

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Measuring and Mapping the Sky

Observation and recording what we see in an accurate way is the foundation of all scientific knowledge. Map making is one of the oldest scientific activities, it certainly predates written language and recorded history by many millennia. The oldest known drawings of constellations are on clay tablets more than 15,000 years old; maps of the lunar phases date back more than 30,000 years. Even though map making is a very ancient activity, it is not a natural one. Map making is an acquired skill that requires practice, but with the use of simple tools even very young students can do a remarkable job of it.

Maps are also great teaching tools. Keep in mind that younger students are very visual learners. Young students who possess only basic literary and logical skills often find it difficult to follow ideas or arguments that are presented through language – this is also a fundamental problem for the ESL student.

Maps put information in an easy to understand visual format, as well as putting information into context which helps the student build a mental framework. Helping students to integrate new knowledge in with what they already know can be a daunting challenge. Map making helps make this process easier, and more effective.

[5.1: Altitude and Azimuth – Your Place in the Sky](#)

[5.2: Measuring the Nightly Path of the Moon](#)

[5.3: Measuring the Moon's Orbital Motion](#)

[5.4: Measuring the Earth with Eratosthenes](#)

[5.5: Mapping the Constellations](#)

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