

Unit 12 Which way is north?

★Activities to learn how to talk about directions.

Unit Aims

As children approach the middle grades of elementary school, there are many chances to look at maps. And when reading maps, the four directions North, South, East, and West are very important. You can start by letting the children know what the four English abbreviations found on compasses mean. In a normal map, the top of the map is north, the bottom south, and so on. However, depending on the type of maps, there are quite a few maps that do not follow this pattern. The goal would be for the children to understand the directions no matter what kind of map they are looking at. It is also a good opportunity for children to think about what can be found in the different directions from their school.

Vocabulary

north south east west
northeast northwest southeast southwest

Classroom English

N means north.
Which way is north?
Where are the mountains?
What's in the south?

Step of Activities

- (1) Learning the four directions (north, south, east, west) by looking at the compasses and magnet on the page. P.53
- (2) Practicing how to say the four directions and learning other

expressions (e.g., northeast, southwest, etc.) using the map of Japan and various parts of Japan. P.54-P.55

- (3) Practicing talking about directions using maps of their own prefecture. P.55
- (4) Thinking about what can be found around the school and drawing a map writing the names of these places or drawing pictures of them. P.56

Reference

In Japanese, the four directions come in the order of east, west, south, north. In English, the order is north, south, east, west. In Chinese, it is east (*ton*), south (*nan*), west (*shee*), north (*pei*). It is interesting for children to discover such differences among different languages.

Other Possible Activities → cf. Page 80

1. Play the “Treasure hunt” game found on Worksheet⑥. It is a game where children follow the teacher’s instructions and go in different directions and move the number of spaces they are told in order to reach where the treasure is. The children can also play together in pairs.
2. Prepare various types of maps and have children figure out the directions in each of the maps. For example, use a map made with a Mercator projection, a world map with Japan in the center, a world map with Europe in the center, a world map with Oceania in the center, etc. Finding where countries such as Japan or Australia are in each of the maps would be another interesting activity. It is also interesting to show a map with the South Pole in the center or to show the bottom of a globe and discuss which way the four directions are.