

Neighborhood Navigator

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Read the “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

In this activity children will use or create maps to explore their neighborhoods.

WHY

Using and creating maps are important skills because they encourage children to think about different ways to share information. Maps challenge children to consider how to represent a 3-D world in 2-D, how to use math in real-world situations, and how the places we live influence our lives and vice versa.

TIME

- 40 minutes or more

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in 1st grade through 5th grade.

CHALLENGE WORDS

- **destination:** a place that one is traveling to reach
- **landmark:** a large natural or built object like a boulder, tree, or building, that is easy to see and can help a person find the way to a place near it
- **navigate:** to give directions to the person driving or steering a ship, car, or other vehicle, or to guide or steer the course of a ship, car, or other vehicle
- **route:** a course of travel

GET READY

- Read *Seven Miles to Freedom* together. *Seven Miles to Freedom* is a biography of Robert Smalls, a brave man who used his boat-piloting skills to escape slavery and help the Union navy during the Civil War. For tips on reading this book together, check out the Guided Reading Activity (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/smalls/smalls_reading.pdf).
- Read the *Step Back in Time* sheets.

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/smalls/>

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YOU NEED

- *Directions* sheets (*attached*)
- *Step Back in Time* sheets (*attached*)
- *ThinkAbout* sheets (*attached*)
- Paper and pen or pencil (*optional*)
- Computer with Internet and printer (*optional*)
- Transportation (*optional*)

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/smalls/>



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Thinkfinity.org
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For more information, visit the National Museum of American History website <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/smalls>.

About the Civil War

In the middle of the 1800s, the United States was splitting apart. Factories and business were bringing wealth to the North while the South depended on an economy based on plantations farmed by **slaves**. In the North, most people wanted to stop the spread of slavery, and **abolitionists** wanted to end it altogether. In the South, slaveholders and small farmers feared that their way of life would disappear under the power of the North.



Robert Smalls lived in South Carolina, which was a Confederate state. He escaped and helped fight for the Union.

Image from *Seven Miles to Freedom*.

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected president and seven southern states **seceded** from the United States, creating the Confederate States of America. When President Lincoln refused to remove U.S. troops from Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, Confederate guns fired on the fort. Then four more states **seceded** and joined the Confederacy.

A long and bloody war followed between the South (the Confederacy) and the North (the Union). In 1865, after five years of fighting, the North won the war, slavery ended, and the country was reunited.

For more information on the Civil War, visit the exhibition *The Price of Freedom: Americans at War* (www.americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/).

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About the Navy during the Civil War

The Union and the Confederacy had different ways of using their navies. The Union's main goal was to **blockade** Confederate ports to keep the South from getting supplies. The Confederate navy's major goal was keeping supplies moving by sea, using fast ships called "**blockade runners**" to speed past the Union **blockade**.

About Robert Smalls

Robert Smalls (1839–1915) was born a **slave** in Beaufort, South Carolina. He became a skilled boat pilot and on May 12, 1862, he used his skills to steal the ship *CSS Planter* with his boat crew and family, who all were **slaves**. Once his ship reached the Union **blockade**, he offered the Union navy the *CSS Planter*. Having escaped into Northern territory, he was no longer a **slave**. He fought alongside the Union navy until the end of the Civil War. After the war, Robert Smalls worked for the South Carolina state and national governments, and represented South Carolina in the U.S. Congress for five terms.



Robert Smalls learned to navigate the waters near Charleston, South Carolina by studying maps.

Image from *Seven Miles to Freedom*.

abolitionist: a person who wants to stop or abolish slavery

blockade: an act of war in which one side uses ships to stop people or supplies from leaving or entering the other side

seceded: separated from a nation and became independent

slave: someone who is owned by another person and is forced to work for that person without pay

SEVEN MILES TO FREEDOM The Robert Smalls Story Text copyright © 2008 by Janet Halfmann Illustrations copyright © 2008 by Duane Smith. Permission arranged with LEE & LOW BOOKS INC., New York, NY 10016.

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For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Examine this map of Charleston Harbor from the Civil War. Can you find these places from Robert Smalls's story: the city of Charleston, Castle Pinckney, Fort Johnson, Fort Sumter, and Fort Moultrie? What direction did Robert Smalls travel?



Plan of Charleston Harbor
[Library of Congress]

Tip The cross shape in the corner of the map is a compass rose, which gives information about directions within the map. On this map, North (shown with an “N”) is toward the top of the page, East (“E”) is toward the right of the page, South (“S”) is to the bottom of the page, and West (“W”) is to the left of the page. These directions are standard for many maps, but you can always check the compass rose to be sure!

2. Discuss Robert Smalls's story. What skills and information helped him escape with his family and crew?

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3. Select the trip you plan to take:
 - Use an online map to plan a trip: This activity is best for a child who has a computer with Internet access and a printer. This activity is best for a city neighborhood (where the child can walk to a destination) or for a family that has access to transportation (so a trip of greater distance can be made without much effort).
 - Create a map of your neighborhood: This activity is best for a child who already has some experience looking at or using maps. This activity can be done in any area (city, suburb, or country) and on any scale (from a backyard to a larger neighborhood).

4. Print out the *ThinkAbout* sheet for your trip and go!

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Think About for Creating Your Own Neighborhood Map

BEFORE YOUR TRIP:

Pick a destination for your trip.

- The adult needs to know how to get to that destination from your starting point.
- The activity will work best if you can walk or ride a bike to this destination. If you chose a destination that you need to drive a car to visit, plan to make a few stops along the way to make notes.

DURING YOUR TRIP:

- As you travel to your destination, take notes on landmarks and what you have to do at a specific landmark.

Tip Try to have at least one landmark for each turn you need to make, or if you are continuing straight for farther than you can see in front of you.

- Take notes on the shape of the road or path. Is it straight or does it curve? Is it wide or narrow?

AFTER YOUR TRIP:

- Use your notes to create a map of the route you used with paper and craft materials. Be sure to mark the starting point, destination, and landmarks along the way.
- For extra fun, share your map with a friend or family member who was not on your trip. See if he or she can follow your map to travel to your destination.

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/smalls/>

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ThinkAbout for Using an Online Map

BEFORE YOUR TRIP:

1. Pick one place that you visit often and have the time and transportation to visit today.
2. Using an online map site, such as GoogleMaps (<http://maps.google.com>), MapQuest (www.mapquest.com), or Yahoo!Maps(maps.yahoo.com/), find your home address on a map.
3. More challenging: Save your home address with an electronic map “pin.” Then search for the address of your destination and save that address on the map with another electronic map “pin” Trace the street lines to connect the two places and write down the directions to follow that route.

Less challenging: Enter the address of your destination and have the online map suggest a route. Trace the route with your finger.

Tip Point out that cars can only travel along the marked roads, but people who are walking or riding bikes might have other options.

4. Take a look at the map together. Is there more than one way to get to your destination? Does it seem like other ways would take a longer time?

Tip To compare the time it would take to travel on different routes, have your child trace the route with his or her finger and count the seconds it takes to trace the route.

5. Pick the route you would like to use to travel to your destination and read those directions aloud together.

DURING YOUR TRIP:

- Have your child do the navigating. If your child misses a direction, consider returning home to start again or just telling him or her what was missed.
- On the way back, look for landmarks that could help you remember this route without street names, for example, colors of buildings, unusual trees, or hills.
- Count the signs or stoplights that you see on your route. Like the flags and whistles in the Robert Smalls story sent information, the signs and stoplights give you information about your route and safety rules.

AFTER YOUR TRIP:

- Discuss the experience together: Was it easy or hard to navigate? Why might it be useful to know how to navigate? (Could teach someone else how to get to that place, etc.)

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Teacher Guide, page 1 of 1

Read the “Directions” and “Parent Guide” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Read or create maps.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Discussion exhibits understanding of story and historical details.
- Discussion exhibits logical connections and comparisons.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

2F: Draw upon data in historical maps.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

4C. The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.

U.S. National Geography Standards

Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

Standard 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective

21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Media Literacy

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