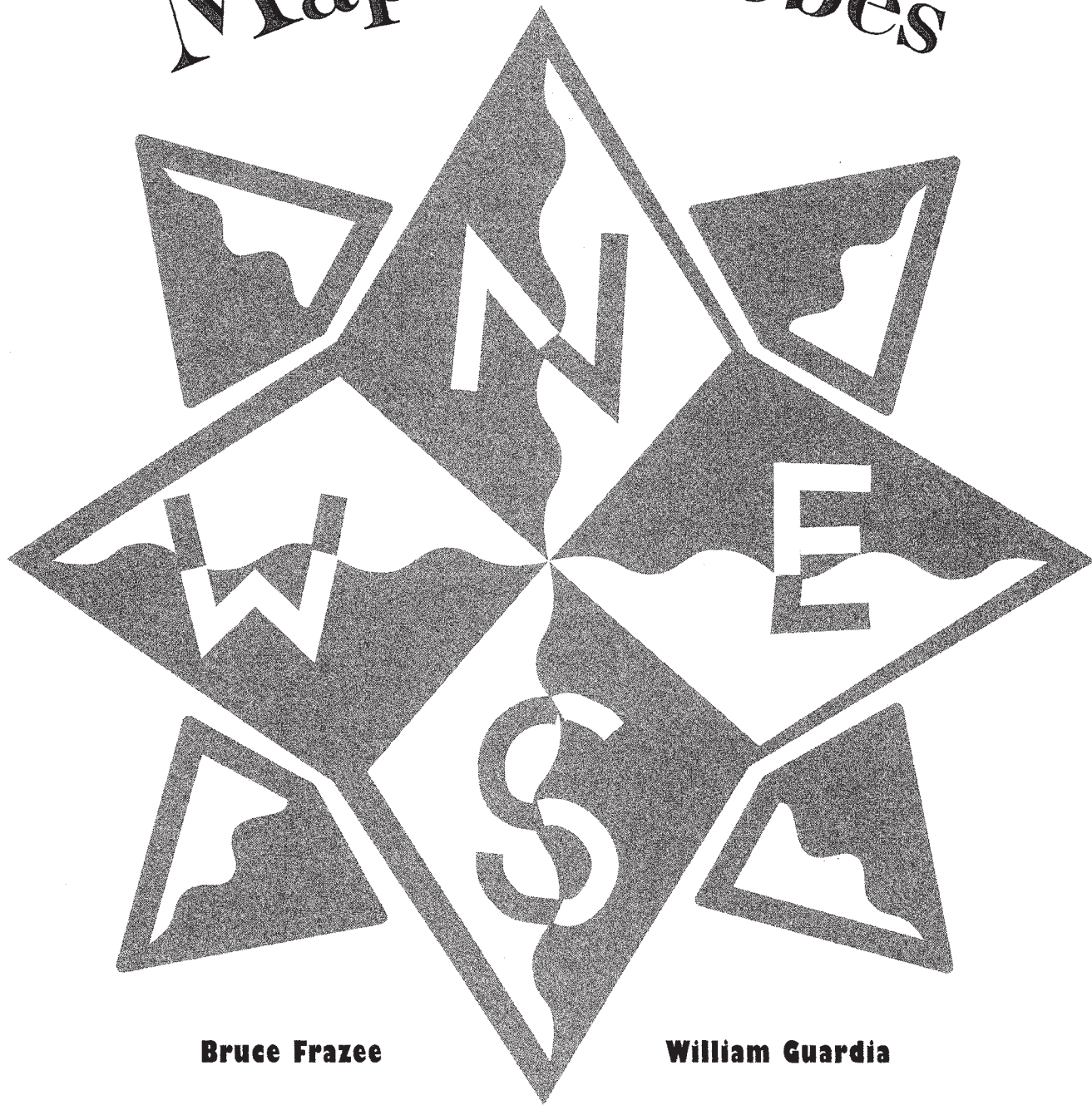
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HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH
Maps & Globes



Bruce Frazee

William Guardia

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Chapter One: Symbols

Teaching Children About Symbols

The language of maps is found in the symbols. The map key, or legend, unlocks the meanings of symbols and allows the child to interpret and read maps. Because map symbols are abstract to children, first-hand experiences of the cultural and physical representations of these features should be introduced. Map symbols are representations of real things, so children need to initially devise their own symbols for objects they wish to represent in their immediate environment. Child-made symbols should be used to represent three-dimensional objects (blocks, toy cars, doll houses, furniture), and placed on a map of an area familiar to the children, such as the classroom or playground. When children understand the concept of symbols as representations of real objects through concrete experiences, they can then begin to interpret commercially-prepared map symbols. A map key, the key to interpreting symbols, must accompany each map made by the children. Symbols need to be taught early because they are an important concept used throughout the lessons presented in this and other sections. The ability to interpret symbols is a crucial life-skill ability; the earlier children can experience symbols the sooner they can begin to make sense of their environment and the world.

The following activities will provide children with readiness skills before they begin the lessons that follow for this chapter:

1. Make a three-dimensional map of your home or neighborhood using small milk cartons or boxes to represent buildings. Use buttons and other objects to add variety and symbols to represent other features of your home or neighborhood. Try to keep the scale relationship as accurate as possible.
2. Encourage children to make maps using map keys (legends) with their own choice of symbols.
3. Help children learn colors and locate the various colors on a map. Discuss and describe the use of colors to show the various features on different types of maps.

4. Use building blocks to allow children to build maps of an area they know. Let children explain their maps and what the blocks represent.
5. Have children draw their own symbols for their room.
6. Have a boy and a girl stand in the room and have children draw pictures of them. Discuss the real people and the symbols that represent them in the pictures.
7. Show children photographs of different objects: buildings, church, home, streets, school, automobiles, etc. Have them develop and draw symbols for each object.
8. Design a map for a bulletin board in the classroom or refrigerator door at home. Place symbols developed by children in appropriate places.
9. Have children select colors as symbols for different objects to add to the map in #8 above. For example: blue for water, green for grass, brown for mountains, etc.

Skills to be Acquired: Symbols

1. Recognizes symbols look like (represent) real objects.
2. Interprets color as a symbol to represent an object.
3. Interprets and draws his/her own symbols to represent chosen objects.
4. Constructs various landforms which represent real features or landforms.
5. Reads and interprets map symbols.
6. Makes maps showing scale and symbols (rooms, neighborhoods, cities, etc.).
7. Solves problems measuring distances on map.
8. Interprets lines, dots, and colors on maps.
9. Uses legends to find information or make comparisons about an area.

10. Draws maps which include keys (legend) titles, direction finder (compass rose) and/or other information.
11. Understands and uses a variety of symbols.
12. Interprets and put geographic data into graphs.
13. Makes graphs to express information and relationships.
14. Reads and makes references from symbols on maps and graphs to obtain information.
15. Locates natural features on maps.



How do You Interpret Symbols?

Level 1

Concept: To interpret symbols.

Objective: Write a message using a code and a code key.

Materials: Pictures of common symbols and braille books.

Procedure:

1. Explain to the class the importance of symbols and how much we rely on symbols in our world.
2. Show various pictures of common symbols. For example: a traffic light, road signs or numbers.
3. Demonstrate an example of a code so children can interpret the meaning of the symbols.
For example: X O - # +.
= Good
O = Am
- = A
X = I
+ = Person
4. Let children write a sentence using a coding system and a key.
5. Let children exchange papers and interpret the codes.

Enrichment/Extension: Show various symbols and discuss their meaning. Obtain braille books and have children feel the pages. Discuss how these symbols are helpful to blind people.

Directions for Worksheet: Help children see relationships between the letters and symbols. Explain that they look at the symbol key to find the correct letter. The letter substitutes for the symbol to make a sentence.

How Do You Interpret Symbols?



Directions: Look at the symbols and the key. Interpret the symbols to find the secret message. Use the space below to make your own secret code and message.

Secret message:



Secret code (the key):

◆ = A	* = O
▲ = I	★ = D
✓ = T	○ = Y
□ = S	◐ = G

My own secret message:

My own secret code key:

Why Do Symbols Represent Real Objects?

Level 1

Concept: Symbols represent real objects.

Objective: Interpret and identify common map symbols.

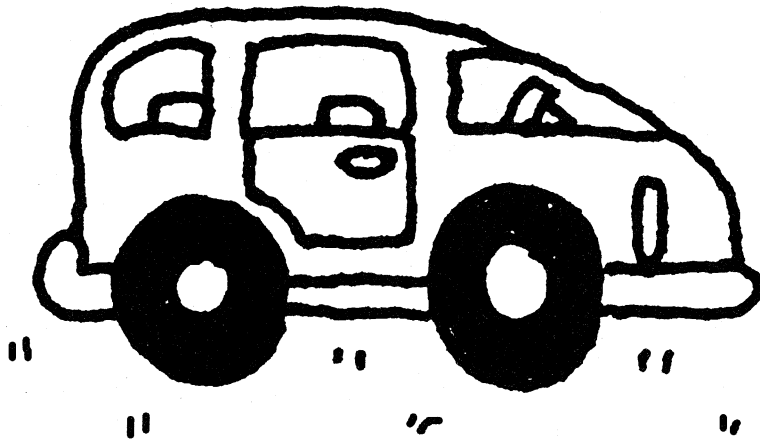
Materials: overhead projector (optional), doll house (scaled-down) objects to represent real objects, and objects to put on overhead.

Procedure:

1. Show children a small car. Ask: "What does this look like?"
2. Place the car sideways on the overhead or trace around the car on a sheet of paper. Attach butcher paper to the chalkboard and trace the outline of the car.
3. Hold up a stop sign. Put the stop sign on the overhead. Trace the outline of the stop sign.
4. Repeat this process with other objects, like model railroad tracks, rice, corn, and money.
5. Explain to children that these shapes represent, or look like, the real objects. These symbols are used as a map key or legend.
6. Locate various map keys and discuss and interpret them.

Enrichment/Extension: Have children create their own map key using various symbols to stand for the real objects.

Directions for Worksheet: Have children study the objects. Give several examples of symbols that could be used to show these objects. Let children make up their own symbols for objects.



Symbols Represent Real Objects



Directions: Look at these objects. Make up a symbol to show each object.

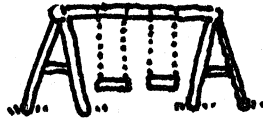
Objects

Symbols

1. home:



2. swing:



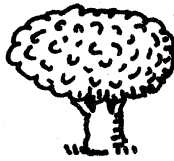
3. doll:



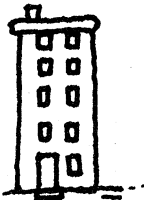
4. shoe:



5. tree:



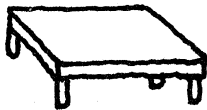
6. tall building:



7. car:



8. desk or table:



9. computer:



10. dog:

