

Secondary geography

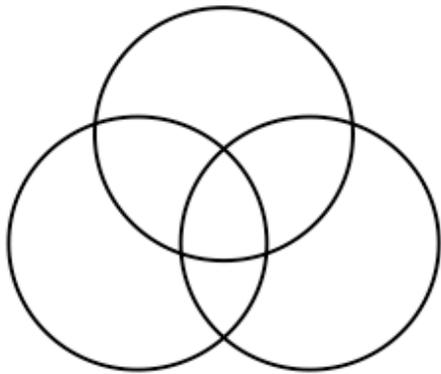
The power of geography

Mapping geography

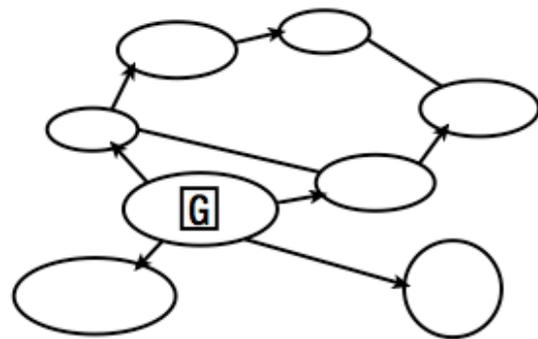
Source: Unit author, David Lambert

The main aim of this activity is to find the 'Location of school geography'

The aim of this exercise is to capture geography in the form of a mental map. You may think of this as a Venn diagram or a form of 'concept map'.



Venn diagram approach



Concept map approach

Whichever approach you adopt, these guidelines will be useful.

- Begin with identifying that you are trying to draw a mental map of geography.
- Brainstorm all the elements that make up geography. Anything goes at this stage.
- Start to classify your elements. For example, some may be sub-divisions of geography (e.g. population geography, biogeography, cultural geography....), whereas other elements may be more to do with the outcomes of studying geography (e.g. knowing where places are, understanding erosion...) and others to do with educational purposes (citizenship, social responsibility, computer literacy...).
- At some stage, begin to arrange your classification as a 'map'. Essentially, this means that you are showing the relationship of various elements – for example, how they are positioned in relation to each other.

There is absolutely no doubt that annotations and explanations will help (for example, to explain the significance of an arrow or link).

You may then be ready to draw on some important additional 'features'. Just as a map of the real world will have mountain ranges, oceans, political boundaries and

other features that 'divide' and separate regions, your mental map can now include any significant divisions and chasms, should you wish to show these.

Some review questions

To what extent is your map 'complete'? Do you think there is 'territory' (i.e. aspects of geography) about which you are unaware?

You may not have been able to make much progress with the activity at all! If not, what was the main stumbling block?

Did you start 'inside looking out' or 'outside looking in'? It is possible that if you start this activity from inside the discipline (for instance, if you consider yourself to be a geography subject specialist/expert) you end up with an utterly different map from someone who starts from outside the discipline with an 'everyday understanding' of geography.

Do you think maps are easier or more difficult to draw for other subjects? (e.g. mathematics or history). Why?

Further reading

Harris and Caviglioli (2003) *Think it-Map it: How schools use mapping to transform teaching and learning*, Stafford, Network Educational Press.