

Lesson Plan: Reading Maps as Technical Communication

Course: Communication in the Trades. Gorham High School

Time Frame: (60–75 minutes)

Materials Needed:

- Osher Map Library digital collection (e.g., trade route maps, maritime navigation charts, industrial/railway maps).
- Railway: <https://oshermaps.org/map/4000167>
- Nautical Chart: <https://oshermaps.org/map/1082> OR <https://oshermaps.org/map/569>
- TRADE Route: <https://oshermaps.org/map/3907.0037>
- Industry: <https://oshermaps.org/map/55626>
- City Planning: <https://oshermaps.org/map/1209>

Learning Objectives

1. Identify how maps function as a form of technical communication.
 2. Connect map-reading skills to communication practices in their trade field (ex construction, maritime, electrical, plumbing, logistics).
 3. Practice collaborative discussion and reflection.
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Class #1

1. Introduction

- Ask: “Why do you think maps are essential to trades like shipping, construction, or engineering ?” Goal is to have students articulate that **Maps are visual tools for technical communication.**

2. Map Exploration

- Display 2–3 selected maps:
 - **Maritime trade route map**
 - **City/industrial map**
 - **Transportation/railway map**
 - Students work in pairs to examine one map and answer:
 - What is the purpose of this map?
 - What symbols or markings are used?
 - What information is communicated clearly? What is hard to interpret?
 - How might workers in a trade rely on this information?
 - Groups share their findings with another group.
 - Ask or exit ticket in writing: How does **misreading maps = miscommunication in the field**? What types of errors could this cause for shipping, construction, electrical, plumbing, transportation?
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Class #2 Activity

- Students receive a **modern trade-related scenario** (examples):
 - A plumbing crew must use a building site plan to identify pipe routes.
 - An electrical team must interpret a grid map for power line placement.
 - A logistics crew must read a route map for material deliveries.
 - In groups, students create a **short written or verbal report** explaining how they would communicate instructions to their crew based on the map.
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Shared Assessments

- Participation in group discussions.
- Map Analysis worksheet

Communication in the Trades: Map Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____

Period: _____

Part 1: Map Exploration

Look closely at the map your group has been assigned from the Osher Map Library. Answer the following questions. Does not need to be in complete sentences, but I need to be able to read/understand what you are saying.

1. Purpose

- What was this map created to show?
- Who do you think the intended audience was?

2. Symbols & Features

- List 3–4 symbols, colors, or markings on the map & what they represent.

3. Communication Strengths & Weaknesses

- What information is communicated clearly?
- What is confusing or unclear?

4. Connection to the Trades

- What type of trade workers would have used this map?
- What problems would occur if the map was misunderstood?

Part 2: Applied Activity

Scenario: Your crew has been given a map to complete a job. Review the assigned scenario below and create a short written or verbal report that explains the steps to the team.

- Plumbing: You must use a site plan to explain where the main water line and branch lines will run.
- Electrical: You must interpret a grid map to explain where power poles and lines will be installed.
- Logistics: You must use a delivery route map to explain how and when materials will reach a job site.
- Maritime: You must use a nautical chart to explain the safest path into port.

Your plan(bullet points or short sentences):

- Key safety/accuracy note: _____
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Part 4: Reflection

- How is reading a map similar to reading a blueprint, schematic, or manual?