

## Keeping Creative at Home: How to reimagine a map of your local area

15 June 2020

Elisabeth Del Prete from UP Projects shares some activities to help your children or students discover and map the unusual places in their own neighbourhood



Whether you're a teacher, a parent, or both, we hope our [Keeping Creative at Home blog series](#) will help you and your children through this tricky period of adjustment.

We're aware there's currently a lot of pressure on parents in particular around home education. So, first and foremost, all of the activities in this series are designed to be fun, creative experiences for your children (and hopefully for you too!), but there is also potential for learning in all of them. This week's Keeping Creative at Home is by Elisabeth Del Prete, Curator of Learning & Live Research at UP Projects, which commissions contemporary art for public places. Elisabeth's activities will help your children or students discover and map the unusual spaces and places in their own neighbourhood, starting with their favourite neighbourhood walk.

What you will need:

- 1 large sheet of white paper (e.g. A3)
- 3-5 sheets of smaller white paper (e.g. A4)
- 1 pair of scissors
- Glue
- Pencil
- Pencil sharpener

Optional:

- Colouring pencils / pens / paint / crayons / chalk
- Coloured paper
- Camera

### **Step 1: Map your walk**

Think of a route you enjoy walking and that you would recommend to a friend or relative visiting your neighbourhood. Imagine walking along the route, listening to familiar sounds and observing your everyday surroundings. Can you draw a sketch map of the walk from what you see in your head? Start by drawing the beginning and the end of the walk. Then sketch the roads, trails, and geographical features in between. What would you point out to the visitor to help them enjoy the walk?

What objects and landmarks come to mind when you think of your walk that you would like to feature on your map? These could be anything: a tree, a park, a post box, a shop sign, the neighbour's dog, a drinking fountain. Label the objects and landmarks with arrows and add lines and signs. Include anything you want, and leave some stuff out, you don't need to draw everything. Use any colours that you like and don't worry if you make a mistake, this is only a draft!

### **Want to go further? Try this:**

Take inspiration from artists who are interested in creatively reimagining a place or developing a story through maps, illustrating journeys through time, space and ideas:

- Susan Hiller, [Dream mapping](#), (1973)
- Yoko Ono, [Map piece](#), (1962)
- Mona Hatoum, [Routes II](#), (2002)
- Alighiero Boetti, [Map of the world](#), (1989)
- Giulia Piscitelli, [Ritratto dell'evangelista san Matteo](#), (2016)

### **Step 2: Walk the walk**

Take your map, some blank sheets of paper, and a pencil (you can also use crayons and chalk) outdoors. Walk along the walk and point out the objects and landmarks from your map as you go. Talk about what you notice and what makes them important. You can add to your map, if you want to, too.

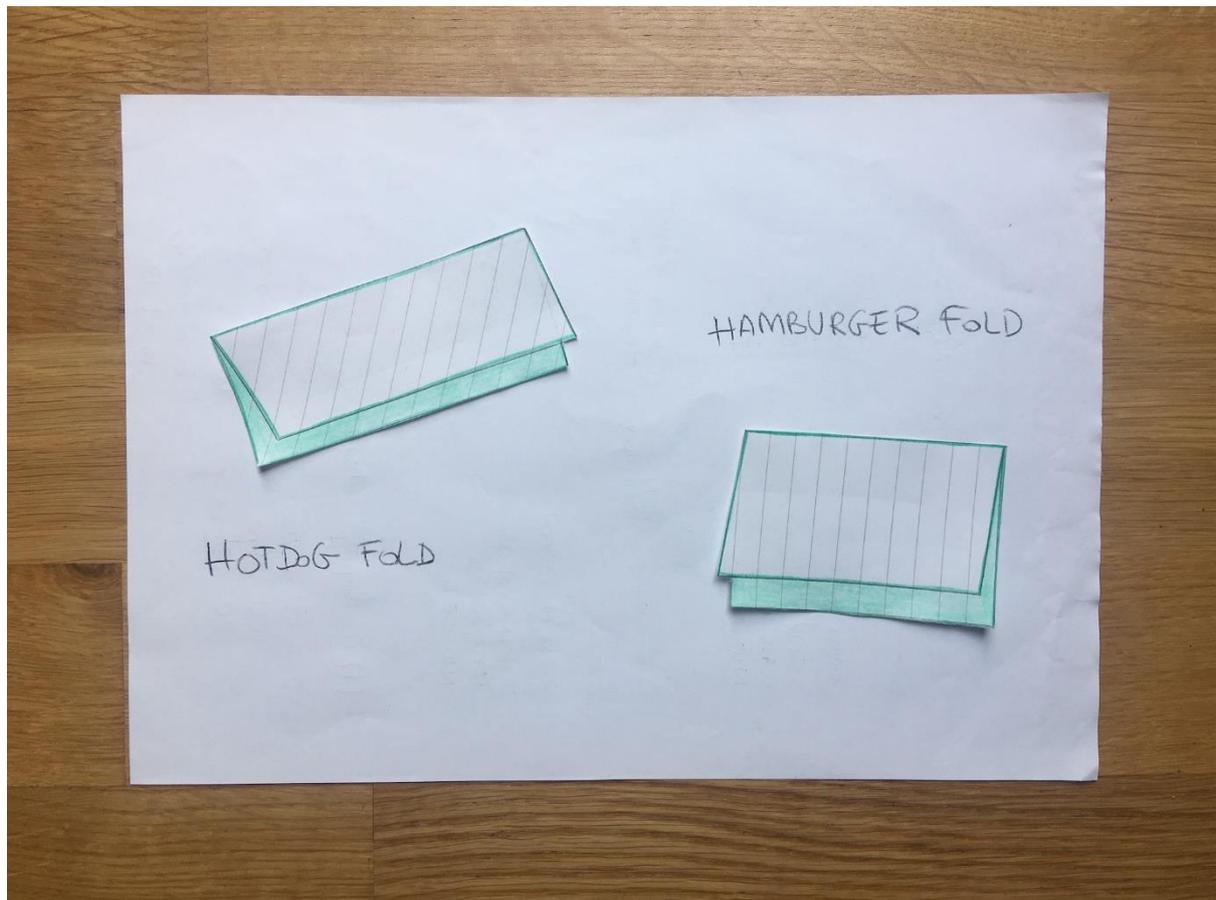
Try experimenting with texture rubbings. First, find some fun textures along the walk. These could include the trunk of your favourite tree, some leaves and cobblestones, or even an embossed surface on a pavement or on a sign. Then, place your paper over your surface of choice and rub the flat edge of your pencil/chalk/pastel over it to recreate the pattern. Repeat as many times as you like and with as many fun surfaces as you can find!  
Can you also make a sketch of these objects? Or perhaps take some photographs from different angles?

**Want to go further? Try this:**

On your map, can you tell north from south? Use the location of the sun in the sky in order to determine direction. Think about how you might add this to your map. Make some [artwork out of your rubbings](#)

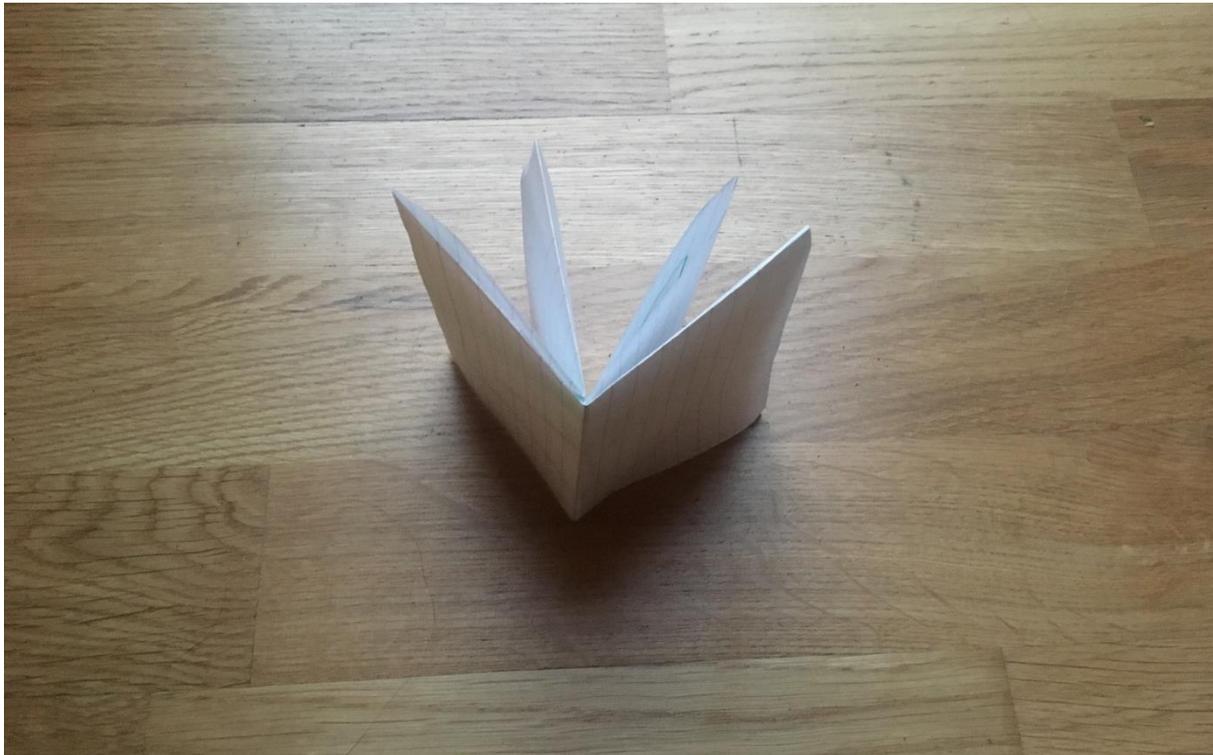
**Step 3: Fold challenge**

Did you know you can make a book out of a single piece of paper? Here's how... Fold a blank sheet of large paper into a booklet by following the simple instructions below. If you don't have an A3 size sheet, you can use glue to stick two A4 sheets together. The bigger the sheet, the more space there will be to draw!



- Lay down your sheet of white paper
- Fold it in half widthways (hamburger fold)
- Fold it again in half widthways (hamburger fold)
- Fold it again in half widthways (hamburger fold)
- Now you have a folded sheet of paper in the shape of a small rectangle
- Unfold your sheet of paper completely to show the eight rectangles formed by the different creases
- Fold it in half widthways (hamburger fold). Make a mark with your pencil at the intersection of the two creases in the centre of the folded sheet. Take your scissors and cut along the centre crease from the folded edge to the centre mark.
- Unfold your sheet of paper completely. There should be a narrow opening in the middle of the paper.
- Fold it in half lengthways (hotdog fold)
- Fold the paper in half lengthways again (hotdog fold) and then push the two ends inwards towards each other allowing the opening to open up further creating a diamond shape
- Keep pushing edges together until the diamond becomes a narrow opening again, perpendicular to the folded edges
- Fold one edge toward the opening and the opposite opening toward the folded edge
- Go over the folds to make them sharp
- Now you have a six-page book!

You can also find visual instructions [here](#).



#### Step 4: Timetravel

Now it's time to fill the book with fun ideas. Start by drawing the map of your chosen walk again on one page or even across two pages. You could use your first map to help you. This time think of what your neighbourhood would have looked like 50, 100, or 300 years ago. Which one of your favourite objects and landmarks (the park, the postbox or the tree) would have been there? Would the park still be there? How different would your neighbourhood have looked?

Think of what your neighbourhood might look like 50, 100, or 300 years from now. What might change and what do you think will still look the same? Write your ideas and any reflections about the past and the future of your neighbourhood down and use them as inspiration for the next step.

#### Want to go further? Try this:

Visit this [website](#), enter the location of your walk, and a past date of your choice, and find out an old map illustrating how your walk used to look like in a different century.

#### Step 5: Create a story map

To create a story map, turn your research from the previous step into an exciting tale about your local area. Record it in your book using drawings and/or written text. Here are some ideas: imagine an incredible event from the past that happened at one of your favourite landmarks. Write about a fantastical character from the future you might meet at one of your landmarks. Draw the journey again as if you are taking futuristic transportation.

#### Want to go further? Try these:

The Scribble challenge: pick a blank page from the booklet, close your eyes and draw your return journey on the map route, drawing a line from start to end and then back to the starting point without taking the pen off the sheet. Does your map now look like a scribble? Can you make a drawing over top and try to incorporate the scribble into a sketch?

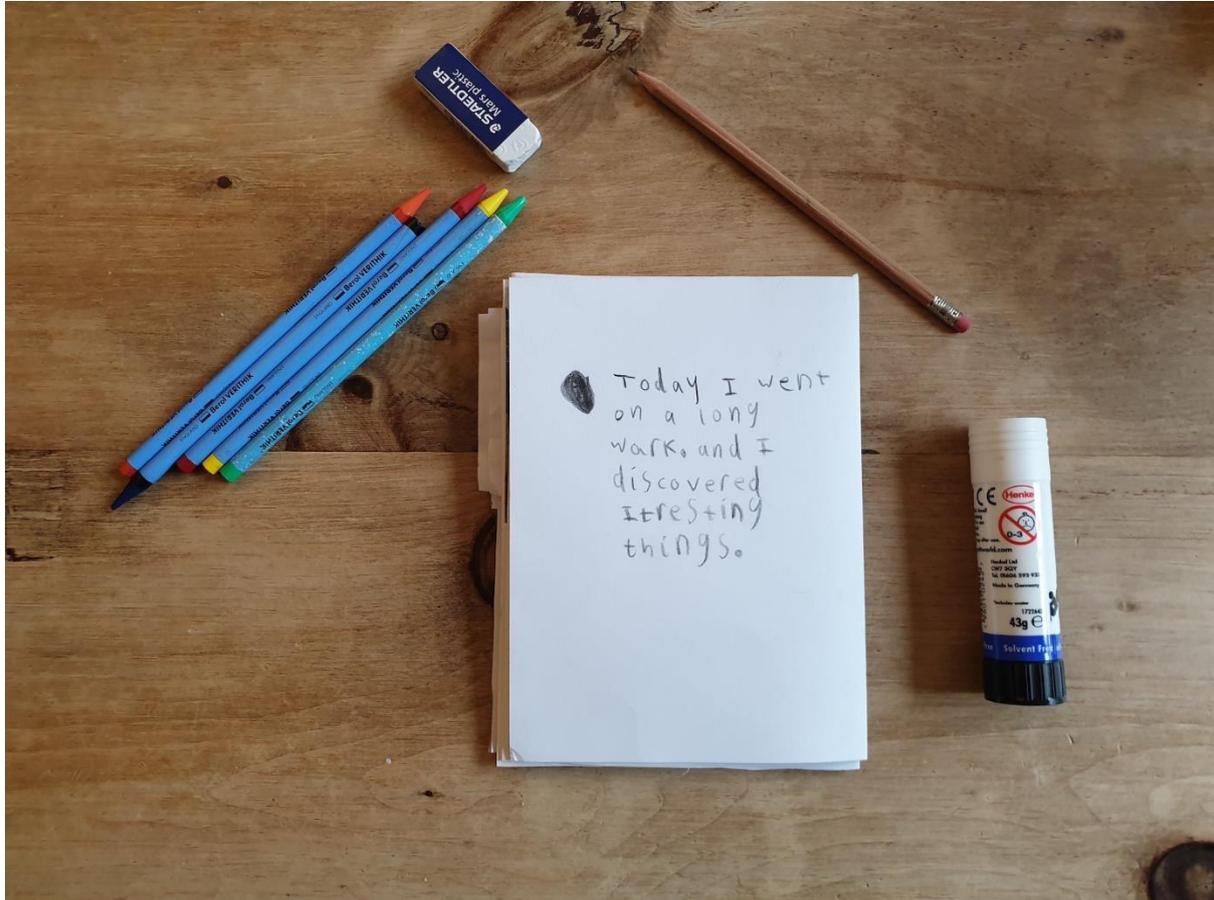
#### Step 6: Fill in the blanks

Fill any spaces on the pages of your booklet with images and descriptions of your favourite objects and landmarks. For example, if a tree features in your map, you could draw a more detailed version of that tree on a separate page and maybe write down a few interesting facts. For example: can you discover what type of tree it is and how old it might be?

You can also glue some of the sketches and the texture rubbings you experimented with in step 2, or any photographs you may have taken during the walk. Use plenty of colour to make it fun and vibrant.

Want to go further? Try these:

- [Keeping Creative at Home: How to get creative with sound](#)
- [Keeping Creative at Home: How to get moving with dance](#)



### Step 7: Build and share a collection of your own travel guides

Explore new neighbourhoods and start building a collection of your favourite walking routes. If you want to get your friends or relatives involved, post one of your booklets to their mail address and ask them what their favourite walk is.

Want to go further? Try these:

- [Keeping Creative at Home: How to research & make your own art project](#)
- [Artful Maps from the Geographical Association](#)