Grade 5 Social Studies

Terms 1, 2 and 3 - notes for 21 topics

IN EVERY TOPIC

- What you will learn and the key words.
- Short, clear notes with worked examples.
- Questions to try and a topic test, with the answers at the back.

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Strand 1.0 Natural and Historic Built Environments | Term 1

1.1 Elements of a Map - Title - Frame - Scale - Compass - Key

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

- identify key elements of a map
- illustrate key elements of a map on a sketch
- interpret features in a map using key elements

KEY WORDS

title, frame, scale, compass, key, legend, sketch map.

1. Title and frame of a map

Two of the five map elements

The title tells the reader what the map shows and often where, for example "Map of Kenya Showing Major Towns". The frame is the border drawn around the whole map, showing exactly which area is included and keeping the map neat and easy to read.

Without a title, a reader cannot be sure if a map shows rainfall, roads, or population - the title removes that confusion immediately.

2. Scale

Understanding scale

Scale shows the relationship between distance on the map and real distance on the ground, for example "1 cm represents 10 km". This lets a huge real area be drawn small enough to fit on paper while still being accurate.

If 1 cm on the map represents 10 km, then 3 cm on the map represents 30 km in real life. Learners measure with a ruler and multiply by the scale.

3. Compass direction and key

Compass and key

The compass on a map shows North, South, East and West, so a reader can describe where one place is compared to another. The key (or legend) explains what each symbol or colour on the map means, for example a blue line for a river or a black dot for a town.

Without the key, symbols on a map are just shapes with no meaning - the key is what turns them into real information.

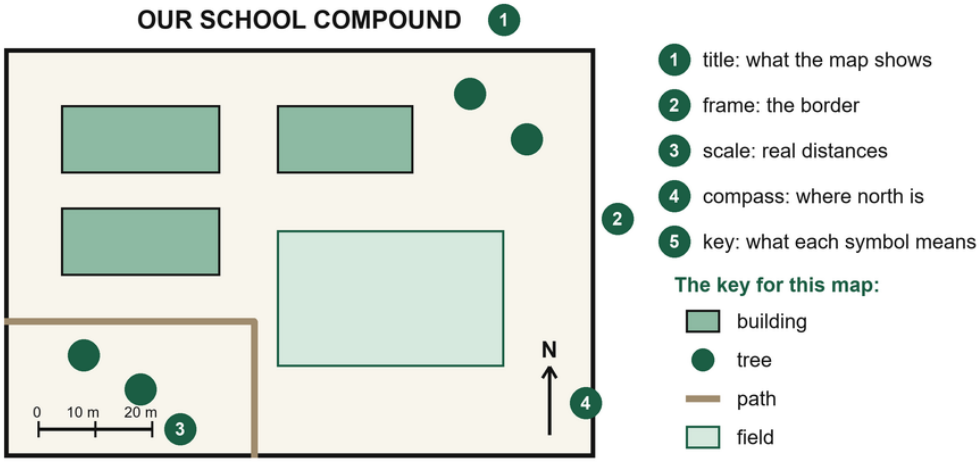
4. Sketching a map with all five elements

Practical: sketching a simple map

Materials: manila paper, ruler, coloured pencils; individual work.

Draw a simple sketch map of the classroom or school compound. Add a title, draw a frame around it, mark a scale, add a compass showing North, and include a key for at least three symbols used.

Maps are used daily for travel, planning farms, finding hospitals or schools, and by governments to plan roads and services - this is why every map needs all five elements to be useful.



A sketch map with all five elements

TRY THESE

1. What does the title of a map tell you?
2. What is the frame of a map?
3. What does scale show on a map?
4. If 1 cm represents 10 km, how many km does 2 cm represent?
5. What does the compass on a map show?
6. What does the key of a map explain?
7. Name the five elements every good map should have.
8. Give one real-life use of a map.

TOPIC TEST

T1. Write a suitable title for a map of your school compound.

T2. If 1 cm represents 10 km, and two towns are 4.5 cm apart on the map, what is the real distance between them?

T3. Design a key symbol for a school and explain what it should mean.

T4. Sketch a simple map showing the route from your classroom to the school gate, with all five elements.

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1.2 Location, Position and Size of Kenya

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

- identify countries that neighbour Kenya
- locate the position of Kenya in relation to her neighbours using a compass direction

KEY WORDS

neighbouring country, border, East Africa, equator, Indian Ocean.

1. Kenya in East Africa

Kenya's position in Africa

Kenya is found in East Africa, on the eastern side of the African continent. The equator, an imaginary line that divides the earth into the Northern and Southern hemispheres, passes right through the middle of Kenya. Because the equator crosses Kenya, parts of the country lie in the Northern hemisphere and parts lie in the Southern hemisphere.

2. Kenya's neighbouring countries

Kenya's neighbours by direction

Kenya is bordered by Ethiopia and South Sudan to the north, Somalia to the east, Tanzania to the south, and Uganda to the west. The Indian Ocean lies along Kenya's southeastern coast.
Using the compass, learners can describe each neighbour's real position: "Ethiopia is to the north of Kenya", "Tanzania is to the south of Kenya".



Kenya, its neighbours, and some of its lakes and rivers

3. The size of Kenya

Kenya's size

Kenya covers about 580,000 square kilometres of land and water. This makes it larger than some of its neighbours, such as Uganda, but smaller than others, such as Tanzania and Ethiopia.
Comparing country sizes on a map helps learners understand that "neighbouring" does not mean "the same size" - neighbours can be very different in area.

4. Valuing good relations with our neighbours

Why good relations matter

Kenya benefits from good relations with its neighbours through trade (buying and selling goods across borders), security (working together against threats), and cooperation through organisations like the East African Community (EAC), which includes Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and other member states.

When neighbouring countries cooperate, people, goods and ideas can move more easily and safely between them, benefiting everyone.

TRY THESE

1. In which region of Africa is Kenya found?
2. What imaginary line passes through the middle of Kenya?
3. Which country borders Kenya to the north?
4. Which country borders Kenya to the east?
5. About how many square kilometres does Kenya cover?
6. Is Kenya larger or smaller than Uganda?
7. Name one benefit of good relations between Kenya and its neighbours.
8. What is the East African Community?

TOPIC TEST

T1. Name one other East African country you know of.

T2. What lies along Kenya's southeastern coast, apart from a country?

T3. Why might a country's size affect how many neighbours it has?

T4. Suggest one way Kenya and a neighbouring country could cooperate to solve a shared problem.

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1.3 Main physical features in Kenya: Relief and Drainage

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

- identify main physical features in Kenya
- show main physical features in Kenya on a map

KEY WORDS

relief, drainage, highland, plateau, Rift Valley, river, lake, basin.

1. Relief features of Kenya

Kenya's relief

Relief means the shape and height of the land. Kenya's main relief features include the central highlands (with Mount Kenya, Africa's second-highest mountain), the Great Rift Valley cutting through the west, plateaus in the north and east, and low coastal plains along the Indian Ocean.

These different relief features give Kenya very different landscapes in different parts of the country.

2. Locating relief features on a map

Practical: locating relief on a map

Materials: map of Kenya, coloured pencils; pairs.

On a map of Kenya, locate and mark the central highlands, the Great Rift Valley, the northern plateau, and the coastal plains. Colour each differently and add a key.

Learners compare their marked map with a real physical map of Kenya to check accuracy.

3. Drainage - major rivers

Kenya's major rivers

Kenya's major rivers include the Tana River (the longest river in Kenya, flowing from Mount Kenya into the Indian Ocean) and the Athi-Galana-Sabaki River (flowing from the Nairobi area to the coast near Malindi). Rivers in western Kenya, such as the Nzoia and Yala, flow into Lake Victoria.

Drainage means the pattern of rivers and lakes that carry water across the land.

4. Lakes of Kenya

Kenya's major lakes

Kenya's major lakes include Lake Victoria (Africa's largest lake, shared with Uganda and Tanzania), Lake Turkana (the largest permanent desert lake in the world, in northern Kenya), Lake Naivasha and Lake Nakuru in the Rift Valley.

Lakes provide water for people and animals, support fishing, and attract tourists - Lake Nakuru is famous for its birdlife and wildlife.

5. Valuing Kenya's physical features

Why physical features matter

Physical features are valuable because they provide farmland, water, and tourist attractions, and support different economic activities in different regions - highlands for farming, lakes for fishing, and the Rift Valley for tourism and geothermal energy.

Protecting these features, such as not polluting rivers and lakes, helps Kenya continue to benefit from them for generations to come.

TRY THESE

1. What does "relief" mean?
2. Name Kenya's highest mountain.
3. On a map, roughly where would you find the central highlands?
4. On a map, roughly where would you find the Great Rift Valley?
5. What does "drainage" mean?
6. Name Kenya's longest river.
7. Name Africa's largest lake, shared by Kenya.
8. Which countries share Lake Victoria with Kenya?
9. Give one way relief features are valuable to Kenya.
10. Give one way drainage features (rivers/lakes) are valuable to Kenya.

TOPIC TEST

T1. Why might the central highlands and the coastal plains have very different land uses?

T2. Name one relief feature not covered in this lesson that you have heard of in Kenya.

T3. Why might rivers flowing into Lake Victoria not reach the ocean directly?

T4. Why might a country value having many different lakes rather than just one?

T5. Suggest one thing your community could do to protect a physical feature near your school.

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