Digimap for Schools

Square of the Year

Alan Parkinson

Geography teaching resource

Key Stage 3

This is one of a series of teaching resources for use with Digimap for Schools. For more details about this service, visit http://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk

Ordnance Survey

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Digimap for Schools Geography Resources

These resources are a guide for teachers to demonstrate to the whole class or direct individual students as appropriate. Each activity has several ideas within it that you can tailor to suit your class and pupils. Some resources contain worksheets for direct distribution to pupils.

Title: Square of the Year

Level	Context	Location
Key Stage 3	Concentrate on one grid square and identify its features which are then described using positive language in a creative writing task.	Could be done with any GB map extract, including locally to the school.

Knowledge / Skills	Zoom levels, map symbols, printing maps
Curriculum links (England)	Map Symbols/Literacy
Curriculum links (Wales)	Locate places and environments using atlases and maps. Use six figure references and 1: 25 000/1: 50 000 maps. Use maps, plans and ICT to interpret and present locational information
Scottish Curriculum for Excellence	Social Studies Outcomes: People, Place and Environment: 0.07a, 1.07a, 1.14a

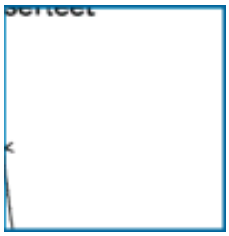
Activity

This activity involves creative writing, and a detailed examination of just one grid square of mapping. The writing can be done using the labelling tools of *Digimap for Schools*, or a printout can be produced, and the writing done separately.

This is an activity that will require students to think 'inside the box' for a change.

Introduction

Look at this image. What do you think it is?



This is SE8322 which has been nominated the least interesting map square at 1: 50 000 scale. All that is shown a small section of electricity transmission line and the edge of some text.

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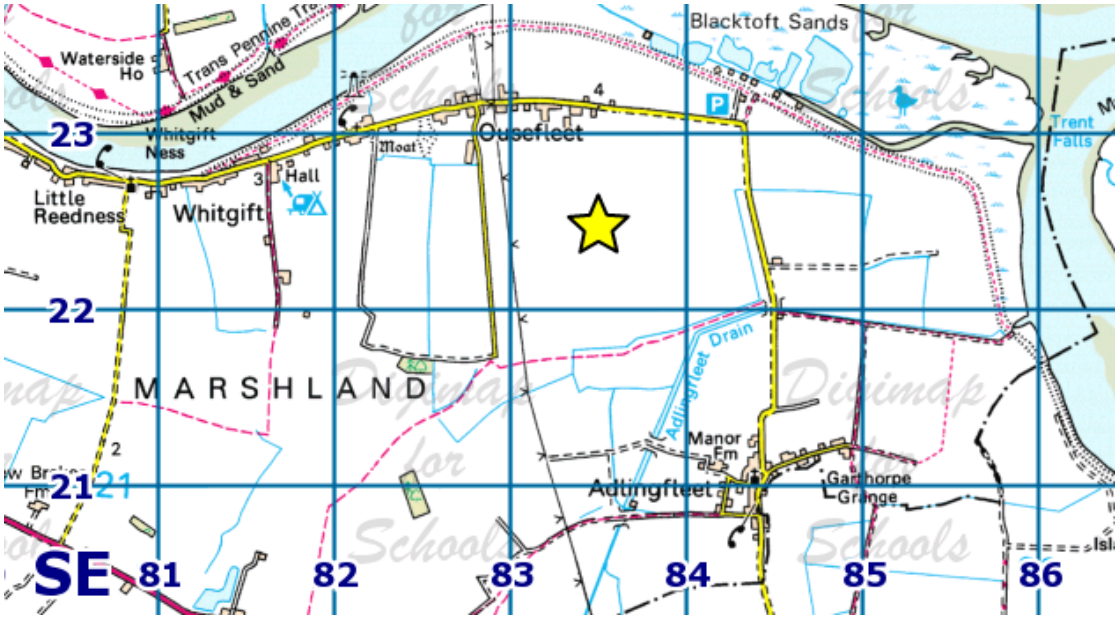
Main activity

1 This activity begins by your students locating the 'most boring grid square in the country' using *Digimap for Schools.* It can be found easily by typing SE8322 into the search box. You may find it useful to add the national grid layers to the map by selecting this icon.  .



To find out what it looks like in real life there is a photograph of it on the Geograph website at http://schools.geograph.org.uk/photo/81429

Officially the dullest Geograph square in the UK.
Yes really. According to the OS who have scanned the whole of the UK maps by computer, this is the most featureless square in the UK. In the distance there is a row of pylons and one of them stands in the far corner of the square. The land is billiard table flat and there are no drainage ditches in it to speak of. The mud is a rather nice shade of brown. It really is that dull.

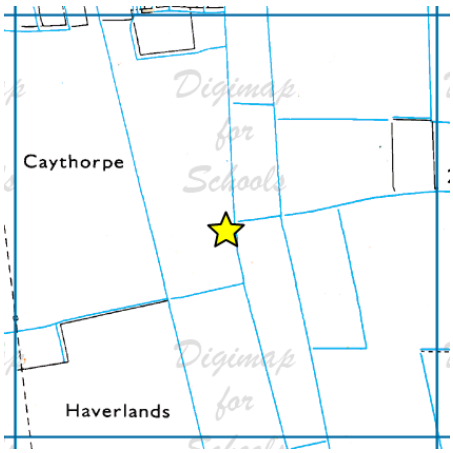
Notice that the caption here says 'UK'.

Ordnance Survey maps are of Great Britain. (Northern Ireland produce their own maps).

Many adults mix up UK and GB. Make sure your geography students are secure in understanding the difference between GB, UK and the British Isles!

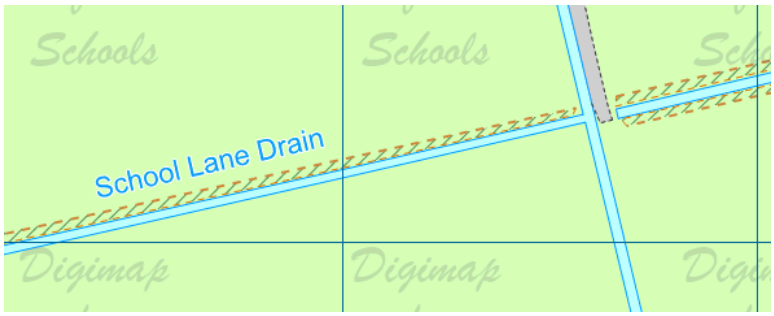
See web links below.

2 Now ask them to zoom in and they will see that the square is far less empty of features than first suggested. What additional detail is added or taken away as they change the zoom level? Discuss why this detail is not shown on the smaller scale map.



This is the same square zoomed in to show mapping that was drawn at 1:25 000 scale.

3 As maps are zoomed in to larger scales there are many empty gird squares, but information that is shown is very detailed. For example:



4 Having considered what makes a grid square dull, students should now find one that they find most interesting and enter it for 'Square of the Year' using the hand-out(s) provided. It is suggested that students all use 1 km grid squares mapped at 1:25 000, and that they use the second level of zoom, so that results are comparable to each others.

Students need to choose their square promptly so you may wish to set a time limit for that and have some suggestions to hand. Here are a few suggestions.

Edinburgh Castle	NT 250 730
London Eye, Thames and Parliament	TQ 300 790
GCHQ	SO 909 220
Alton Towers	SK 070 429
Media City	SJ 799 970

They should write a description of their square which makes it sound as if it is the best square of any on the whole map. Encourage students to use descriptive language to explain why the features are impressive, large, beautiful, stunning and so on.

Reward particularly creative responses.

A template could be provided with some sentence starters for those students who may struggle to get going with a blank piece of paper.

Taking it further

1 This activity could also be undertaken using grid squares covering other scales of mapping, including large scale OS MasterMap.

2 The activity could be located in the school area. Print out a map, cut up the squares and allocate randomly to students, or groups of students. Challenge them to find the best features of their square and to take photographs of the views. They should use the tools within *Digimap for Schools* to create an A3 map highlighting their square and pinpointing the photograph locations. Other labels should describe the features. Display and encourage voting to decide the best local square.

3 Students should be encouraged to explore Geograph http://schools.geograph.org.uk

Here photos are linked to grid squares. If they have photographs of their square they should add it to the site, completing a full description. Uploads to this site are archived by the British Library.

4 Has this square always looked like this? What changes may have taken place over the last 20, 50 or 100 years?

5 Consider whether certain squares have a natural advantage when it comes to the competition: are squares near the sea, or in mountainous areas better than those in urban areas – does the 'amount' of features in a square make a difference?

Web links:

1 This is a downloadable two page leaflet explaining the national grid system.

http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/leaflets/using-the-national-grid-leaflet-for-children.pdf

2 Photographs of every grid square can be obtained from http://schools.geograph.org.uk

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Steve Kidd for leading me to the 'easiest square to map-read', and to Mark Jones for the idea of having a 'Square of the Year' contest.

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Square of the Year

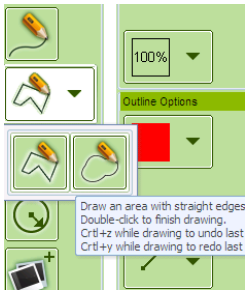
You are going to be working with just one grid square of 1 square kilometre and will be using the 1:25 000 mapping at its larger zoom level. Open *Digimap for Schools,* switch on the grid and explore the map until you find a square that you think could be really interesting. Remember that you are looking for a place that has lots of interest **actually within** the square – things you can see **from** the square don't count.

TIP – you will know you are at the correct level of mapping when you use the Grid Reference tool and it gives you two letters followed by eight numbers.

Use this tool to find a Grid Reference –  – switch the grid on and off using this tool.

To find the grid reference of the square you need to locate the grid reference tool at the bottom left corner of the square. Omit the last two numbers of each set of four (which will be zeros if you have positioned the tool very exactly). Write the two letters and four numbers of your chosen square here.

You may want to highlight the edge of your square using the tool 'Draw an area'. Make sure you select 100% transparency, and choose your outline colour and line width before you draw. A thick red line works well.



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You are going to enter your grid square for the Square of the Year competition. Look at the features that are actually found in your square. Use the box below to jot down description to explain why the features are impressive, large, beautiful, stunning and so on. Now write a description which makes it sound as if it is the best square of all. Be creative!

Why not design an Ordnance Survey map inspired trophy for the winning square?