Lesson 1: An Introduction to Geocaching

Lesson in Brief
A fun introduction to the world of geocaching. Kids learn (probably for the first time) about geocaching and think of the possibilities for this world-wide, high-tech treasure hunt!

Things you will need
• ‘Geocaching Find Someone Who Knows’ sheet; one copy per student
• Geocaching facts in envelopes
• ‘Find Someone Who Knows’ Answer Sheet
• Sample ‘cache’ – shoebox with trinkets that Year 6 students would find fun
• A few extra trinkets
• ‘Cache’* hidden in the school yard
• Computer with internet and smart board / data projector if possible
• Paper and pens

(Time allocation has not been given as it will depend on your class, and how long you decide to spend on each activity.)

*A cache or geocache is a hidden container housing a logbook, pen or pencil and trinkets for people to exchange. Officially they are registered on the geocaching website (www.geocaching.com) but not if you are doing a more low-tech version around your school. Consider the ages of the students you are working with and be sure to create ‘caches’ that they will enjoy finding!

Lesson Description

Discussion
1. Quietly walk around the room, handing out one trinket each to five or so students. As you give it to them say something like, “not to keep”.

Main Curriculum Links

Health and Physical Education
Examine ways to respond effectively to successes, challenges and failures that strengthen personal identities and sense of self.

English
Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions (ACELY1709).

History
Locate information related to inquiry questions in a range of sources (ACHHS121).

Maths
Solve problems involving the comparison of lengths and areas using appropriate units (ACMMG137).

Learning Objectives

Students can:
✓ Explain what geocaching is, explain the rules, what you need and how you play.
2. Show the sample cache to the class, talking about the various items in the cache.
3. Ask students to come up, one at a time and put their trinket in the cache, and take something out. This, they can keep.
4. Write the word MUGGLE up on the board. In geocaching, what do you think it means?

Activity 1

Outside geocache search
- Remind the kids about the game they used to play where something was hidden and they had to find it by everyone saying “hotter” and “colder” as the finder got closer or further away from a hidden item. We are going to play an older version of this game. Three students wait outside the room (they will be the ‘finders’ or ‘geocachers’) while the teacher tells the rest of the class where they have hidden a ‘cache’.
- Explain geocaching etiquette. Firstly, the need for stealth so that you don’t give it away that there is a cache in that location. Secondly, if more than one geocacher arrives at a site at the same time, the first person to see the cache stands aside to give the other person a chance to find it too. Also discuss the environmental stewardship element of geocaching, that is, take care not to damage the flora or fauna in any way, and also practice ‘cache in–trash out’. Learn more about cache in – trash out at http://www.geocaching.com/cito/default.aspx.
- Three geocachers go in search, with the class following and giving directions. Ensure the class knows north, south, east and west. Teacher gives examples like ‘about ten metres east’, or ‘head south when you reach the corner’.
- When they find the cache, explain that they sign the log book, give something and take something if they want to, then re-hide it exactly where it was before.

Activity 2
(In the classroom, or outside.)

Find someone who knows
- Hand out one envelope to each student, each containing one fact about geocaching. Instruct students to keep this fact to themselves. Students find their question on the ‘Find Someone Who Knows’ sheet, and write down the answer.
- Remind students of the need for care when walking around the room. (With ‘Find Someone Who Knows’ activities, it can get pretty dangerous if kids run around the room to be the first to answer all the questions!).
• Students then mingle to find the answers to the questions.
• When most students have a lot of answers, go through the answers together as a class.

**Activity 3**

**Geocaching in 2 minutes**

Tell students that there are geocaches hidden all over the world!

Watch 2 minute movie on geocaching.com website.

http://www.geocaching.com/videos/#cat=cat:newbies&vid=-4VFeYZTTYs

Type in the name of the school’s suburb and show students the geocaches in the area. Hint that you can use a Smart phone with a geocaching app to go geocaching. If you have downloaded the app on to your phone, show the students.

**Activity 4**

**Design a cache!**

Break up into groups of 3-5 people.

Students use key words and phrases and drawings to answer the following questions:

• What would be some great things to put in a ‘cache’ at our school? (Real caches can’t be put on school grounds as we can’t invite in strangers. These will be found by kids at the school.) Think about what kindy kids, older kids, and even adults would love to find in a cache. This game is for all ages!
• Where would be some great places to hide geocaches around the school?
• How could you disguise the cache so that it is trickier to find?

**Concluding**

Teacher randomly chooses students to say what they have learned in the lesson. Use the ‘Find Someone Who Knows’ sheet as a guide for questions.

Challenge question for home (for kids eager to know more): How did geocaching get started?
Teacher Resource

Geocaching facts and Instructions for ‘Find Someone Who Knows’

(Information taken from the Geocaching website: http://www.geocaching.com/guide/)

These facts are used as starting points for the ‘Find Someone Who Knows’ activity. Geocaching will be new to most students. The idea here is that they each have their own bit of ‘secret’ information to use as a starting point. Photocopy the sheet as many times as you need to, so that each student is given one fact about geocaching. Cut out facts and put each one in an envelope. Hand out these secret facts as kids enter the room. Instruct them to read the ‘Find Someone Who Knows’ sheet and write in the (one) answer that they know. When you are ready, instruct the class to move around the room, getting the answers to the questions.

Each student must do the writing on their own sheet. The person with the answer explains what they know, then the owner of the sheet writes down the answer (otherwise they don’t really learn anything.) They then write the name of the student they got information from.
What is geocaching?
A free, real-world, outdoor, treasure hunt!

How is the game played?
First, go to www.geocaching.com.

1. Register for a free basic membership.
2. Visit the “Hide and Seek a Cache” page.
3. Enter your post code and click “search”.
4. Choose any geocache from the list and click on its name.
5. Enter the GC code into your GPS device (You can download the geocaching app onto your phone, it then becomes a GPS device that you can use for the game.)
6. Use your GPS to help you find the hidden geocaches.
7. Sign the logbook and return the geocache to its original location.
8. Share your geocaching stories and photos online.

What are the rules of geocaching?
1. If you take something from the cache, leave something of equal or greater value.
2. Write about your find in the cache logbook.

What do I need to go geocaching?
You just need a GPS device, or mobile phone with the geocaching app, and a www.geocaching.com membership.

Where are geocaches located?
Geocaches can be found all over the world! They might be at your local park, at the end of a long hike, underwater, or on the side of the street. You can even type in the name of a city on the other side of the world to see what is hidden there.

What are the different types of geocaches?
Here are just a few: Traditional, Multi-cache, Mystery or puzzle caches, Event Caches, Cash in-Trash Out, EarthCache.
What kind of cache should I look for on my first adventure?
Best not to start with the really hard ones. Try:
Cache type: Traditional
Difficulty rating: 1
Cache size: Regular or large

How do I use a Smart phone to go geocaching?
Download the geocaching app, then follow the instructions. It’s easy! You can type in the GC code to your phone or transfer locations from your computer using a cable. You can even just search for the nearest caches while you are out and about.

What does a geocache look like?
Some are big, some are small. You will see everything from a large, plastic container to a fake rock with a secret compartment.

What do I do once I’ve found a geocache?
Sign the book and return it to the cache. You can take an item if you like, but make sure you leave something of equal or greater value. Put the cache back as you found it. Finally, log your find on the geocaching website.

Who hides geocaches?
Members of the geocaching community hide, and maintain caches. You can hide one too!
Remember: if you hide it, you need to maintain it so that other geocachers have something wonderful to find.

How do I hide a cache?
First, find a few caches in your area. This will give you some ideas about what makes a great cache. There is more info on the geocaching website about how to hide and maintain a cache. Have fun!
### Geocaching – Find Someone Who Knows…

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www.natureplaywa.org.au
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