

## LESSON: ASSET MAPPING OUR COMMUNITIES (MULTIPLE DAYS)

**Overview:** This lesson should take a minimum of two days, longer if you allow class time for students to create their maps. Students will learn about the assets existing in their communities, which will help them when they develop solutions to their issue later in the course. You can choose for students to create individual maps or a class map of the community.

### Student Objectives:

- Identify assets in their community
- Identify main idea of Asset Mapping article
- Explain why it is important to recognize community assets
- Create an asset map of their community

### Vocabulary:

- asset

### Assessments:

- Main Idea graphic organizer
- Create a map

### Materials:

- Asset Mapping article
- Main Idea Notes: Asset Mapping graphic organizer
- My Commute, My Community handout
- Chart paper
- Community Mapping assignment handout
- Sticky notes
- Optional: disposable cameras

### BELL-RINGER: Journal (5 minutes)

Students should list three facts about their neighborhood in their journals.

### BEFORE: Share out (5–10 minutes)

Have each student share one thing from their bell-ringer. Chart their responses on the board in two columns. One column should be for things that are positive, the other for things that are negative (but don't reveal these headings to students yet). When students have all shared, ask students what each column has in common and what a good column heading would be.

Have students analyze the lists. Were there a lot more positives than negatives or visa versa? Why might that be the case?

### DURING: Introduction to asset mapping (20–25 minutes)

Ask students, "What might be problematic about only looking at a neighborhood's problems?"

Have students copy the definition of asset into their vocabulary journals.



**asset:** a useful and desirable thing or quality

Review any assets listed from the bell-ringer. Explain to students that you want them looking for the main idea in the Asset Mapping article. Have them fill out the Main Idea Notes: Asset Mapping graphic organizer after they read, either independently or aloud as a class.

**AFTER: Assets in our communities (5 minutes)**

Have students think of one asset in their community that is not already listed on the board using the ideas generated from the article, and add the assets to the column left up from the bell-ringer exercise. Have students explain how it is an asset in the community.



**Note:** Students often struggle with how to know if something is an asset or not in their community. A few questions you might use to help them think about this are: What people do you admire in your neighborhood? What stores in your neighborhood do you like to go to, or are good to have? What parks, libraries, houses of worship exist? What is your favorite thing to do in your neighborhood? What talents do young people bring to your neighborhood?

It is important to remember that identifying community assets does not have a right or wrong answer. It is possible for people to view elements of the community quite differently (one person might think having a supermarket is a great thing while another believes the food is of poor quality and overpriced so it is a negative). This is a good opportunity to have students practice using evidence to support their opinions and to demonstrate open discourse and debate in the classroom.

**CLOSER: Introduce My Commute/My Community (5–10 minutes)**

The purpose of this assignment is to have students look at their communities (and for this assignment make it clear to students that we are generally talking about neighborhoods when we are talking about community) through the lens of the assets and challenges.

Have students chart the assets and challenges in their neighborhood on the My Commute, My Community T-chart. They can do this on their commute to/from school or by taking a walking tour of the five blocks surrounding their home or their school.



**Enrichment:** Using their Perfect Paragraph guidelines, students can write a Pros & Cons Essay describing their commute to and from school in terms of positives and negatives. One paragraph should be dedicated to the positives (resources/assets) they observe, while the other should discuss the negatives. Encourage students to do more than just list observations, but to also explore the relationship between what they see—causes and symptoms—and the issues their communities face. For example, an abandoned factory is more than just an eyesore; it also signifies job loss, which in turn implies less money in the community for education, medical care, food, etc.



**Field trip opportunity:** You can do My Commute, My Community as a class by taking a walking field trip (or ride the bus or train) with your class with clipboards and a simple T-chart labeled “assets” and “challenges.” Have students silently report their observations. This could be a great community-building activity for the class to do together. It also emphasizes the participatory and active expectations of the class.

## DAY 2

### **BELL-RINGER: My Commute, My Community (3 minutes)**

Have students take out My Commute, My Community and highlight the top two to three assets and two to three challenges they identified.

### **BEFORE: Community assets and challenges (15–20 minutes)**

Have students get into groups of three or four. Distribute a sheet of butcher paper and markers to each group. Ask each group to quickly choose a recorder and have that person put a plus sign (+) over one half of the sheet and a minus sign (–) over the other half.

Everyone will take the observations they made as part of My Commute, My Community and put them together to make a chart of the general challenges (–) and assets (+) in a community.

When groups have finished, have them post their charts around the room and lead a Gallery Walk (see teaching strategies in the appendix). Have students comment with sticky notes on one asset and one challenge from each group they found either interesting or troubling.

Lead a discussion, drawing upon the notes students made during the Gallery Walk. Ask students:

- What works well in the communities we belong to? What helps make a community successful?
- What could be most improved in our communities? What prevents a community from being truly successful?

### **DURING: Community mapping (times will vary)**

We have provided two options for this assignment—an individual map or a large-scale class map (see handouts for details). Choose the option that works best for you and your class. The length of time for this lesson will depend on which option you choose: The individual map can be started in class and finished as homework. The large-scale map requires that students bring items to class to construct the map and functions as a community collage and thus will take a little longer.

**If you choose to create a class map:** Divide the class into teams and assign each team a task. Tell the students how large the map will be so that they can appropriately scale their contributions. (It should be large enough to accommodate the paraphernalia collected).

Determine a due date for bringing in the materials. The groups will need to meet and complete their tasks outside of class. You will need at least one class period to assemble the map.

**Constructing the class map:** Hang up the large-scale map on the wall (the mapping team should complete this prior to map construction day). Members from the mapping team should facilitate the other teams' contributions.

### **AFTER: Community mapping reflection (times will vary)**

While students are not attaching their contributions to the class map, or as part of their individual mapping assignment, they can work on writing a one-page reflection. Their reflection should follow the Perfect Paragraph guidelines and answer the following:

- How has this project impacted the way you see your community?
- Are there assets or challenges you didn't recognize before?
- What do you want to see preserved? What do you want to see changed?



**Note:** The website [www.projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer](http://www.projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer) provides detailed census data information on race, income, education, and housing by neighborhood in an easy to use map-based format. The website [www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/st\\_profile.htm](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/st_profile.htm) provides maps and charts about gender/race/housing tenure makeup of the state as a whole, and [www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/censusatlas/](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/censusatlas/) provides various maps and tables using the census data as well.

## Asset Mapping

### INTRODUCTION

In many communities across the country, it is not uncommon for local leaders and citizens to assemble together to try to make their community an even better place in which to live. Unfortunately, the beginning point for these discussions usually is focused on the various *problems* and *concerns* existing in the community.

In the end, what is produced is a laundry list of all the problems being experienced by residents of these communities. The list might include concerns with the local school system, the lack of health services, transportation problems, inadequate child care services, limited availability of jobs that pay a decent wage, or the lack of good recreation programs for children. No matter what community you are talking about, community groups that begin taking a hard look at their community by only documenting all of its “problems” are already starting things off on the wrong foot. That’s not to suggest that communities should try to sweep all their problems under the rug. What it does indicate is that the best way to effectively address the challenges that face communities is to have a good knowledge of the *resources* available to work on local issues.

An important beginning point involves mapping the *assets* of the community—the **skills and talents of local residents, as well as the capabilities available or possible through local organizations and institutions**. Collectively, these resources offer the wherewithal to address the host of important issues impacting the community.

### INDIVIDUALS

- Every person has talents, skills, and gifts important to a community.
- Each time individuals use these abilities, the community in which they live is strengthened and these people feel a sense of empowerment.
- Strong communities are places where the capacities of local individuals are identified, valued, and used.
- The development of the community is built upon the talents and resources of its members.

### LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

- **Kinship (Family):** The family carries out a number of important activities, such as the care and socialization of the young, providing food, housing, and nurturing for family members, and the biological reproduction of the human race.
- **Economic:** This involves the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services in a community. The community’s economic system influences what kind of work is available, where jobs are located, how much people earn, the quality of the work environment, the prospects for future jobs, and the level of unemployment and underemployment in the area.
- **Education:** The major function of education is to prepare youth to be successful, contributing members of society upon reaching adulthood. This includes preparing them for the

world of work, but also passing on to them knowledge, values, beliefs, and accepted ways of behaving (what we often call “norms”) that we believe young members of our community should learn.

- **Political (Government):** The political (or governmental) institution is the arena in which power and authority is acquired and exercised. Its major functions include: (1) protecting the life, liberty, and property of local residents (such as enforcing laws and providing police protection); (2) regulating conflict, including developing procedures and practices for resolving disputes; and (3) planning, coordinating, and providing public facilities and services to local residents.
- **Religious:** The religious institution plays an important role in attending to the spiritual needs of local citizens. In addition, it serves as an important source of support for certain moral values, norms, and customs. It also provides residents with personal support in times of need.
- **Associations:** Associations refer to the civic, service, social, fraternal, and other voluntary organizations available for people to participate in local activities. They operate with formal constitutional rules and by-laws, and operate with a team of officers and/or a board of directors.

### **INFORMAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- **Church Groups:** prayer group, stewardship committee, youth group, service group
- **Community Celebrations Committees:** Annual Fair Committee, Arts and Crafts, Festival Committee, July 4th Parade Committee, Neighborhood Groups: crime watch, homeowner’s association
- **Sports Leagues:** bowling, basketball, baseball, fishing, hunting clubs

Modified from *Mapping the Assets of Your Community: A Key Component for Building Local Capacity* by Lionel J. Beaulieu.

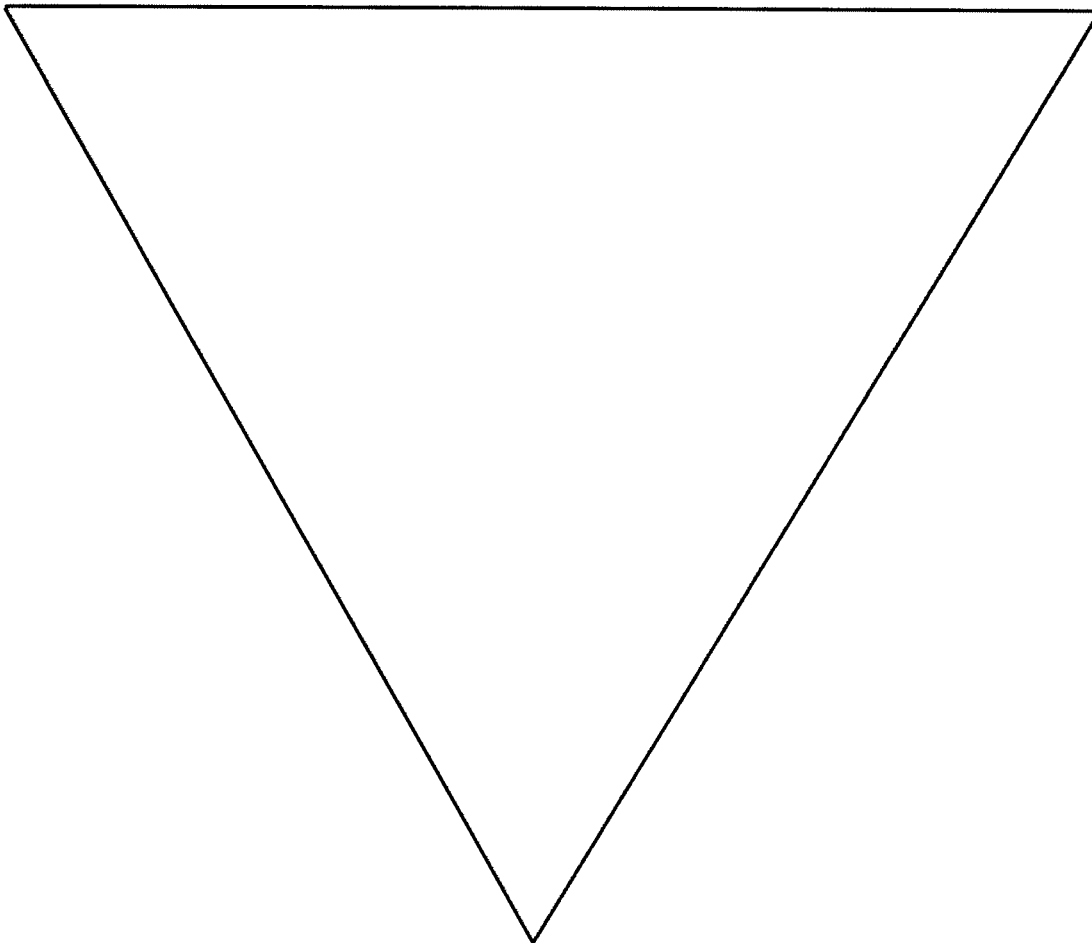
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## Main Idea Notes: Asset Mapping

What's the main idea?

Narrow it down: What's the most important point?



How do you know that's the most important idea? Write three examples or comments that support your assertion that this is the most important idea.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## My Commute, My Community

Either on your way to/from school OR by walking the five blocks surrounding school or your home, write the assets of the neighborhood and the challenges of the neighborhood on the chart below.

Assets	Challenges



## Community Mapping: Individual Map Process

1. Determine the street boundaries of your community and draw them on your map.
2. Place the other main streets between your boundaries on the map.
3. Depending on the community you chose, place your house or your school on the map.
4. Survey neighbors, community leaders, local businessmen, etc. by asking them the questions below. Be sure to write down their answers!
  - a. What do you *most like* about living in this neighborhood?
  - b. What are some of the *resources* or *assets* this neighborhood has? What **community organizations** (nonprofits, church groups, etc.), **government services** (including parks), **businesses**, or other groups are helping the neighborhood? How?
  - c. What about your neighborhood could be *improved*? In other words, what are some of the problems we have in this neighborhood? Do they happen in any specific location(s)? Also, are there any **businesses** or **services** that aren't good for our neighborhood? Are we missing any business that would be good?
  - d. How do you think these problems could be improved? What do community members and other people or institutions need to do?
5. Use the answers to your survey as well as your own experiences to identify your community's resources or assets. These include parks, government offices, nonprofits that serve the community, businesses, etc. Place these resources on your map and label them by writing what they represent. Use one color to represent your resources.
6. Are there challenges within your community that can be mapped? For example, is there a place where there should be a bus stop or a stop light, or an area of violence? Place these locations on your map using the same color and label what each area represents.
7. Create a key for your map.

## Community Mapping: Individual Map Rubric

	<b>Exceeds Standard</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Nears Standard</b>	<b>Needs Work</b>
<b>Map layout</b>	Map is accurate, includes main streets, and is accurately labeled and very detailed	Map is accurate, includes main streets, and is accurately labeled	Map is mostly accurate, includes many main streets, and is mostly accurately labeled	Map is inaccurate, does not include main streets, and is not accurately labeled
<b>Assets</b>	Map includes 5 or more assets within the community	Map includes 3–4 assets within the community	Map includes 1–2 assets within the community	Map does not include any assets within the community
<b>Challenges</b>	Map includes 5 or more challenges within the community	Map includes 3–4 challenges within the community	Map includes 1–2 challenges within the community	Map includes no challenges within the community
<b>Key</b>	Key is clear, accurate, and detailed	Key is clear and accurate	Key is somewhat clear and accurate	Key is missing or inaccurate
<b>Presentation</b>	Map is neat, well formed, with great attention to detail	Map is neat and well formed	Map is mostly neat and well formed	Map is not appropriate for high school–level work

## Community Mapping: Class Map

1. **Photo Team:** Your task is to take photos of the neighborhood. Try to capture a wide variety of locations and objects. As a team, you must contribute *a minimum of 20 photos*. Hint: pair up and assign a section of the neighborhood for each pair.
2. **Mapping Team:** You're responsible for drawing the actual large-scale map and assisting the rest of the class in attaching their contributions to the map. The map must include *at least six main streets* that are placed and labeled accurately and be complete before map construction day. Hint: use an online map to help you make yours (check out [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com), [maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com), or [maps.yahoo.com](http://maps.yahoo.com)).
3. **Paraphernalia Team:** Your mission is to collect business cards, take-out menus, and pamphlets that represent the community's assets or resources. You should also include any neighborhood or school newsletter or newspaper if there are any. As a team, you must have *a minimum of 12 pieces of paraphernalia*. Hint: pair up and assign a section of the neighborhood for each pair. You might want to use [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) or [maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com) to look up the streets where there are businesses and organizations before dividing the area.
4. **Assets and Challenges Team:** Your team is responsible for determining what assets and challenges will be placed on the map. You must know the location of the assets and problems and decide how they will be represented on the map. In order to do so, you'll need to survey neighbors, community leaders, local businessmen, etc. by asking them the questions below. Be sure to write down their answers!
  - a. What do you *most like* about living in this neighborhood?
  - b. What are some of the *resources* or *assets* this neighborhood has? What community organizations (nonprofits, church groups, etc.), government services (including parks), businesses, or other groups are helping the neighborhood? How?
  - c. What about your neighborhood could be *improved*? In other words, what are some of the problems we have in this neighborhood? Do they happen in any specific location(s)? Also, are there any businesses or services that aren't good for our neighborhood? Are we missing any business that would be good?
  - d. How do you think these problems could be improved? What do community members and other people or institutions need to do?

After you're done surveying, you'll need to create attachable representations (use construction paper) of *at least 3–4 community assets* and *at least 3–4 community challenges*. Hint: pair up and assign a section of the neighborhood for each pair.

5. **Community Culture Team:** The greatest resource in any community is the people who live there. Your team is in charge of creating visual representations of the community's culture. For example, you could include words that describe the community, symbols like flags, a picture of neighborhood public art, drawings of people that reflect the various religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds of the entire community, etc.

## Community Mapping: Class Map Rubric

**Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Exceeds Standard</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Nears Standard</b>	<b>Needs Work</b>
<b>Completion of task</b>	Group completes task as outlined on the assignment sheet, going above and beyond requirement	Group completes task as outlined on the assignment sheet	Group mostly completes task as outlined on the assignment sheet	Group fails to complete task as outlined on the assignment sheet
<b>Collaboration</b>	All group members work collaboratively to complete task	All group members participate and contribute to task	Most of the group members participate and contribute to task	One or two group members do all the work