Place Marker Icons

There are several tricks that significantly enhance the impact that the Place Marker icons can have on a Lit Trip.

Where to locate Place Marker Icons

- At the simplest level, Place Markers can be positioned at every location the characters visit in a story.

- At another level, Place Markers can be positioned at every location *relevant to* the story whether that location is actually visited by the characters or not. For example, in the story, *My Brother Same Is Dead,* the characters do relatively little traveling themselves, but the story makes reference to very specific "nearby" Revolutionary War locations. Identifying these locations with place markers helps students see the "locational context" within which a story takes place.

- Place Markers can be placed at locations relevant to "other" information related to the story such as locations relating to the "life journey" of the author or sites of other geographical, historical, or social significance that might be within students' cognizance. In a constructivist learning situation this helps students connect the story to already existing awarenesses of the location.

Choosing Place Marker Icons

- The choice of Place Marker icons can also be used to carry content. By default, Google Earth uses a yellow push-pin icon. But, this icon offers little in the way of content enhancement beyond "pin-pointing" a location. Consider...

  - The simple option of color-coding the Place Markers. When placing the marker, click on the Style, Color tab in the information window that appears and changing the icon color to indicate "something" about the location. Red push pins could indicate locations relating to the British troops and Blue icons could indicate locations relating to the Colonial troops in a story about the American Revolutionary War.

  - Even better, in the information window associated with a Place Marker, click on the icon image of the yellow push-pin in the upper right corner to see a variety of "other available" icons built into Google Earth. Create a system for letting the icon "tell" what kind of information this Place Marker contains.

    - could indicate "supplemental background information" as opposed to a different icon that indicates locations where particulat actions took place in the story.

    - could indicate that there is a video clip or picture in these pop ups.

    - could be used to indicate sequencing of events.

  - And even better yet, use a custom icon that truly adds value to the Lit Trip.

    Notice how the use of a custom icon adds value to these Place Markers from the Night Lit Trip.

    After clicking the yellow push-pin icon to get to the built in icons, click the Add Custom Icon... link at the bottom of the window. Then either browse for a locally stored icon or enter the URL for a website where the icon appears. Be sure to look for copyright restrictions.
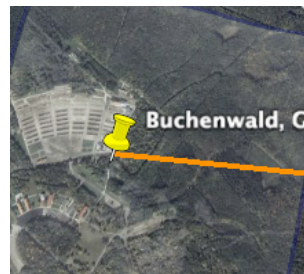
  - Sometimes the best icon is no icon! In the icon selection window, to the right of the Add Custom Icon... button is a button labeled No Icon. This allows the placement of labels without an associated icon and therefore there is no way to "trigger" a pop-up window. This is particularly useful to simply indicate static labels such as names of rivers, dates, time, etc.

Naming Place Markers

The "default assumption" is that Place Markers should be named to indicate the name of the place they mark. This is certainly often exactly how they should be named, however, there are other possibilities for naming Place Markers that can add value.

Consider...

- naming the Place Markers according to the chapter number in the book relating to this location. Then in bold, identify the name of the location in the first line of the description.

- naming the Place Markers to indicate a timeline of the journey. Then use the first line of the description to indicate the chapter and/or the location name.

Taking Advantage of the Style, Color Controls

Consider...

- using label colors to "help tell the story." Use the Color,Style options to color-code factions within the story, to distinguish antagonists from protagonists, to indicate which mark Plot elements and which mark Theme elements, or to clarify which are about the story itself and which provide background information that supplements the understanding of the story.