

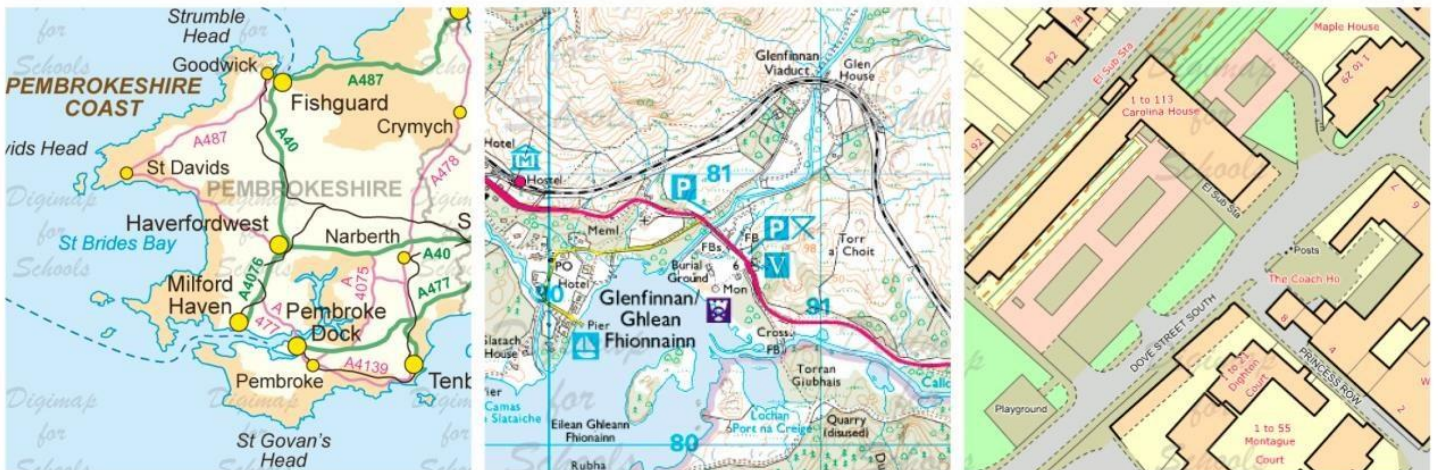
# Digimap for Schools

## Writing the Earth: Literacy using maps

Alan Parkinson

Geography teaching resource

Secondary



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>

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## Digimap for Schools Geography Resources

Title: Writing the Earth

Level	Context	Location
Secondary	Maps can be used to tell stories. Geography literally means 'writing the earth' and they can form the basis of some good literacy work.	Anywhere in GB

Knowledge/skills	Zooming levels, annotating a map, literacy.
Curriculum Links (England)	Map skills, literacy, landscapes.
Curriculum Links (Wales)	Use maps to interpret and present locational information, communicate ideas and information using maps and visual images.
Scottish Curriculum for Excellence	Social Science Outcomes: People, Place and Environment 1.07a, 1.14a.

### Activity

Geography literally means 'writing the earth'. This activity is about creating a story with an Ordnance Survey map sourced from Digimap for Schools as the setting, or as the inspiration. The map needs to be 'brought to life'.

### Introduction

Consider where your stories could be located. This could be with teacher guidance, or students could be asked to choose a place e.g. 'somewhere with a castle', 'somewhere near the sea' or 'somewhere with a mysterious sounding name' (the search function would come in handy for this).

It may also be useful to provide a theme for the story. Examples might be:

Journeys  
Wish you were here  
What will I do for a living?  
Where will I live?

Some locations in Great Britain are associated with particular stories. Introduce your class to the fact that many famous writers have used geographical features as inspiration. (See the web links for some examples.)

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## Main activity

This activity works well when a physical prompt is provided to help focus thinking. Three options that could be used are:

### 1. Story cubes.

Many teachers will already be familiar with these and it may be worth checking to see if your school already has a set. The most well-known are Rory's Story Cubes, and the set called 'Voyages' includes lots of visual prompts that could be used in conjunction with a map from Digimap for Schools.

### 2. 6 x 6 activity

This uses a similar idea, but requires a key-word related to the area to be placed in each of 36 boxes. Roll 2 six-sided dice to generate the co-ordinates of a particular square. The word in that square is then used in the story. An example for the Castleton area of the High Peak in Derbyshire is shown at Annex A. A blank 6 x 6 grid is provided at Annex B.

(From an original idea by Steve Bowker.)

### 3. Map cubes

Create some MAP DICE to help get the story rolling. Search for 'Dice net' on the internet to find templates. Pupils should select an area of mapping and print it out at A4. They could then paste areas of mapping on each side of the dice. Each section of the story is prompted by the roll of a dice.

Depending on the area selected it may be more interesting to choose different areas of the map for each side of the dice, rather than to cut the dice out from one area of the map extract.

## Taking it further

Alternatively, you could write some poetry. Simple verse forms like haikus work well with those who may struggle to write a lot. Poetry that is in the form of a *calligram* would also work well here.

A calligram is a diagram which contains words, and is written in a way that conveys the meaning of that word. E.g. the word 'Seashore' written in words which are wavy, and have blue at the top and yellow at the bottom.



This could involve writing a poem or story about a river that takes the shape of the river's course. Use your imagination with shapes and words.

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## Web links

Example of classic authors inspired by the landscape: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/literland>

List of books based on areas in London:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/artsentertainment/books/features/tales-of-the-city-literary-map-of-london-810394.html>

Rory's Story Cubes: <http://www.thecreativityhub.com/>

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Annex A

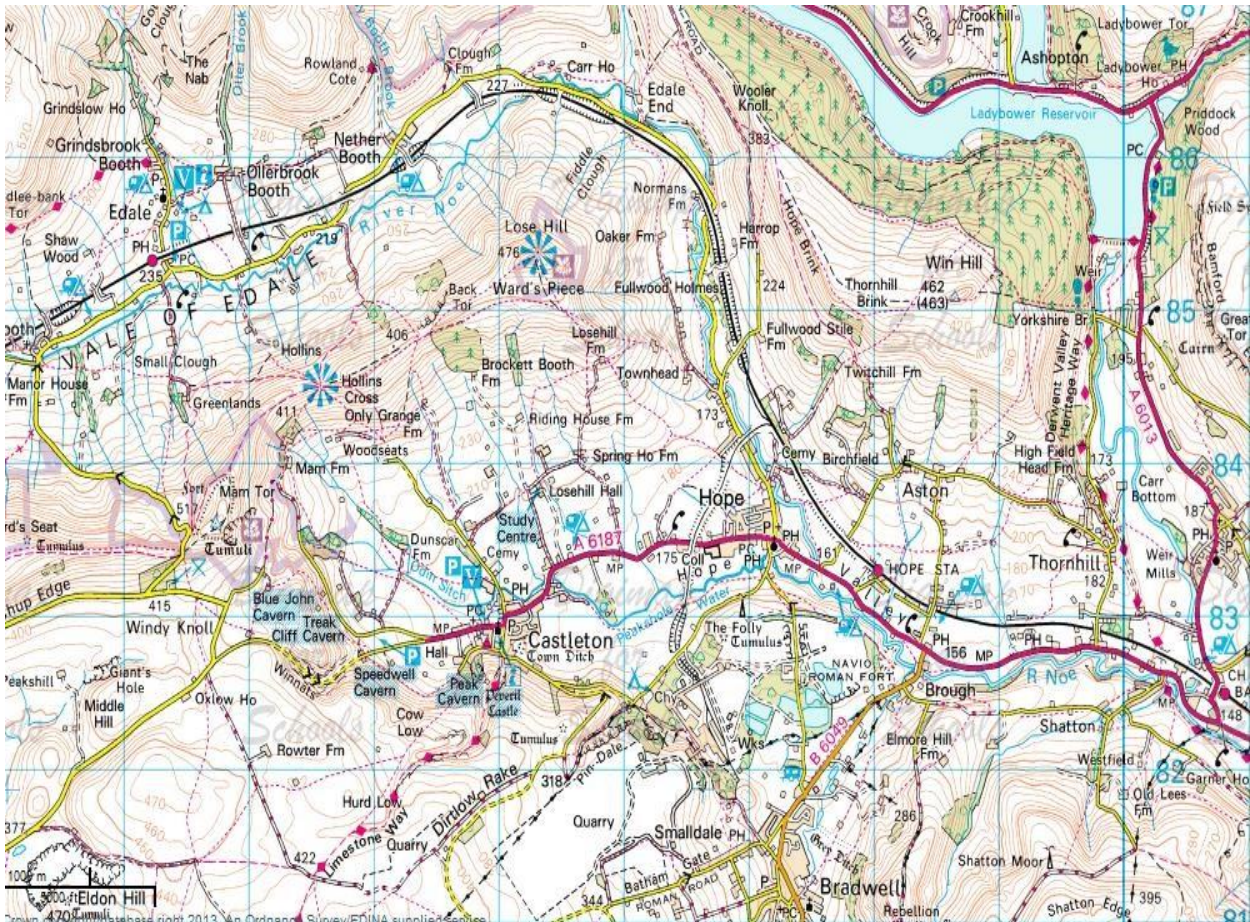
Example 6 x 6 grid suitable for use with Castleton area of the High Peak in Derbyshire

<b>Lorries stuck</b>	<b>Pollution</b>	<b>Traffic Jams</b>	<b>Car parks full</b>	<b>Raining Heavily</b>	<b>Gore Tex jacket</b>
<b>Satellite navigation</b>	<b>Breakdowns</b>	<b>Noise</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Tourists</b>	<b>Shopping</b>
<b>Road cracking up</b>	<b>Steep Slopes</b>	<b>Mam Tor</b>	<b>Breakdown vehicle</b>	<b>Sunny</b>	<b>Cow</b>
<b>Sight seeing</b>	<b>Road signs</b>	<b>Very busy in the post office</b>	<b>Blue John</b>	<b>Tractor going slowly</b>	<b>Sheep on the road</b>
<b>Landslide</b>	<b>Detour Signs</b>	<b>Postcards</b>	<b>Litter</b>	<b>Ice cream van</b>	<b>Farmer</b>
<b>Graffiti</b>	<b>Fish and Chips</b>	<b>Caverns</b>	<b>Making lots of money</b>	<b>Picnic</b>	<b>Winnat's Pass</b>

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Search for 'Castleton in Digimap for Schools and enlarge to full screen using



# Digimap for Schools

<http://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk>

Annex B
