

Title of Session: Fantasy Maps (For best results this session should be presented AFTER High Fantasy and World Building)

Creator: Janet Beasley

Curriculum: ADVANCED

Definition: Because a fantasy world is “unknown” to your readers, it is recommended you add a map to your fantasy novellas, novelettes, and novels which include highly imaginative worlds that will be traveled or referred to throughout the story.

Goals: By the end of the session enthusiasts will have begun to draw, or possibly finish, a basic map of their fantasy world that will prove useful to their readers.

Tools:

Wipe off board or flip chart and appropriate markers

Computer screen or projector with screen

Activity Tools:

Large pieces of drawing paper – ideal size would be 18 inch x 24 inch (tablets of such are often times available at local retailer’s, or online)

Color pencils

Erasers

Ice Breaker:

Ask each enthusiast to share interesting facts about the map they will be creating for their fantasy world.

Watch Fantasy Maps Video

Activity 1:

On your wipe off board or flip chart write the following questions as you present them and gather input from the enthusiasts for each before writing in any answers:

Is a map a world or a region?

A map can be either, or both. In author Janet Beasley’s Hidden Earth Series Volume 1 Maycly the Trilogy you will find both a full world map as well as 9 regional maps of the entire world that have been broken down for easier reference. In Volume 2 Planet Land ~ The Adventures of Cub and Nash you will find only one map, and that map represents a region on Planet Land.

What kinds of things can a fantasy map include?

Ask enthusiasts before writing the answers below

- Lands
- Mountains
- Valleys
- Forests
- Rivers
- Streams
- Roadways
- A legend or key (to show what types the roads are, distance, type of forestry, mountains vs. alps, etc.)
- A weathervane

How big should a fantasy map be?

- When drawing the map, you will want to make it larger than the one that will be in your book. 18 inch x 24 inch paper is a good size. (Drawing tablets of paper this size are often times available at local retailer's, or online)

If you have the capability to draw from your laptop or digital tablet you may also use this mode. Keep in mind the more rugged your fantasy map appears, the more “authentic” it will look.

Does it matter whether I draw my map landscape or vertical?

If you are going to be including your map in an ebook you may want to consider drawing your map vertical so your text on the map is the right direction.

If your map is laid out horizontally, you can surely split it into two halves to take up two pages. Just be certain you have labeled your towns and such so the text appears correctly in a vertical format.

Once the map is drawn on paper, you will want to make certain you have a way to turn it into a digital copy.

- You can photograph it yourself and save it as a jpeg
- You can have it professionally photographed
- You can have it scanned and save it to a portable drive such as a USB stick (if doing this you may want to consider using 8 ½ inch by 11 inch paper for your master copy as this size is more commonly used on scanners)

If I am physically drawing the map bigger than it will appear in my novel what things should I consider?

- Make certain your hand writing is legible, especially for the main lands/areas and water ways.
- If you draw the map in color it will cause nice shading on the final black and white copy that will appear in your book.

- You can have your maps appear in color in both ebooks and print, however color makes for larger files in ebooks (slower loading times – and select retailers have file size limits), and in a print book you will always pay extra for color overall, even if it is only one page.
- The more detail the better, in most cases.
 - Any place that you may mention in your novel should be on that map
 - Any places not mentioned in your story are fully acceptable to leave on your map. If you plan on writing a series, who knows, the added towns, villages, waterways, and roads may come in handy in those next volumes.

After drawing your map you will find that it can actually enhance your story by leaps and bounds, especially if you have added in extra towns, roads, waterways, etc. These make for wonderful enrichment to add.

- For instance, if your character is traveling from Main Town to Subtle Town, you could include passing by things such as Clear Lake or Woogery Forest.

Your finished map will also reveal any flaws you may have in your story regarding the travels, terrain, and events.

- For instance, you may have written the troops traveled north from Glammer Town, when in reality, according to your map, your characters are already in the north at Simply Town and Glammer Town is to the south.

When should I draw my map?

There is no exact answer to this, it is all about personal preference. Some authors prefer to draw their maps first, others during the novel writing, and thirdly there are those who draw them last.

- **Note from session creator, YA enchanted epic fantasy author Janet Beasley:**
 - I personally prefer to draw my map about a third into my novel. This way I have a solid base of what I am creating, and can elaborate from there. I have found by having the map to refer to as I write the last two thirds to be extremely beneficial in enhancing my story as well as tightening up some “loose ends” such as leading the characters down a wrong road to reach their destinations, or perhaps have events going on in areas they shouldn’t be.

If I’m just going to shrink the map to fit in my book, why draw the map that big to begin with?

- A larger map is easier to work with when it comes to your initial layout and design of your world's information.

If I'm going to only publish an ebook do I even need a map?

- It's strictly up to you, but if you are writing fantasy, including a map is highly recommended even if it is a simplistic map. You have to remember, no one knows about your world but you, and fantasy fans love to read the maps and get a feel of where the action is taking place.

If you are creating names for new towns, lands, and/or villages you will want to make certain you spell the same on both the map AND in the novel.

Activity 2:

Hand out the Sample Maps (Maycly and Planet Land) Tell enthusiasts to use them for inspiration while drawing.

Have enthusiasts draw their maps on the large sheets of paper

Discussion:

- What was your favorite part about drawing your map?
- When do you think you'll draw your map – before, during, or after your finished writing, and why?
- What are some of the creative names you've come up with for your towns, mountain ranges, waterways, roads, etc.?

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Handout: ADVANCED

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List other things you think will enhance your map according to your story:

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Feel free to explore other fantasy maps on the web. There is a multitude of ways a map can be drawn. Only you can decide which style best suits your needs.