

GOOGLE MAPS LEADS HIKERS ASTRAY

Nov 28th, 2023

WARM-UP QUESTIONS: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. What images come to your mind when you think about Canada?
2. Read the headline above. Have you heard this news story? If so, say what you know. If not, can you guess what it is about?

VOCABULARY: *Match the following vocabulary words with a description. Use a dictionary if you need to.*

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|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Astray | a) a natural area that is uninhabited and mostly unchanged by people |
| 2. Wilderness | b) being somewhere that you cannot get away from |
| 3. Treacherous | c) away from the correct path |
| 4. Stranded | d) to find one's way |
| 5. Harness | e) a device that tells which way is north |
| 6. Navigate | f) a set of straps for holding a person to stop them from falling |
| 7. Compass | g) dangerous |

LISTEN: *Listen to the audio track on eslnewsstories.com or to a reader of the text. Try to fill in the missing words. Then check your answers with the full text (below).*

On separate occasions, hikers in the Canadian wilderness have required rescuing after attempting to _____ a trail on Google Maps. Unfortunately, the path they were trying to follow did not exist.

The region they were in, north of Vancouver near Mount Fromme, has treacherous cliffs and was the location of one hiker's _____ in 2021. At least twice, hikers there have become lost and needed to be rescued by helicopter. One of those hikers called North Shore Rescue (NSR), a volunteer rescue group, because he was stranded on a cliff and was _____ how long he could hang on. NSR lowered a harness to the man and was able to lift him to safety.

The rescue group is warning hikers against using urban map applications to navigate while in hiking areas. They say there are more _____ apps for trail guidance, and because technology can fail, they recommend using a paper map and compass.

It is unknown how the non-existent trail appeared on the Maps app in the first place. Google Maps has now _____ the trail from their app.

WORD FORMS: Fill in different forms for the vocabulary from the article. Use a dictionary if you need to. Where there is an *x*, the word is unimportant for ESL students, has a different meaning, or does not exist. Sometimes there are multiple possible answers, and sometimes the adjective form is a past or present participle.

VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	NOUN
x	treacherous		
	stranded	x	
		x	harness
navigate			

FULL STORY:

On separate occasions, hikers in the Canadian wilderness have required rescuing after attempting to follow a trail on Google Maps. Unfortunately, the path they were trying to follow did not exist.

The region they were in, north of Vancouver near Mount Fromme, has treacherous cliffs and was the location of one hiker's death in 2021. At least twice, hikers there have become lost and needed to be rescued by helicopter. One of those hikers called North Shore Rescue (NSR), a volunteer rescue group, because he was stranded on a cliff and was unsure how long he could hang on. NSR lowered a harness to the man and was able to lift him to safety.

The rescue group is warning hikers against using urban map applications to navigate while in hiking areas. They say there are more suitable apps for trail guidance, and because technology can fail, they recommend using a paper map and compass.

It is unknown how the non-existent trail appeared on the Maps app in the first place. Google Maps has now removed the trail from their app.

Sources: [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), [cbc.ca](https://www.cbc.ca), [businessinsider.com](https://www.businessinsider.com)
For source links, see the article on [ESLNewsStories.com](https://www.ESLNewsStories.com)

COMPREHENSION: *Decide if the following are true (T) or false (F), and then discuss your answers with your partner(s).*

1. Vancouver is north of Mount Fromme. (T / F)
2. Hikers have become lost because of inaccurate maps. (T / F)
3. A volunteer rescue group recommends hikers not to rely on apps like Google Maps. (T / F)
4. Google has corrected the problem in the Google Maps app. (T / F)

COMPLETE: *Re-order the following sentences. Capitalize certain words and add punctuation.*

1. should / hikers / map / urban / not / applications / use
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2. hikers / some / by / have / rescued / been / helicopter
-

DISCUSSION: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Try to speak in sentences and ask follow-up questions.*

1. What did you think about this story? Was there any surprising information?
2. Have you been to Canada? How was it? If not, are you interested in going there? What are you interested in seeing there?
3. Do you like hiking? Why or why not?
4. Does your country have good hiking locations? Where are they?
5. What dangers do hikers face?
6. Do you have a good sense of direction?
7. Do you prefer using a paper map or a maps app? How often do you use either of those in your daily life?
8. Has a maps app ever given you wrong information or instructions? What happened?
9. Which technology do you trust? Which technology is difficult to trust?
10. In what situations do people need rescuing?

