

Creating a Google Map to show a "Walking School Bus" route

Step 1: Sketch out the route on paper, clearly labeling major points and intersections as necessary. Include relevant notes and text descriptions.

(Example: http://www.hvespta.org/flyers/2007-2008/walk_to_school_day_spring_2008_en.pdf)

Step 2: If you don't already have one, create a Google account (e.g., a Gmail account):
<https://www.google.com/accounts/ManageAccount>

Step 3: If not already logged in, log in to your Google account:
<https://www.google.com/accounts/ManageAccount>

Step 4: Once logged in, go to Google Maps: <http://maps.google.com/>

Step 5: Select the "My Maps" link near top left on the Google Maps interface.

Step 6:

- Select the "Create Map" link.
- Use the standard navigation widget to zoom in to the general area of the points and routes you wish to map.
- Use the three mapping tools to create placemarks, lines, and shapes on the map. (Placemarks are the pin-like graphics that can be associated with text.)
- Play around with colors, line widths, etc, but don't overdo it. Clarity is paramount so "less is more".
- If the map is to be shared via a website, confirm that the Privacy setting is set to "public".
- Don't forget to name and save your map (text inputs in the left sidebar).
- Click on "Save" every so often while working, and "Done" when finished. (You can always re-open a map for later editing.)

Step 7: When finished, select the "Link to this page" link at the far right. A pop up window should open with HTML code that can be included in web pages to link to the map.

Step 8 (extra credit): Create a Web image of the map to use in Web pages:

- With the map open in the Google Maps interface, zoom out to a level that takes in most of your map's content. (Don't worry if the details are lost; you're making a simplified graphic.)
- Select "Alt" + "Print Screen" (on Windows machines, anyway) to capture a screen shot.
- Open up your favorite image creation program (e.g., Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, Paint Shop Pro, etc.) and paste the screen shot into a new image.
- Cut, crop and resize the image as needed.
- Save the image, preferably in PNG format, although GIF is good, too. Avoid JPG unless the image includes photo-like elements.
- Upload the final image to your website, and include it as a linked image in your Web page(s).