

## A Mapping Activity

Let me take you through this **activity involving the drawing of a plan for a block of units and then one unit in the block**. Here are the instructions. This is the ambitious version. My suggestion is to learn from the example and set your own up for a space and place you know well.

### Block Instructions

*The unit block consists of twelve units with two side by side blocks. The front of the blocks face to the East and the back is to the West. There is one building with four units on the left (southern) side and another building on the right (northern) side with eight units on this side. The block with eight units is split by a corridor and a stairwell with four units on one side and four units on the other. The block is terraced on four levels. In the middle of the front of the unit blocks are the letter boxes and behind them the garbage bins. There is an entry driveway on the southern side and an exit driveway on the northern side.*

**ACTIVITY: Draw a sketch of your visualisation of the apartment complex**



Figure 1: Eastern view of the apartment complex

### Unit Instructions

Now let us draw one unit in the block in stages. Draw the map with north at the top and a landscape rectangle.

#### 1. Shape of the unit and patio

*The shape of the unit is a rectangle 10 m (north/south) by 14m (east/west). There is a 10m by 3 m wide patio outside these dimensions on the front (east). There is a glass hip high gate which opens on to a 10 metre by 3-metre-wide patio which runs the frontage of the unit. The gate is in the middle of the patio. There is a BBQ on the right (north) and a table and two white chairs on the left (south).*



Figure 2: Front of the unit.

**ACTIVITY: Draw the shape of the unit and the patio.  
Draw in the gate, BBQ, tables and chairs of the patio.**

## 2. The kitchen, dining and living area

The entrance is from the east through two sliding doors beyond the 10m wide patio.

The two sliding doors open into a living area which is in the shape of a rectangle 10m (north/south) x 6 m (east/west). With your back to the door on the left-hand (south) side there is a kitchen to the back and a dining table towards the front. On the right-hand side is a living area with a TV on the right (northern) wall in between two single lounge chairs. Opposite the TV is a three-seater lounge, and on the back (western) side wall of the room is a two-seater lounge. There is a door leading to the hallway in the middle of the back wall between the kitchen and living area.



Figure 3: The kitchen, dining and living areas

**ACTIVITY: Draw the kitchen, dining and living space and add the furniture.**

## 3. Bedrooms, bathroom and laundry

In the middle of the back wall of the living room is the entrance to a hallway which is 5m long. If you stand at that entrance, there is a hallway to the right which is 4m from the internal front door. Next on the right is a L-shaped bathroom with the shower being the L shape behind the following mentioned toilet room. Following this on the right is a separate toilet. A rectangle shaped laundry is straight ahead at the back (western) end of the unit running to the right or north behind the toilet and shower of the bathroom.

Going back to the entrance to the hallway to the left-hand (southern) side is the main bedroom with a queen size bed and following this on the left-hand side the next door is the second bedroom with three single beds.

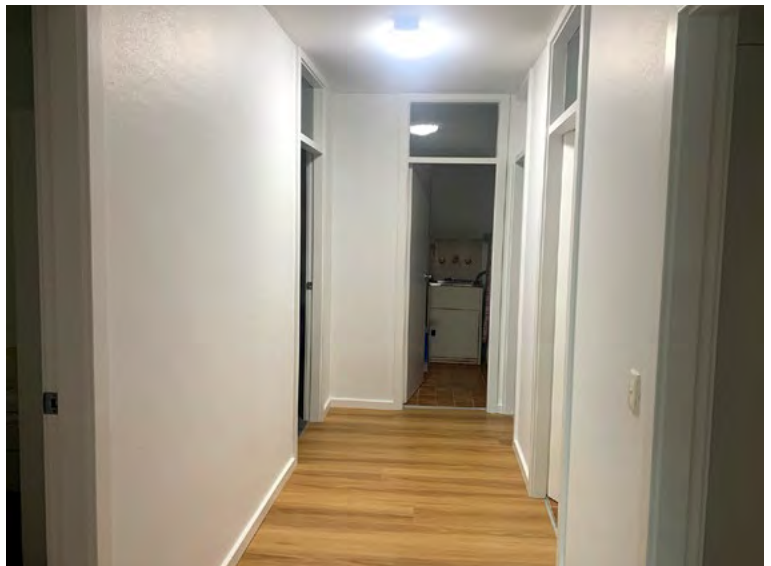


Figure 4: View from the entrance to the rear of the unit.

**ACTIVITY: Draw the back rooms of the unit.**

## Conclusion

This activity is going to cause frustration. It may well have done so for you already. You will have multiple questions from students about how well you have provided instructions from which to draw. The students will get frustrated because they want a quick fix and an answer. Resist the quick solution.

The success of the activity depends on how you set it up. It needs to be made clear that the point of the exercise is to help students visualise place and space without having seen it. Scattered through this article are samples of a range of students' attempts at the activity.

At the end of the exercise provide the map of the unit. See Figure 5. If necessary, you could simplify the task by only providing instructions for individual rooms at a time and put the pieces all together at the end.

Initially the sketch will not be to scale but a later run through can address this skill. The beauty about this exercise is in getting the students to focus on their visualisation of space and place. Give the class a break for a few weeks and reverse the process and ask the students to provide their own instructions to draw a room in their house.

It is an activity they will not forget, and you will not forget.

# GEO SKILLS: TEACHING SKILLS IN GEOGRAPHY

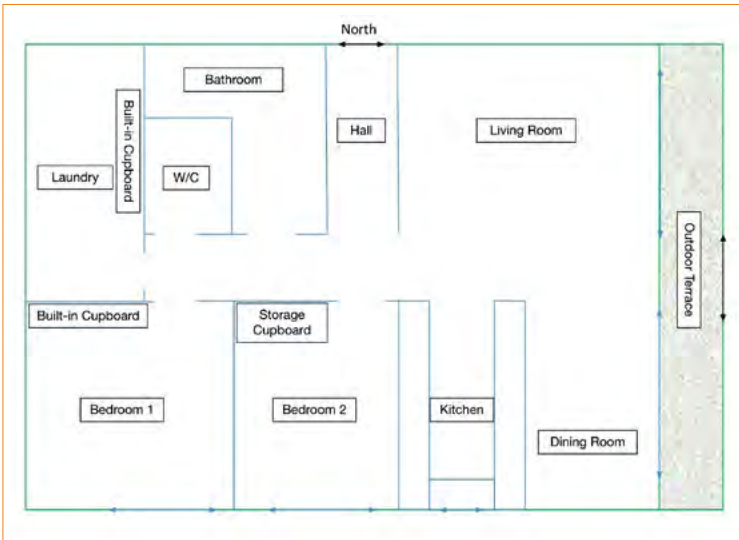


Figure 5: Map of the unit

Interestingly, there are unintended consequences from the activity. Some students who struggle with tests and assignments nailed this task displaying a good sense of space and place. This provided me with a good case for positive reinforcement and a demonstration for students that they can be solid geographers.

Alternatively, the task is humbling for some students who normally do well and were challenged. Perfectionists really struggled but in my debrief they could see the benefit. Finally, in relation to getting the best out of students the task provided insight into students, who think differently, can respond to written and oral instructions and displayed the capacity to endure the uncomfortable for one moment more until success became evident.

**Give it a go – be comfortable with being uncomfortable.**

Samples of student work.

