

Activity from the 'Didactic Atlas' by IGN: «Create a sketch of a landscape»

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Introduction

The «[Didactic Atlas](#)» of the National Geographic Institute of Spain (IGN) is an Open Educational Resource (OER) aimed at learning and teaching Geography, which takes the Spanish educational system as a reference and is linked to the National Atlas of Spain (ANE). It has been developed in collaboration with teachers from the Didactics of Geography Group of the Spanish Association of Geography (AGE) and the Interuniversity Institute of Geography (IIG) of the University of Alicante.

It consists of a digital and multimedia geographic atlas, where various aspects of Spain's geography are presented in an educational manner through a collection of maps, most of which are interactive, along with a series of activities and games to practice and test the knowledge acquired. It includes 15 topics, divided into two levels (Compulsory Secondary Education and Baccalaureate) and grouped into 5 thematic sections. All the content is available for download (editable in eXeLearning) and is offered under an open license, respecting the authorship of the work and allowing its use, adaptation, and redistribution.



Activity «Create a sketch of a landscape»

For the GeoNight 2025 edition, we propose carrying out an activity from the «[Didactic Atlas](#)» of the IGN with the aim of familiarizing the general public with this free-access educational resource.

The selected activity is called «[Realizar el croquis de un paisaje](#)» and belongs to the «Paisaje» (Landscape) topic of the «[Didactic Atlas](#)» forming part of the thematic group «Estructura territorial» (Territorial Structure).

The landscape is the visible part of the geographical space, resulting from the interaction of natural and/or human elements and factors over time. Natural elements include abiotic components (relief, climate, hydrography) and biotic components (vegetation, fauna), which interact with anthropic elements (population, infrastructure, settlement, land use, etc.).

When interpreting a landscape, it is necessary to systematize it (organize it in some way), for example, through the identification of its components.

In this context, sketches drawn over a landscape photograph serve as an educational tool that can encourage careful observation to identify elements and units of the landscape, facilitate the commentary and interpretation of a landscape image, and develop synthesis skills.

The activity involves creating a sketch based on a landscape photograph, identifying the units and components of the landscape. The objectives intended to be achieved with this activity are:

- Learn to analyze and interpret a landscape
- Understand the geographical space from a systemic perspective
- Cultivate a geographical outlook that appreciates landscape heritage, promotes sustainability, and fosters respect for the territory

Would you dare to interpret a landscape you know by drawing a sketch?

How to carry out the activity?

- 1) Access the activity «[Realizar el croquis de un paisaje](#)».

You will see two options (Task 1 and Task 2). We will do number 2, which involves selecting a photograph of a landscape from our surroundings or one we are familiar with and creating a sketch identifying the units and elements of the landscape.

- 2) To make it easier to carry out the activity, we detail the steps to follow:

- I. We look for a photograph of a landscape that we like or are familiar with.

- II. We analyze and interpret the landscape.


We can learn the meaning of «[Paisaje](#)» (landscape) what its components are, and how to interpret them by consulting the "Landscape" topic in the Didactic Atlas of the IGN.

III. We draw the sketch on the photograph. (See the example in [the Annex](#))

Sketches can be made by hand, with free drawing tools, or you can also use the free educational resource from IGN, «[Discovering the territory](#)». At the end of the modules "[Map Symbols](#)" and "[Drawing a Map](#)" you will find a tool to draw the sketch, print, and save your design.



The different options for creating a sketch are indicated in the information box for the activity:

[Actividad] Realizar el croquis de un paisaje

 Realizar el croquis de un paisaje

Descripción de la actividad

Elaborar varios croquis realizados sobre fotografías de paisaje, identificando unidades y componentes del paisaje.

  Los croquis se pueden realizar de diferentes modos y utilizando distintas herramientas:

- A mano, con rotuladores, dibujando sobre un acetato que se superpone a la fotografía.
- En el ordenador, utilizando un *software* libre y gratuito de dibujo. Por ejemplo, GIMP, Paint.net, etc.
- En el ordenador, de forma *on line*, haciendo uso del recurso educativo del IGN de [Descubre el Territorio: Dibujar un mapa](#). Al final de esta píldora educativa se ofrece la posibilidad de insertar una fotografía y dibujar sobre ella, introduciendo trazos (de diferente color, grosor, etc.), y añadir texto. También existe la posibilidad de imprimir el croquis final (ocultando la fotografía de fondo).

IV. We identify the units of the landscape (with letters) and the elements of the landscape (with numbers).

V. We briefly comment on the image. What type of landscape is it?

Would you like to share your sketch and/or the landscape commentary on [our social media](#) (@IGNSpain)? You can respond to the GeoNight post that we will publish on our profile using the hashtags #AtlasDidacticoIGN and #GeoNight2025. You can also give us your opinion about this activity and the Didactic Atlas of the IGN that it is part of.

Annex: Example of a sketch from the photograph «Aerial view of the Alcarria of Guadalajara»

Let's create, as an example, the sketch of the photograph from the National Atlas of Spain titled «[Vista aérea de la Alcarria de Guadalajara](#)».



Vista aérea de la Alcarria de Guadalajara

Atlas Nacional de España (ANE), [ign.es. Vista aérea de la Alcarria de Guadalajara](#) (CC BY 4.0)

To create the sketch, we will use the free educational resource from IGN, [Discovering the territory: Drawing a map](#).



We navigate through the resource (clicking on the arrows at the bottom) and change the photograph (pressing the button "Change Photo"). We select the desired image in .jpg format.



We select the stroke color (for example, black) and the width (for example, 1 point) and start drawing.

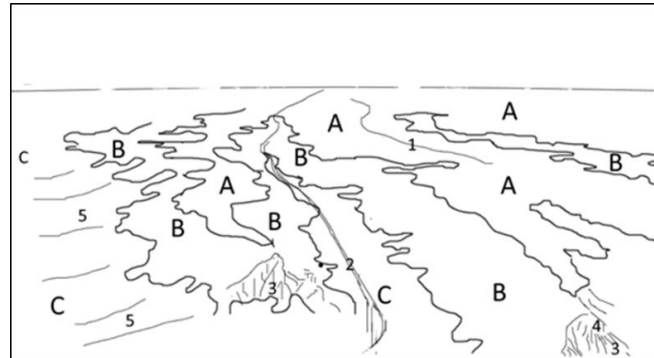


Using the top toolbar, we can undo changes, erase, add text, etc.

We identify the units of the landscape with letters and the elements of the landscape with numbers.

Once we finish drawing on the image, we click the "Hide/Show Background" button to see only the strokes (sketch) on a white background. We can print or save the image as a .png file by clicking the "Print/Save" button.

The result, in the case of the example, would be:



Units

A: Moorlands
B: Slopes
C: Valley floors

Elements

1: AVE Madrid-Barcelona
2: Northeast Highway
3: Gullies
4: Escarpment
5: Glacis