

Homemade Map Directions

After discussing the geographic features of China that made governance and the spread of ideas and goods difficult to exchange, and isolated the country from the rest of the world, it is time to play a game to further this understanding!

Goal:

- **Your child(ren) must pass a secret message from one side of the “country” to the other as quickly as possible.**
 - **The message is given to the first person, how can they get through the land barriers to pass along the message to the person on the other side of the “country?”**

Creating the map:

- Create a map of your play area with specific locations pointed out (bedrooms, green chair, kitchen table, backyard, living room, garage, and kitchen etc.).
- Include “barriers” on your map, such as rivers, mountains, or deserts. These will make it harder for your child to pass through this section.
 - For example, if the child is starting in their room, draw a river outside of their door on the map (you can even make a ‘real river’ out of towels or sheets). This could mean they have to wait three seconds before crossing the threshold of their room to the outside. And build a bridge over the river.
 - Other geographic connections could be a mountain represented by couch cushions, or a dessert could be a warm, dry front patio, a lake could be a blue rug, and a valley could be chairs put in a row etc.
- Create a secret note that needs to be passed from person to person.
- Assign an order as to who will pass the note to whom. For example, Johnny knows that once he receives the note, he has to make his way over the ‘mountain’ to give it to Janey. Then, Janey knows she has to give the note to Alex who is over the ‘river’ and the ‘desert.’
 - Be sure to keep the players spread apart since they are representing towns across the country.

Players:

- If you are playing with one child, place notes throughout the house for them to collect in a certain order. Using their homemade map to navigate barriers, see how fast they can collect these notes.
- If you are playing with more than one person, have the order established before playing.

How to level the game to increase difficulty:

- Make the first time without barriers (rivers, mountains, etc.) and they have to walk.
 - Ask questions, “How was it? Did you have very many barriers to get through? The land was fairly flat and no rivers to pass through.”
- Then, put in barriers that may delay the quickness and ease of getting the message across.
 - These barriers can be rivers, which they will have to wait three seconds before crossing, then for a larger challenge, they can build a bridge. For mountains, they will have to wait five seconds before crossing. For a leveled challenge, they can climb over something. For the desert, they may have to wait in the desert for 10 seconds, and for a leveled challenge, lift a heavy bag while in the desert (representing the cargo needed to cross the desert).
 - Start timing the rounds to compare how fast they can get the message across.
 - Directions: “Now, let’s do the same activity. We are going to time you to see how fast you can get the message passed to the last person/town.”
- The next round can then be running.

Wrap-Up Discussion Questions:

- What did you like/dislike about the game?
- After learning about the geography of China, how do you think this game applies to Ancient China?
- What were some challenges you faced when trying to get the message across?
- What challenges do you think people in Ancient China faced?
- How were you able to increase your speed to get the message across?

- How do you think people in Ancient China were able to get messages across the country faster? What inventions/roads led to this?