

Maps as Stories, Stories as Maps

Starter activity

Questions

- Which parks and open spaces do you like and why?
- Have you ever gone into a park after dark?
- Can you describe how it looked and how you felt?

Activity 1: Read and discuss

Look at the picture of Vivian Usherwood. Read his poem **'The Silent Park'**.

Discuss: In pairs, read the poem and discuss these questions:

- What things does Vivian notice?
- How does he feel?
- Which lines do you like the most? (Pick out examples and add them to the map.)
- Why do you think the park is important for Vivian?
- There is a blank space in the poem. What does Vivian leave out and why?

Activity 2: Similarities and differences

- Point to your favourite park on Google Maps and pick out the main features and symbols for vegetation, footpaths, roads.
- Look at the maps drawn by children from east London or other story maps.
- What is the difference between the children's maps and the Google map?

Similarities		Differences	
Google map/Example map	Student's map	Google map/Example map	Student's map

Activity 3: Visualisation

Shut your eyes and imagine a walk through a park (it can be real or imaginary). Have pens and paper ready to write down words and ideas.

- What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? How do you feel? What are people around doing? Does the activity change at different times of the day and how? What is the play area like? Are there any dangers? Can you see any birds or animals and can you describe them? What kinds of trees and plants are in the park? Do children make dens there? Is there any graffiti or signposts? Is there a cafe in the park and are there many people eating and drinking there? What are they eating and drinking? Are there any rules in the park? Do people always follow the rules?
- Use your pen and paper to draw a map of your park using the notes from the visualisation exercise.

Activity 4: Writing

Task: Write a poem taking the reader on a journey across your park. Take your reader from 'here' to 'there'.

- Use notes made throughout the session and your map to help inform the poem.
- Use adjectives to describe.
- Paint a colourful picture of the park with your words.
- Leave a powerful blank space, as Vivian Usherwood did.

Plenary

- What have you learned about maps?
- What did you find most difficult?
- What did you find most engaging?
- What new vocabulary have you learned? List at least two examples of vocabulary.
- Do you have a different understanding now of how maps can be used?