



# Mapping & Writing

[Text adapted from National Writing Project. Kid Writing](#)

\*a Note from GWP. Mapping is a strategy we teach and believe in for all ages, so don't shy away because of the age references in the article below. Read more about this fabulous idea on writing with your family. Sketching out maps brings stories to light that we all want to tell and share. Plus, St. Louis neighborhoods are worth exploring!

## Looking All Around: Neighborhood Walk & Mapping

What do kindergartners and first graders write about? Everything! The whole world is a possible topic to draw, talk, and write about. In this exploration, we will explore your child's world. You might take a neighborhood walk, or an exploration around your house, or a gaze out your window. You are welcome to do as much or as little of this exploration as you like, and join in where you can. Feel free to tackle the invitations that appeal to you, to get out of your comfort zone and try something new, or to show off skills you already have.

This exploration offers an opportunity to think about, notice, document, and share your local neighborhood, back or front yard, or outdoor surroundings (eg. park, block, street). There is no "right" way to do this, so just dive in and find a way to make this work for you whether you live in an urban or rural setting or whether you can explore the outdoors or dream about it from the shelter of your home. Whatever the circumstance, take a walk with us and let's make and share our maps!



**Before you begin this activity with your child, here's suggested prep for this activity:**

1. A piece of blank paper.
2. A pencil or pen or crayons.
3. Optional: Glue stick and magazines
4. Optional: Camera

## Step 1: Explore

**Neighborhood Walk:** Take a brief walk around your neighborhood block or local park and notice what you see. Take mental or digital pictures. Gather objects and images of places you stop along the way (e.g. leaves, rocks, pinecones, flower petals) that help make you remember the places you visit. Or, bring a notebook and markers or pencils or crayons and draw what you see along the way.

## Step 2: Create

**Draw A Map:** Take a blank page and draw or make a map of your neighborhood. Use the objects you collected to remember key spots or what you remember or drew along your walk (e.g. a special tree, a street, a corner, houses, a park, a school, etc.) Or, arrange your found objects on the ground and create a map with the objects. Remember: A map for kids does not have to be complicated. It can be representations of things and places they noticed on their walk.

**Make A Map:** Find a box or egg cartons or toilet paper tubes and create a 3D representation of your neighborhood inside of it. You can create the buildings and trees.

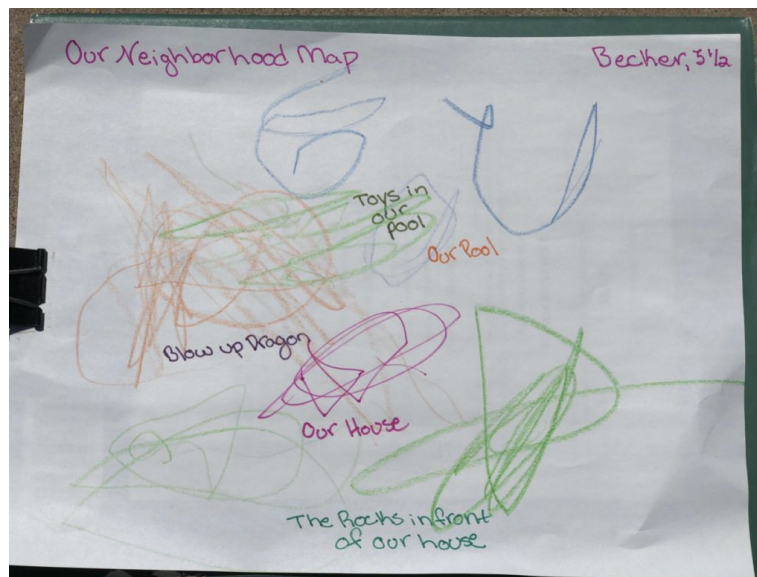
**Example: parent and child co-created map:**



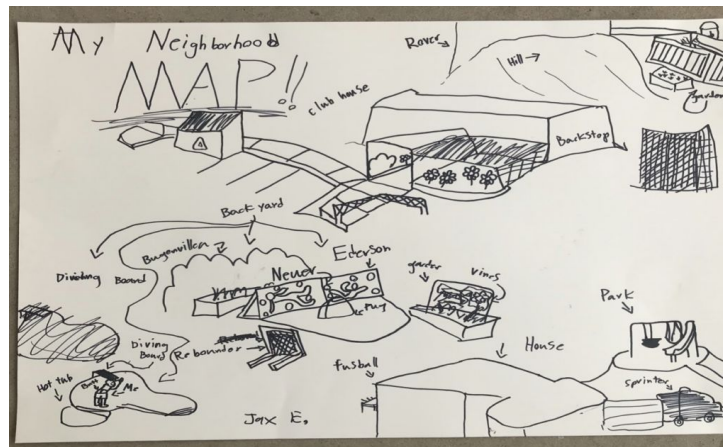
## Step 3: Write

On another page: Draw or write a story of a place or memory in your neighborhood. Here are some questions to get you started: What was a special time you want to remember in your neighborhood? What is a special spot you love that you want to show and describe? Who lives in your neighborhood? What are the sights and sounds? Draw this in detail or write and draw to share the memory or place. You can also use magazines or catalogs and cut out images that represent places or spaces in your neighborhood instead of drawing.

Example: Becker, Age 3 ½:



Example: Jax, Age 9:



## Step 4: Connect

Part of being a writer is sharing your work and ideas with others! You might have other people you want to share you map with, and we invite you to send this out or take a picture to send to friends and family who would be interested and want to see your neighborhood! Send your map to a grandparent, teacher, or friend!

## Resources

Books to read or listen to to inspire writing about your neighborhood: [Harlem A Poem By Walter Dean Myers Cassette](#) and [Last Stop On Market Street by Matt De La Peña](#)

---

You can share your creations on social media with the hashtags #WriteNow #NWP #kidwriting. Tag the National Writing Project on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#) so that we can help others find what you post. Finally, follow our publication [Write Now](#) on Medium or [sign up](#) for the Write Now newsletter.