

## **Do Our Brains Pay a Price for GPS?**

Readability Score: 12.4

1. Define: intuitive, retain, schematics, specialist, spatial memory, atrophy, cognitive, incremental, orienting, visual interface, inherently
2. What are some mental maps you have?
3. Have you used GPS? Do you think it has caused you, or people you were riding with, to neglect the forming of mental maps? Explain.
4. What is the theory behind the idea that GPS inhibiting our creation of mental maps? What is the empirical evidence that it does so?
5. What does the writer mean when he says the GPS reorients itself to put the user at the center of the map?
6. According to the author, we may not want to let GPS take over our brain's map-making work, because "[T]he process of generating mental maps also plays a role in activities that have nothing to do with getting to work." Do you agree? What might these activities be?
7. Besides the reason mentioned in question six, list two arguments mentioned in the article for retaining our mental map making skills, despite the fact that technology can replace them. What do you think of these arguments?
8. Why do you think our brains change depending on how we use them? Why do they need this flexibility--what factors influence the different ways a person might use his or her brain? Can we say, as the author does, that forming mental maps is something "the human brain is supposed to do well"? Explain.
9. What other brain functions can you think of that have weakened over hundreds or thousands of years due to technology? Have any been enhanced? Explain.
10. Do you think there are any limits to how we can shape our brains? Can we, or others, mold us into anything we want to be? Why or why not?