

MAKEBELIEFSCOMIX LESSON PLANS

SECTION 5: WRITING ABOUT MAGIC PLACES FROM STUDENT MAPS

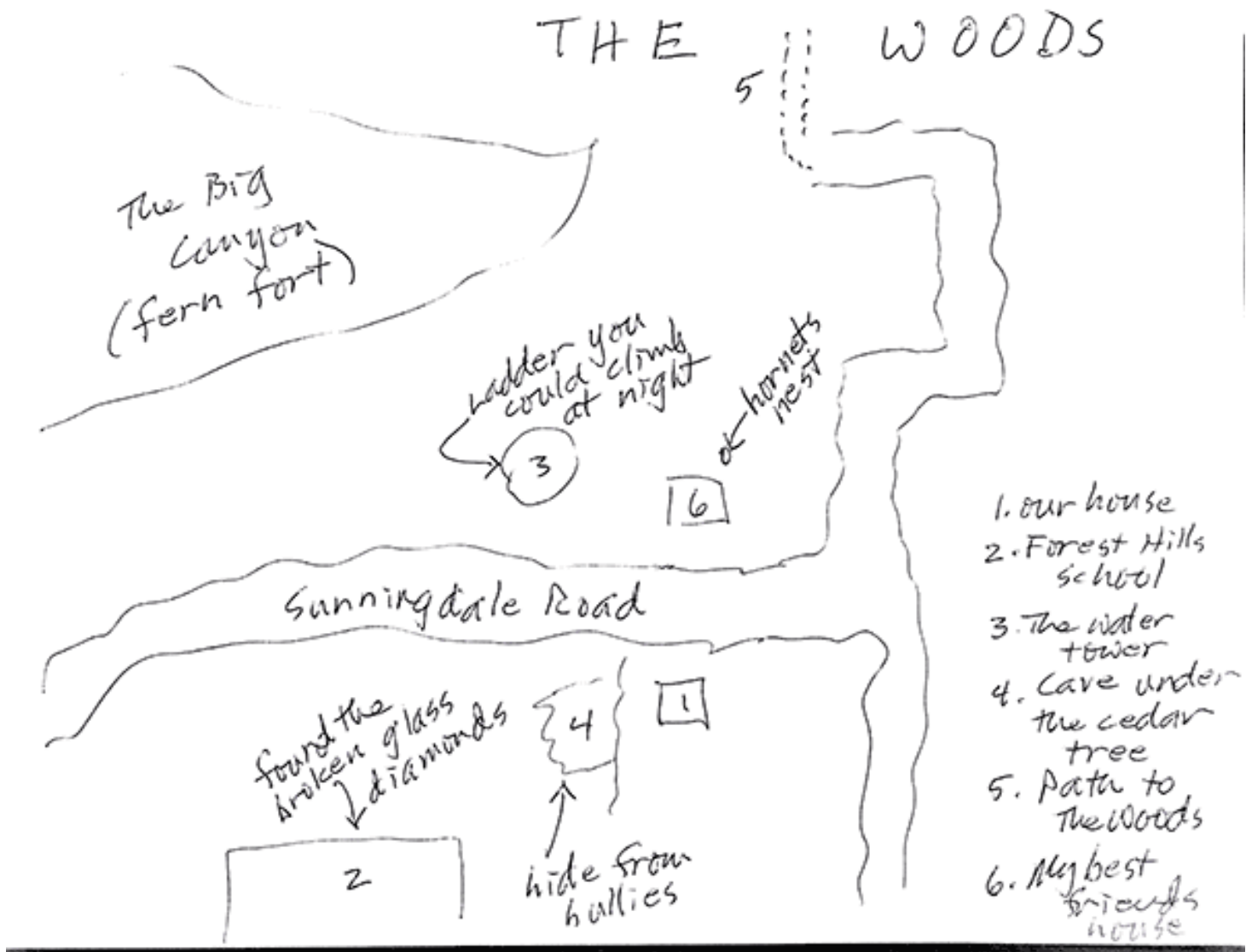
WHAT TO DO WHEN STUDENT SAYS, 'I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING TO WRITE ABOUT'

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Activity: Writing about Magic Places from Student Maps

Rationale: To banish the sentence "I can't think of anything to write about," invite students to draw a map of their childhood neighborhood, identifying key landmarks that can become stories in writing, or scenes in drawings.

Students will: Draw a map of a neighborhood they know from direct childhood experience, including home, school, houses of friends, hiding places, climbing trees, dangerous dogs, and other features of their experience with home ground.



Procedures:

Teachers could model the activity by drawing a map on the board of their own childhood neighborhood—ideally including some quirky, or "secret" information only a kid would know.

Students then draw their own maps, while the teacher circulates around the room, questioning, responding to map elements as they appear, encouraging students to add more detail.

Students make a "Key" to their maps, numbering locations and identifying on a separate page story-details of things that happened at particular locations.

Students each share one story from their map with the class, as a way of kindling new memories from their classmates. Everyone then adds new elements to their own maps.

Students then write stories about their places—the incidents that most intrigue them from the process of making the map. These incidents can then become rich beginnings for stories, poems, essays, comics, or art.

Students can be encouraged to create comic strip stories at MakeBeliefsComix.com about the highlighted notations on the drawn maps. These comic strip stories can be the first step in encouraging students to create longer essays or even autobiographies of the key moments in their lives.

