

MY NORTH AMERICA LANDFORM MAP

EXPLORE
CREATE
LEARN

Build a country you can touch!

AHS Worldwide • Geography • Unit 1 Project • Grades 3–5

Real
Places.
Real
Learning.
Your
Map.



YOUR MISSION

Pick one country — Canada, the United States, or Mexico — and build it out of salt dough on a cardboard base. In each step, YOU choose which landform to add: a mountain, a volcano, a river, a lake, a desert, or an island. One landform per step is all you need. If you want to add more, go ahead!

When you are done, you will own a map nobody else in the world has!



TWO UPLOADS — THAT IS ALL

- End of Step 4 — a photo or video of your map so far.
- End of Step 8 — a photo or video of your finished map.



CHOOSE YOUR COUNTRY

Check one:

☐

CANADA

☐

UNITED STATES

☐

MEXICO

I chose this country because:



THE ONE BIG RULE: Put each landform where it really is. Look at a real map first. If your country does not have the landform you wanted, just pick a different one from the list. Real maps do not make things up!

THE 8 STEPS TO YOUR MAP

1



Choose and draw your country

2



Raise the high place

3



Paint the open lands

4



Make the water flow
(UPLOAD)

5



Add still water

6



Add labels, a map key, and a compass

7



Add the finishing touches

8



Finish, check, and be proud!
(UPLOAD)

➔ Each step adds something permanent. Nothing gets taken apart. YOU pick the landform in Steps 2, 4, 5, and 7. ➔



WHAT YOU NEED

Gather these before Step 1. Most of it is already in your house!

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

- ☐ This booklet — you write in it every step
- ☐ Your printed two-page country template
- ☐ Cardboard, foam board, or a flattened box (about 18 x 12 inches)
- ☐ Flour, salt, and water for salt dough
- ☐ A mixing bowl and spoon
- ☐ Pencil and eraser
- ☐ Paint, markers, or colored pencils
- ☐ String, yarn, or paint for rivers and borders
- ☐ White glue or tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Toothpicks and scrap paper for label flags
- ☐ Index cards or scrap paper
- ☐ A phone or camera for your two uploads



NICE TO HAVE

- ☐ A physical map of North America to look at
- ☐ Cookie sheet or tray to carry your map
- ☐ Sandpaper for smoothing dried dough
- ☐ Clear glue or gloss for shiny water
- ☐ Cotton balls for snow and clouds
- ☐ Small twigs, sand, or dried leaves for texture



SALT DOUGH RECIPE

- ☐ 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ 1 cup table salt
- ☐ ¾ cup warm water
- ☐ 1 tablespoon vegetable oil



SAFETY FIRST!

Ask an adult before you use the oven, and let them do the cutting if the cardboard is thick. Salt dough is not food — do not eat it, and keep it away from pets. Wash your hands when you finish.



COST

About \$0–5 if you already have flour, salt, and paint at home. Buying everything new costs about \$12.



Learning by doing. Exploring the world. One map at a time.

REAL PLACES

REAL LEARNING

YOUR MAP



CHOOSE AND DRAW YOUR COUNTRY

Your Country, Your Way!

Draw it yourself!
Today your country
stops being a picture
and becomes a real
3D map!



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Real Learning.
Your Map.



WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Cardboard base, about 18 x 12 in
- ☐ Pencil and a good eraser
- ☐ A map of your country to look at
- ☐ Salt dough (recipe on cover page)
- ☐ A bowl and spoon



QUICK TIP

Your salt dough map doesn't have to be perfect! Just press it out and shape it the best you can. Keep it simple.



Look at a map and notice the big shapes.



Draw your country outline on cardboard.



Leave room for your title.



Erase and fix any mistakes.



Mix your salt dough (recipe on cover page).



Press the dough inside the outline, about as thick as two stacked pennies.



Smooth the surface with your finger.



Let it dry for 24-48 hours.



Move on to step 2!



IF YOUR COUNTRY IS...

- Canada:** Remember to include the big islands, but you can skip the tiny ones.
- United States:** Include the main 48 states; Alaska and Hawaii are optional.
- Mexico:** Keep Baja and the Yucatan thick so they survive cracking.



MAKE IT YOURS

- Choose a creative title for your map.
- Think about what makes your country special.
- Get ready to add mountains in Step 2!



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STEP 2 RAISE A HIGH PLACE

Mountains make land, change the weather, and create unique habitats!

Add a mountain, volcano, or hill.

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WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your salt dough map from Step 1
- ☐ Extra salt dough (if needed)
- ☐ Toothpicks (for texture, optional)
- ☐ A map of your country to look at
- ☐ A small cup of water (for smoothing)



QUICK TIP

Your salt dough map doesn't have to be perfect! Just press it out and shape it the best you can.



Look at a map of your country. Find a mountain, mountain range, or volcano you want to add (for example, the Rocky Mountains).



Take a piece of salt dough and pinch, shape, and build it up in that spot on your map.



Shape it the best you can. Mountains can be tall and pointy, and volcanoes can be cone-shaped.



Use your fingers or a toothpick to add texture and ridges.



Let it dry or a bit before adding paint in the next step.



Move on to Step 3!



REAL EXAMPLES

Here are some mountain ranges and volcanoes you might add:

- **Canada:** Rocky Mountains, Coast Mountains, volcanoes
- **United States:** Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, volcanoes
- **Mexico:** Sierra Madre, volcanoes



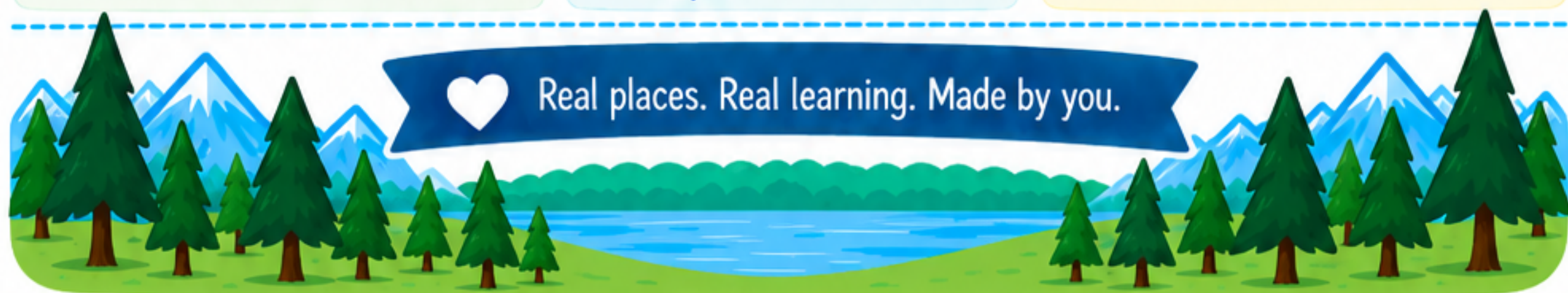
THINK ABOUT IT

- Why do you think people live near mountains?
- How might mountains affect the weather in your country?
- What animals might live in the mountains?
- What makes this place special to you?



MAKE IT YOURS

- Add more than one high place if you want!
- Try making a volcano.
- Use toothpicks to create cool textures.
- Be creative — your map is unique!



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STEP 3

PAINT THE OPEN LANDS

Bring your country to life with color!

Colors help tell the story of your country's landforms. Think about what you see in real life!



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Your Map.



WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your salt dough map from Step 2
- ☐ Paint, markers, or colored pencils
- ☐ A small cup of water
- ☐ A paintbrush (or sponge)
- ☐ A paper towel



QUICK TIP

Use colors that make sense for your country. Look at a real map to see where forests, deserts, plains, and other landforms are located.



Look at a map of your country. Think about what colors to use for different land areas.



Start painting! Add color to one land area, like forests, plains, or desert.



Next, paint your mountains.



Keep adding colors to the open lands. Use a paintbrush or sponge.



Paint carefully, a little at a time. You can mix colors if you want.



Let your paint dry, then move on to Step 4!



REAL EXAMPLES

Here are some land colors you might use:

- **Green** = forests, grasslands
- **Brown** = mountains, high places
- **Yellow or tan** = deserts, dry areas
- **Lighter green** = plains, lowlands



THINK ABOUT IT

- What colors did you choose? Why?
- How do the land colors show what your country is like?
- Are there any special places you want to highlight?

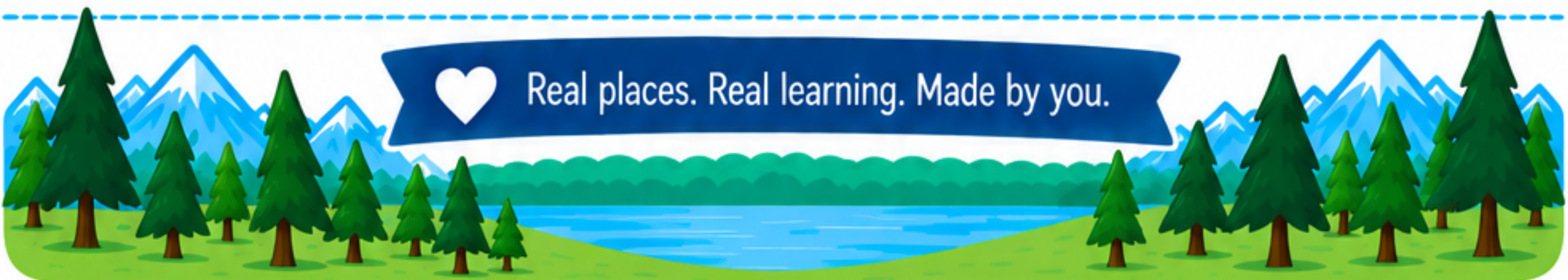


MAKE IT YOURS

- Use real map colors or create your own color scheme.
- Try blending colors for a natural look.
- Be creative — your map is unique!



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MAKE THE WATER FLOW

Add rivers to your country!

Rivers connect places, people, and wildlife!



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Your Map.



WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your painted map from Step 3
- ☐ String, yarn, or thin rolls of salt dough
- ☐ White glue (if using string or dough)
- ☐ A small paintbrush and blue paint
- ☐ A map of your country to look at



QUICK TIP

Find one real river on your map and add it to your project. You can add more rivers if you want!



Look at a map of your country. Find a real river you want to add (for example, the Mississippi in the U.S., the Mackenzie in Canada, or the Río Grande in Mexico).



Decide how you want to make your river: string, yarn, paint, or thin rolls of salt dough.



Add glue if needed and carefully place the river on your map. Press it down gently.



Make your river flow from high places (mountains) to lower areas (lakes, other rivers, or the ocean).



Add more rivers or small streams if you want.



Let everything dry completely before moving to the next step.



RIVER IDEAS

Some famous rivers you might add:

- **Canada:** Mackenzie, Yukon, St. Lawrence, Fraser
- **United States:** Mississippi, Missouri, Colorado, Columbia, Río Grande
- **Mexico:** Río Bravo (Río Grande), Río Balsas, Río Lerma



THINK ABOUT IT

- Where does your river start and where does it end?
- How might rivers help people, animals, and plants?
- What would happen if a river was polluted or disappeared?
- What other rivers could you add if you had more time?

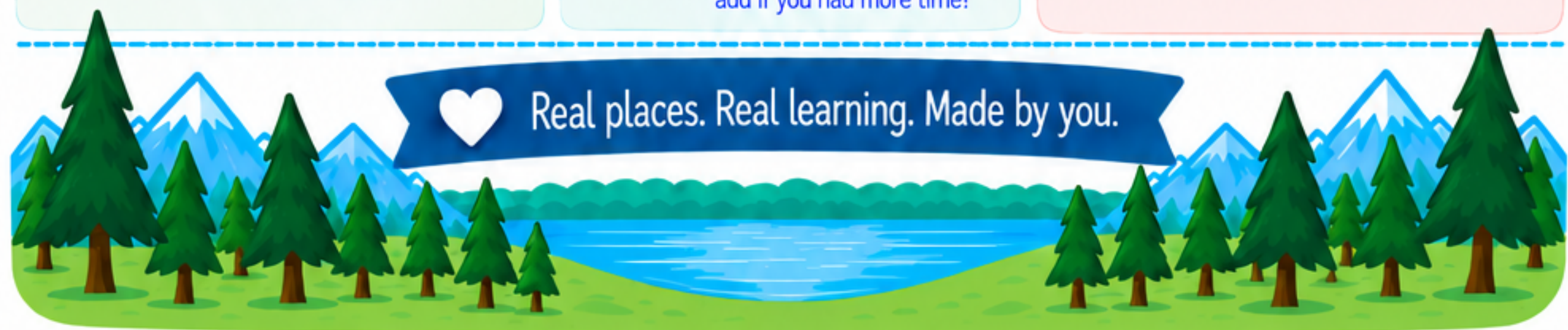


MID-PROJECT UPLOAD

- Take a picture or video of your project. Upload it, so your Coach can see how it's coming along!



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ADD LIVING THINGS

Every place is home to amazing plants and animals. Add some to your map!



Bring animals and plants to your map!



WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your painted map from Step 4
- ☐ Small pieces of salt dough (for animals and plants)
- ☐ Acrylic paint or markers (optional)
- ☐ Glue (if needed)
- ☐ Animal crackers or small toy animals and plants (optional)



QUICK TIP

Choose animals and plants that live in your country or region. You can add one or two, or more if you want! Keep them simple.



DO IT

1



Think about what animals or plants live in different parts of your country.

2



Take a small piece of salt dough and shape your animal or plant. You can use animal crackers or toys, too!

3



Add simple details with paint or markers (if you want).

4



Place the animal or plant on your map. Use a little glue if needed.



IDEAS FOR ANIMALS

Here are some animals you might add:

- **United States:** bald eagle, bison, moose, bear, alligator, whale
- **Canada:** moose, beaver, polar bear, caribou, loon
- **Mexico:** jaguar, monarch butterfly, sea turtle, whale



IDEAS FOR PLANTS

Here are some plants you might add:

- Pine trees (forests)
- Cactus (deserts)
- Palm trees (coasts)
- Wildflowers
- Other trees or plants that are special to your country

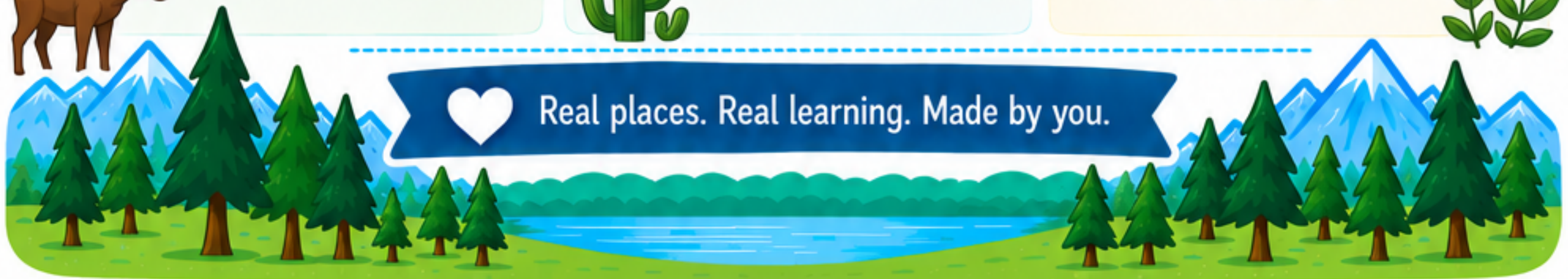


THINK ABOUT IT

- What animals or plants are native to your country?
- Why do you think they live in these places?
- How do animals and plants help people?
- What would you add if you had more time?



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ADD LABELS AND FINISH!

Show what you know about your country!

Labels help others understand your map. Be creative and make it your own!



WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your map from Step 5
- ☐ Markers, colored pencils, or paint pens
- ☐ Small paper flags or sticky notes (optional)
- ☐ Glue or tape (if using paper labels)
- ☐ A pencil (to plan your labels)



QUICK TIP

Use short, clear labels for important places like mountains, rivers, lakes, cities, animals, or plants. You can write directly on your map or use small flags or sticky notes!



DO IT

1



Look at your completed map from Step 5. Think about what important places you want to label.

2



Write your labels. Keep them short and clear. You can use paper, sticky notes, or write directly on your map.

3



Add your labels to your map. You can glue or tape them on, or use small flags.

4



Add any extra details if you want (such as a title, compass, or legend). You're done!



LABEL IDEAS

- Major mountains
- Rivers or lakes
- Deserts or forests
- Cities or states (if you want)
- Animals or plants
- Other special places



THINK ABOUT IT

- What are the most important places in your country?
- Why did you choose these labels?
- What did you learn while making your map?
- What else would you like to add if you had more time?

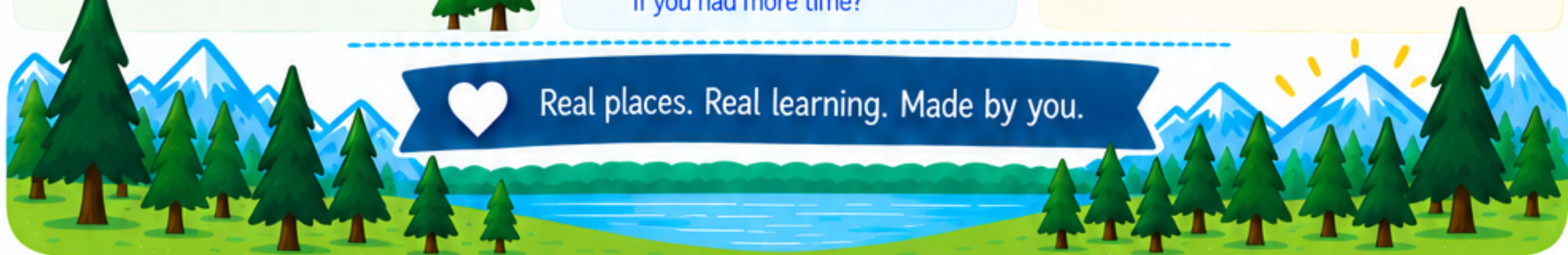


MAKE IT YOURS

- Use colorful labels or drawings.
- Try a title, legend, or compass.
- Add fun details like trees, animals, or even people!
- Be creative — your map is unique!



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STEP
7

PRESENT YOUR MAP!

Share what you've learned!

Tell the story
of your country—
its places, people,
plants, and animals!

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Your Map.



WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your finished map from Step 6
- ☐ Paper for a title (optional)
- ☐ Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- ☐ Small note cards (optional)
- ☐ A few minutes to think and share!



QUICK TIP

Think about 2–4 interesting facts you can share. You can point to your map as you talk. Keep it simple and be proud of your work!



DO IT

1



Look at your finished map.
Review what you added — mountains, rivers,
animals, plants, and labels.

2



Add a title to your map (optional).
You can also add a compass, legend, or border
to make it look finished.

3

Share About Your Map!

- Where is your country?
- What are some important places?
- What animals or plants live there?
- What did you learn while making your map?

Think about what you want to share.
You can use these questions to help you.

4



Share your map with a family member, friend,
or class! Tell them what you learned and why
your country is special.



PRESENTATION IDEAS

- Show your map to your family.
- Tell a few fun facts.
- Use your map to teach someone about your country.
- Take a picture of your map!



THINK ABOUT IT

- What was your favorite part?
- What was challenging?
- What did you learn about your country?
- What would you like to add if you had more time?



YOU DID IT!

You created a map, added real features, and learned about the amazing places, plants, and animals in your country. Great work!



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SHARE YOUR MAP

Show what you've learned!

Real places.
Real learning.
Your map.
Your story!



WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ Your finished map from Step 7
- ☐ A parent, grandparent, or older sibling to present it to
- ☐ A parent, grandparent, or older sibling to record your presentation



QUICK TIP

Speak clearly, smile, and be yourself! You can share as many details as you want. There's no right or wrong way — this is your chance to show what you created and learned!



DO IT

1



Set your map in a well-lit area.

2



Ask your parent, grandparent, or older sibling to record your presentation.

3



Present your map on camera! Share as many things as possible about what you created.

4



Upload your video!
You did it! Great job!



IDEAS TO SHARE

- Important places on your map
- Animals and plants you added
- Interesting facts you learned
- Why you chose these places
- What you liked best about making your map



THINK ABOUT IT

- What was your favorite part?
- What was the most surprising thing you learned?
- What do you want to explore next?
- How do animals and plants help people?



FINAL UPLOAD

- ☐ Record a short video.
- ☐ Walk us through each feature of your map.
- ☐ Share one thing you learned while creating your map.
- ☐ Share one thing you would do differently next time.
- ☐ Upload your video for your Coach to review!



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