Follow the Direction

Using maps, a compass (if available), and learn the difference between east, west, south, and north; including SE, NE, etc.

Grade Level: 6th Grade
Subject: Social Studies
Length of Time: One to Two 45-Minute Class Periods

Objectives & Outcomes
The students will be able to identify the cardinal directions, use a map, and if available, read a compass.

Materials Needed
Compasses (one for each pair of students), combination of one or more of the following: local, city, county, state, US, world maps, 8 ½ by 11 sheets of paper, markers, tape. Blank compass template for each student.

Teacher will need: Prepare bold and colorful signs to indicate the cardinal directions, as well as NE, NW, SE, and SW. Eight in all.

Procedure

Opening to Lesson
- Ask students to stand up next to their desks.
- Tell the students to walk and stand along the wall they think is north.
- Do the same for the other three cardinal directions.
- Ask students to return to their seats.
- Next, ask them the difference between southeast and southwest.
- Use the following questions to spark further interest: Why do we need to know the difference between south, north, etc.? Who decides what is north and south? (Or others as students share responses.)

Body of Lesson

Modeling
- Use a world or US map on the board or wall and point to the approximate location of the school.
- Use the words “this way” to show other locations relative to the town the school is located.
- Point to each of the four walls and ask about a location in the world: Is Europe
towards this wall, which wall, etc.? How about (nearby town)?

- The teacher will use a compass to point to where north is located.
- Tape the NORTH sign on the identified location in the room.
- Referring back to the wall map, the teacher will show a location NORTH of the school, write in in large letters on a blank 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper and tape it to the NORTH wall.

**Guided Practice**

- Distribute the maps to each pair of students with blank paper, markers, and compasses.
- Have tape available in a central location for use by all students.
- Ask students to use the compass and recognize the needle is pointing in the area of the NORTH sign on the wall.
- Ask them if they can now locate South, East, and West. Once identified, use tape to place the SOUTH, EAST, and WEST signs in those areas.
- Ask students to now identify the final four directions: SE, NE, SW, NW Post those signs.
- Distribute the blank template of a compass and allow students to label it.
- Students will now use their maps, along with their partner, choose TEN places on the map (use as many different maps as possible) and identify each as N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, or SW relative to the school’s location.
- Use the marker to write the location on the blank sheet of paper.
- **Note:** At this point, teacher may stop if not in a self-contained classroom and have students carry their signs to the N, S, etc. wall, to show location relative to the school.
- Students will now tape and hang the signs of the locations on the appropriate wall: N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, or SW
- **Teacher now asks students to describe verbally where certain places are located relative to the school’s location:** Example: Where is California relative to our school? California is southwest of Central Elementary School.

**Independent Practice**

- Students receive a one page map showing states, cities, etc. A second page has questions for students to answer in the same method as the example above. (It is not recommended to always use the school as the starting location.)
- Students receive a page showing a list of statements such as the following: Fill in the blank. Florida is located _____ of New York State. Answer: South
- For homework, students may be asked to identify several landmarks in the town relative to their home.
- The teacher will collect the completed pages. This will be used as an assessment.

**Closing**

After taping the signs on the wall or completion of any assessments, discuss with students other ways to determine direction such as using the sunrise or sunset. Have students think about times a compass may be needed, interstate routes, I95, I40, and other uses for knowing directions.
**Assessment & Evaluation**
The students will be able to identify the cardinal directions, use a map, and if available, read a compass.

**Modification & Differentiation**
Compasses (one for each pair of students), combination of one or more of the following: local, city, county, state, US, world maps, 8 ½ by 11 sheets of paper, markers, tape. Blank compass template for each student.

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**Related Lesson Plans**

**The History of Thanksgiving**

Students will research the history of Thanksgiving based on the perspective of the Native Americans and the Pilgrims and then interview each other to learn about each story.

**A Day in the Life of a Roman Girl and Boy**

Students will research the topic of daily life for children of ancient Rome.

**The Articles of Confederation**

The students will research the “first rules” of the United States, the Articles of Confederation.

**Help a Cause**

Students will use recycled materials to create toys for a local shelter.