

# Cultural History along the Natchez Trace Parkway



ON-SITE LESSON:

## Trail Mapping (code 4TM)

➤ **Grade Level:**

7<sup>th</sup> grade

➤ **Subject Areas:**

Geography

➤ **Setting:**

Beech Springs Nature Trail

➤ **Duration:**

45 minutes

➤ **Skills:**

Mapping Skills

➤ **AL Objectives:**

Geography 1, 2

➤ **Vocabulary:**

Cartographer,  
legend

**Summary:** Students will walk a trail and draw a simple map that represents the Beech Springs Nature Trail at the Natchez Trace Visitor Center. (teachers may adapt this lesson to other trails)



**Materials Needed:** Shared - compasses, one per 2 or 3 students: For each student, clipboard, pencil, Beech Springs Trail grid map with partial legend

## Instructional Information

Alabama Objectives:

- 1) Describe the world in spatial terms using maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies.
- 2) Determine how regions are used to describe the organization of Earth's surface.

**Learning Objectives:** The students will be able to: 1) draw a map on a grid 2) use compass directions to properly orient map details 3) identify important reference points on trail 4) develop a legend key for the map

**Teacher Set:** Explain to students that they will be mapping a trail in the forest using a map grid and compass. Hand out the map grid worksheet.

**Teacher Overview:** Explain to the students that early travelers on the Natchez Trace may have needed to make their own maps. Explain that they may have shared their homemade maps with friends.

**Student Instruction:** Have the students locate features that maps have in common in the margins.

--Legend (describes what each symbol/color means)

--Scale Bar (show the relation of real distance to the map)

--North Arrow (an artsy way to tell you which way is up")

--Date (maps immediately start to go out of date as soon as they are finished because the earth is constantly changing)

--Created By: (Cartographers like to get credit)

--Title (usually at the top in big letters)

NATR 4th grade lesson mapping

**Student Task:** Students should note that a title is missing and create their own titles.

Explain to the students that they will be drawing a map and making a legend (key) as they hike on the trail. Discuss which items the students believe they might see and that would be important enough to be marked on the map.

Explain to the students that they should make observations on the trail and determine which features are unique enough to be included on the map legend. Students will develop symbols for those features and enter the symbol in the legend space as well as on the map. Students will use a compass to determine the correct direction which to map the trail. Students will step off the distance between items to be drawn on the maps. Each step will be equivalent to \_\_\_ blocks on the map.

Students will take turns being the leader and lead for X steps. As they lead, they will count steps between objects to be marked on the trail map. They will also stop when the trail changes direction. When a student notices an important object or change in direction, the class will stop and draw the portion of the trail just completed as well as the object noted as important. If the object does not have a symbol on the map, each student should come up with an appropriate symbol for their own map. After the leader has counted off X steps and all students have mapped that last trail segment, the leader will recede to the end of the line. The new leader will then proceed to count off X more steps. This will continue for the duration of the hike.

If the class is also participating in the Historic Walk Talk, the Ranger will deliver a portion of the historic talk at the end of each leader's term.

Teacher Closure: Ask students how early travelers might have found their way without a map. Discuss the advantages of having maps.

Student Assessment: Participation in the activity, creation of a map and follow up discussion.

Suggestions for re-teaching: Post visit activities included in this curriculum.

Extension: Take the students on a hike on a section of the National Scenic Trail and have them compare features of that trail with the one they mapped.

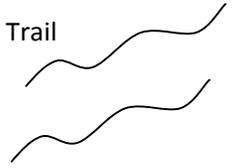
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Created by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**LEGEND**

Trail



Large Tree



Rock



W

Scale :

1 block = \_\_\_\_\_ steps

E

