

# Activity 1.1 Mapping Perceptions

**Performance Objectives** In creating their own maps, as well as analyzing the *Map of Imperial Territories*, students will identify key elements of a map (scale, kinds of features, symbols, orientation), functions that influence its creation, and how it serves as a resource.

**Grade Level** 3–5

**Essential Questions** What can maps tell us about how its maker perceives his or her place in the world?  
What does a Ming dynasty map tell us about how the Chinese at that time saw their country in relation to the rest of the world?

**Standards** **Social Studies**

*World History*

- Studying about different world cultures and civilizations

*Geography*

- Drawing maps and diagrams that represent places, physical features, and objects
- Identifying and comparing a region's physical, human, and cultural characteristics
- Asking questions about where places are located, why they are located where they are, what is important about their locations, and how their locations are related to those of other people and places
- Gathering and organizing geographic information from a variety of sources and displaying it in a number of ways

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

- Gathering and interpreting information independently from charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams
- Reflecting on what is heard or read and describing other relevant ideas and experiences

**Time Required** One class period for drawing maps; one class period for discussion, comparisons, and written analysis

## Activity 1.1 Mapping Perceptions

**Materials** Photocopies of the *Map of Imperial Territories* and **Introductory Questions** from the beginning of this section or the *Visible Traces* poster  
Colored markers  
11" x 14" sheets of white drawing paper for maps  
Paper and pencil for peer analysis

**Assessment Piece** Neighborhood maps, discussion response, written analysis of classmate's map

**Procedure**

1. Distribute the *Map of Imperial Territories* and discuss the **Introductory Questions**.
2. Have students use colored markers to draw a map of their neighborhood.
3. Post neighborhood maps around the room and ask students the following questions in relation to several maps:  
What is at the center of the map?  
Are some things depicted larger than others?  
Which part of the map is depicted in detail?  
Was everything in your neighborhood included in the map?  
How did you decide what should be included?
4. Return to the *Map of Imperial Territories* and discuss the following:  
What is at the center of this map?  
Are countries other than China shown?  
In looking at the map, would one be able to gather much information about countries outside of China?  
What might this say about how the people that made and used this map felt about countries outside of China?  
The Chinese word for China is *Zhongguo*, meaning "central states" or "middle kingdom." Does this map convey these meanings? How?
5. Have students write an analysis of one of their classmates' maps, identifying the kind of information that seems to be valuable to the student who made it. Have students describe how the mapmaker depicted his or her home in relation to the neighborhood.

**Extension** Have students look at other groups' maps of the world (made during different periods if possible) and analyze how these groups see themselves in relation to the rest of the world.