

**Why Does Where Matter?  
Using Story Mapping as Informative Text**

*Janet B. Zegna*

This unit is written for kindergarten through second grade teachers to learn how geographic information systems (GIS) can be used in early elementary classrooms to help our students become more analytical when reading maps as informational text and to use maps as tools to deliver information. This unit's activities create an end of unit performance task for reading, writing, geography, and life science as it integrates our social studies unit on maps and globes, our science unit on organisms, and our learning to write informational text. This unit's purpose is to have students create and use maps to convey meaning about the world. They will use critical thinking skills as well as develop an understanding of spatial relationships. They will use reasoning skills to analyze and evaluate the information embedded in the maps. They will ask and answer questions about where certain trees live and why they live there. The final product is a story map which can be published as a web map for other early elementary teachers to use. Finally, the story map can also be a living document that future students can add information to.