

LANDSCAPES AND LANDFORMS

Escape Rooms in Geography

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My name is Chad Cary and I have been a HSIE teacher at Casula High School for ten years. History (7–10), Ancient and Modern History are my main teaching areas, however, I have had numerous Geography classes over the years. Because it is not a subject that comes naturally to me, I always make it a personal mission to design lessons which gets students working collaboratively.

Recently I have been experimenting with the use of Escape Rooms to generate high levels of engagement within my HSIE classrooms. I have had tremendous success with this with History classes, but I hadn't had the chance to try one out for a Geography class. This year I was given a mixed ability stage 4 Geography class and decided to trial out an Escape Room as a way of preparing students for an upcoming assessment task. In order to 'escape', students needed to complete various challenges which incorporated both content (Landscapes and Landforms) and geographical skills.

The theme was that our librarian was abducted and locked up somewhere in the school. One of the biggest difficulties I have had in the past with escape rooms is the number of students participating. The ideal number for a group is 8–12 students. The best part of this lesson was that the students were split into three groups and needed to work simultaneously to complete colour coded tasks to find the final map and key to save our librarian before the period ended. This allowed the lesson to easily cater for a larger cohort. It took them 40 minutes and she was saved.

Welcome to Mr Cary's Geography Escape Room

Attention Year 8!!!
I have captured your beloved teacher librarian Ms Milliken and hidden her somewhere in the school.

You will need to use your Geographical skills and content awareness that you have developed this term to find and free her. You will need to work collaboratively with your peers if you are going to have any chance of finding her. You will have 45 minutes to work in your allocated groups, pay attention to what colour you are in.

Your first task is to find the code.
Using the school map and starting in your current location, go south and stop on the first number you reach.
Then go west and stop on the first number you encounter. Hopefully this has provided you with the code you require to proceed

Note - If you go to a clue that you are not up to yet you will receive a strike. 3 strikes and you will be unable to escape!!!

- The world coins can be handed into the Mr Cary for a more explicit clue if you become stuck, use them wisely!!!

The Missing Librarian

LANDSCAPES AND LANDFORMS: ESCAPE ROOMS

I have developed a photo collage to provide a rather comprehensive visual understanding of how the lesson worked. Some of these are included in this article. The full photo collage can be located on the 'Community of Geography Teachers Australia' Facebook group under a post I shared. Amazon and Breakout EDU have been really helpful in regard to accumulating resources in order to put everything together.

Engagement has always been at the forefront of what I do regardless of what subject I am teaching. I have found the integration of Escape Rooms into my Teaching and Learning programs to be one of the best ways at engaging my students and motivating myself.

I am a firm believer in sharing resources with the teaching community so if I ever develop something that has been successful in the classroom, I always ensure that it is shared with my colleagues. The reason for this is simple, I would not have developed half of the engaging lessons I have without the inspiration provided to me by other teachers when they share their stories and experiences. If anyone would like to utilise the resources put together for this escape room, please find below a link to the google drive (can also be found on the Facebook group post). I am always happy to offer support, share resources and bounce ideas of people too.

Resources link

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rQvQ3cjUQ8EsEhqV9ir88lh6yodhBqcb?usp=sharing>

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What this looks like in the classroom

- Students are placed into 3 colour-coded groups. Note: I group them beforehand using a random group creator website with each group designated a colour.
- There are a series of challenges/tasks already set up which have a colour placed upon them.
- The students are told that they need to work together and complete these challenges to find their group's respective key.
- Three keys are required to unlock the coordinates of where the abducted librarian can be found.
- Small, coloured stickers are attached to various challenges (mainly lockboxes with different styles of locks), this alerts the groups as to which challenge, they need to work on.
- Each challenge is designed to reveal a code or message which points them in the direction of the next clue. They will be unable to attempt other challenges because they will lack the necessary information to unlock a challenge.
- If students become stuck, they can request a more explicit clue.
- Each group is given 3 world coins which they can use at any point for guidance.



Locked boxes



World 'help' coins (3 per team)

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Landscapes and Landforms Tasks

Task 1/Group 1 – There is an area reference sheet with an instruction sheet. Students need to figure out the area reference to give them a 4-digit code which will unlock a padlock which will provide them with the next challenge.

Task 1/Group 2 – Landscapes/Landforms find-a-word. Once the words are all located, the remaining letters will reveal a secret word which will unlock a word-padlock.

Task 1/Group 3 – Geography Crossword. Students complete the crossword, which has a number of boxes highlighted, once the crossword is completed, a secret word will be revealed.

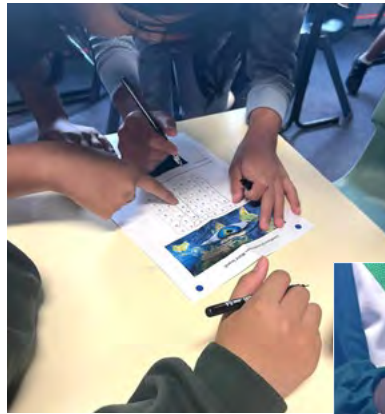
Task 2/Group 1 – Image and Legend task. Students are given a bunch of images of various landscapes. Students use the legend to add the values of the images together to give them a 3-digit number which will unlock a padlock.

Task 2/Group 2 – Code cracker which reveals a sentence directing students to a world map on the back wall.

Task 3/Group 3 – Cardinal direction task using a world map. Students use the map and their understanding of directions to solve a directional task. They then input this series of directions into a directional padlock.

Task 4/Group 1 – Longitude and Latitude task. Students given a location and need to find the longitude and latitude to unlock another padlock.

Task 4/Group 2 – Students put together a jumbled image of Australia. Once this is completed, a secret message will be revealed (written in invisible ink, they are provided with a UV torch).



Students engaged in fun activity to revise topic knowledge, understanding and skills



Happy teacher



Rescued librarian