OpenSchoolMaps: 01 Get to know the OSM-Org website solution

OpenSchoolMaps.ch — Free learning materials for free geodata and maps

A worksheet for students

This worksheet introduces you to the OpenStreetMap project and its main website openstreetmap.org. You will learn to search for places and read the map there.

Have you heard of OpenStreetMap?

Go to osm.org with your web browser. (The content of the address field will change to something like `https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=8/46.825/8.224`.)

You will be brought to a website. The main part of which is a map. Can you see the map section? Which area is shown?

If this is your first visit to openstreetmap.org, a welcome message will appear in the upper left corner. If the message has already been clicked away, here is its content again:

> Welcome to OpenStreetMap!
>
> OpenStreetMap is a map of the world, created by people like you and freely usable under an open license.
>
> Hosting is supported by [...].
>
> https://www.osm.org/about Learn more | https://www.osm.org/user/new Start mapping

Read the message and then close it to return to the map.

Map Section

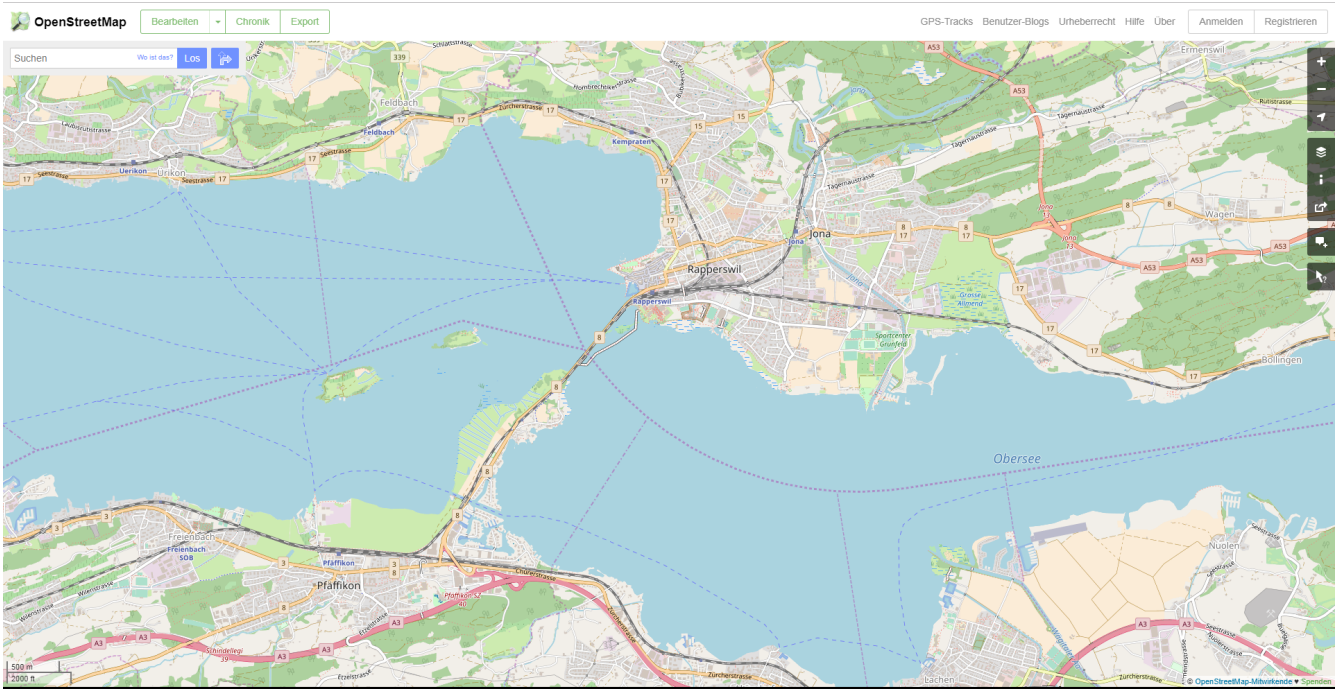

Figure 1. The OpenStreetMap.org website.

At the right margin, there are some dark grey buttons with white symbols. Click on the − button. What happened?

What do you think the + -button does? Try it out!

If you have a mouse with a scroll wheel, hover the mouse pointer over the map and scroll (slowly) forwards or backwards. What did you notice?

Does it matter where you hover the mouse pointer as you scroll your mouse?

Of course, the map section can also be moved without enlarging or changing its size. reduce. Can you figure out how?

What happens when you double-click a spot on the map?

Search Box

At the top left you will find a text input field for search queries. It can be places, addresses, sights and names of shops, hotels, restaurants and much more. Some other examples are:

- Search your canton
- Search your church or your district

> The search field takes care of spelling and wording. If what you're searching is not found, it is either not in the database or what you have entered is spelled differently in the database. Just change the query and try again!

Try finding your school, you can use the search field or simply move around the map as learned in the section above. If OpenStreetMap fails to query your school by the name or address, you can try including both.

Is your school building registered in OpenStreetMap?

Try searching for your house. Can it be found by your address?

If not, search for it again by moving and zooming the map. Try to find other places you know.

OpenStreetMap does not only work in Switzerland. You can also find places like New York, Tokyo and Kolkata. Important cities can be found under different names, so instead of "Tokio" you can use the English spelling "Tokyo" or the local (Japanese) "東京".

- Have you recently been on holiday (at home or abroad) or visiting relatives? Try to find the resort which you resides in. Can you locate them on the map?

Which city is called "Ciūrichas" in Lithuanian?

A Spanish tourist asks about the way to "Ginebra". Where is she trying to go to (in Switzerland)?

Orientation

There is no compass rose on openstreetmap.org. What is the map orientation? If necessary, you can compare a physical map with the virtual map from openstreetmap.org.

East is on the _____ of the openstreetmap.org map.

North is at the _____ of the openstreetmap.org map

South is at the _____ of the openstreetmap.org map

West is on the _____ of the openstreetmap.org map

Proportions On The Map

Zoom out until you can see the entire map. You will realize that Greenland and South America seems to have the same size. Could it be that they are actually about the same size? If possible, look at the globe and compare with that.

At the bottom left you will find a map scale. In contrast to physical map, there is no Scale number (e.g. 1:10'000). Can you imagine why?

Map Key

To see the meaning of different line colors and types on the map, click on the  button on the right. Also different surface types and some (not all) map symbols are listed there.

The further you zooms in, the more details are displayed on the map and the longer this map key becomes.

What do the purple lines of different thicknesses mean?