Bonus: Map Drawing Tips

As a bonus to the course, we're including some tips on how to draw good maps for your future games.

Some of you might feel that you are not good at drawing maps. Put another way, this just means that you're not sure of what needs to be included in your map. Once you are aware of the important points that all good maps share, then you'll be well on your way to creating and drawing some great maps. To get things started, it's always a good idea to sketch a rough outline on paper before starting in RPG Maker.

Different Points for Different Maps

Field Maps

When thinking of your Field maps, first consider what route will the player take on the adventure? What vehicles will be necessary? If the player is to pass through a cave, then a rocky area where a cave would naturally form is necessary. If the player is to use a boat, then you'll need to create a wide expanse of sea. If an airship is called for, then you'll need to surround the destination with impassable mountains. By planning the adventure out this way, you will gradually come to an image of what your map will look like.

Villages

If you're having difficulty with a village map, then begin by making a list necessary buildings and locations for the village. Shops and Inns are obviously necessary, but also think about the role that village plays in the game and in the game world. If it is a port village, then not only will you need a dock for ships, but also a location to unload and store cargo, as well as homes for all the people who work the ships and cargo.

Dungeons

With dungeons as well, it's best to begin by thinking of the purpose or what role the dungeon plays. If the dungeon is in a natural topographical feature like a cave, then the insides will be correspondingly intricate. But if it is an artificially created feature like a mine or a robber's hideout, then the shape will be much more ordered with straight lines and 90 degree corners. Further, the boss's room and geographically placed traps will require a shape that matches the game's walkthrough.

A Collection of Ready-to-Use Maps

Sometimes, explanations alone are not enough, so we've prepared a few sample maps for you to use.

Field 01

Here are 3 large islands surrounding an inner sea and surrounded by the deep sea. We imagine a scenario where the player needs to find a small boat to cross the inner sea where he will search for a bigger boat to sail the deep sea. Hopefully, he'll find an airship on his journey to take him to the dessert surrounded by mountains at the bottom right of the map. Be sure to think of where you'll place each of the vehicles before using this map.

Field 02

With a sea in the middle, this is a map that sends the player around in a circle. It's also specially constructed so that the player can't just walk across it. Instead, the player will need to pass though mountains via caves or arrange a ship to travel across the sea. Also, since each area is set up individually, you could create Events that need to be completed before a bridge appears allowing access to the next area.


Farming Village

There is an Inn in the top left, a shop on the bottom right and a church in the top right.

Port

This map is designed not to show the ships moored here. Instead, you could arrange for the player to walk off the map along the pier, fade the screen to black and have the player on the boat in the next scene. The building in the top-left corner is mean to be a light house, but it could also be used as a storehouse.
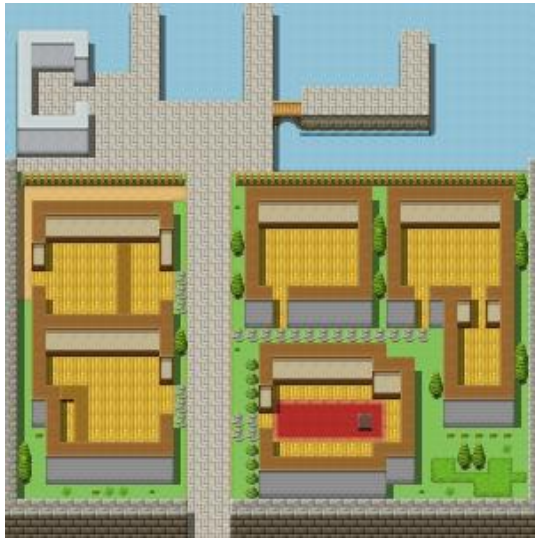

Castle Town

The player would pass through the map and enter the castle through the top. There is a bar and Inn in the bottom left corner.

Snow-covered Village

The building in the top left could be the mayor's house, or a meeting hall of some sort. The building at the bottom right could be a storehouse. Since this is a snow-covered area, it may be interesting to build a basement storehouse somewhere.
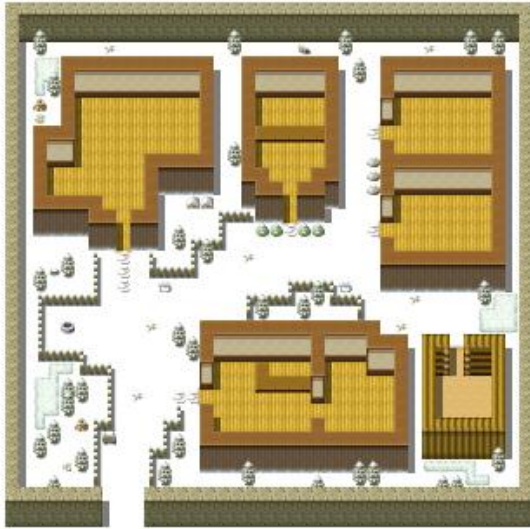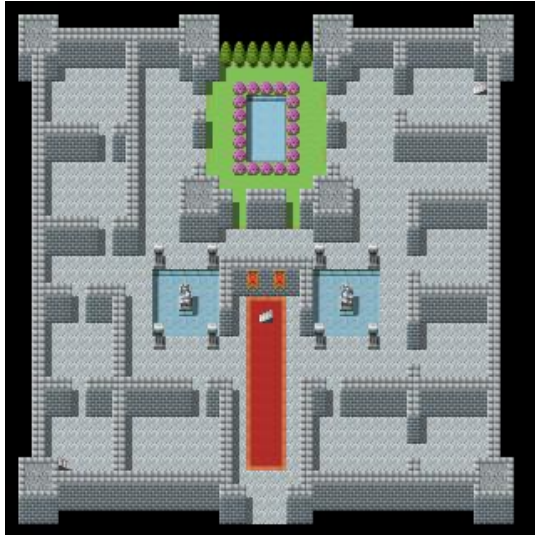

Mountain Village

Here you could add a cave at the top of the map and put a room or a dungeon.

Castle, 1st Floor

The staircase in the middle could be a passage up to the audience chamber. This floor may contain the kitchens, maids and soldiers' rooms.
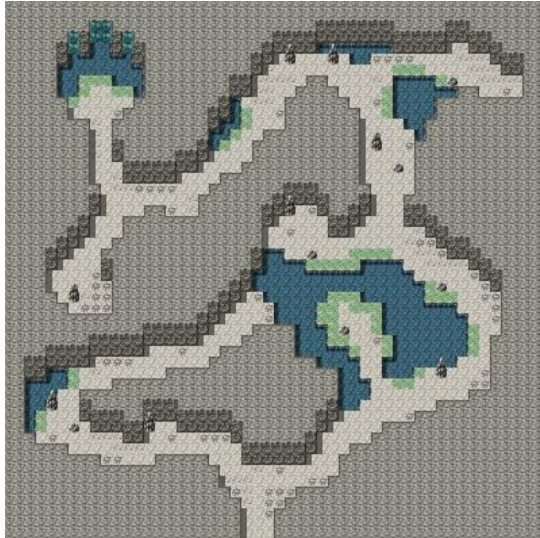

Castle, 2nd Floor

The two rooms on the left of the audience chamber could be for the king and his prince or princess. Directly below the audience chamber could be a dining room with the galley beside it and some waiting rooms directly above.
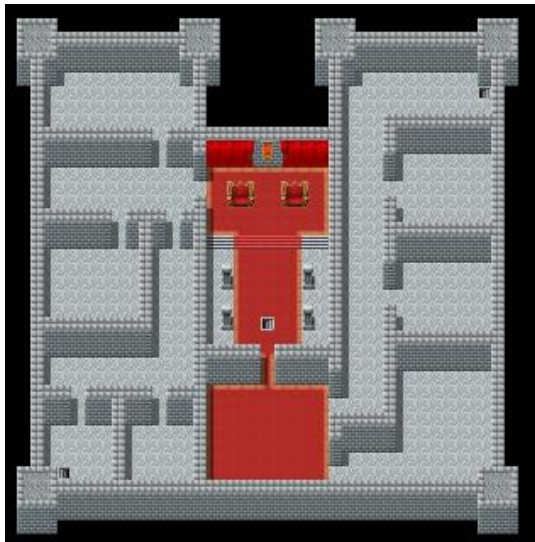
Cave-style Dungeon

This would be ideal for the first dungeon of the game. The room with the waterfalls is the boss room.
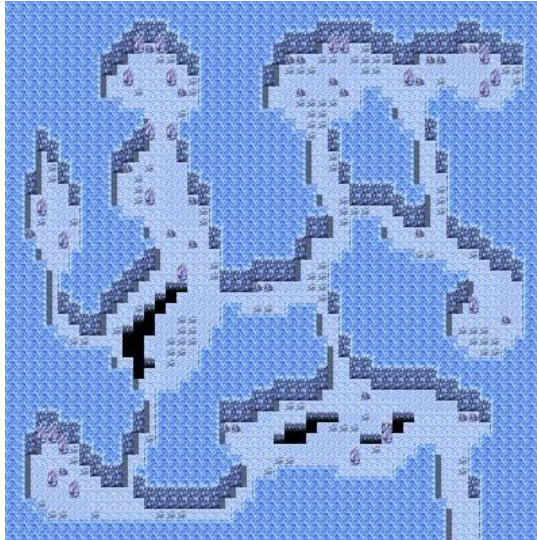

Gang Hideout

This is a cave within a cave and the chief's room is the one with the carpet. Behind that would be the treasure room. The entrance could be guarded by a password, switch or a locked door.
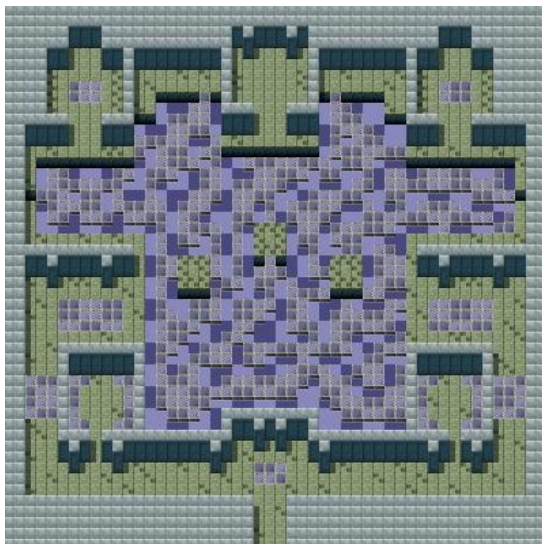
Crystal Cave

With open crevices and crystal pillars, this is a difficult to navigate map. The room in the top left is the boss room.

Metal Cave

Built on the image of a base from an ancient civilization, the metal floor is beginning to give way and you can see through it in places. Setting different backgrounds could be a lot of fun with this map.

Underground Canal

Here is a map with metal ladders. Since they are necessary to move around, you could set up puzzles to allow access to them.

Ancient Ruins

The boss room is in the middle. There is a path around the ruins, so you could utilize the full map by breaking some of the walls and making some passageways impassable.

How to Use the Sample Maps

We've prepared a file with all the above maps. You're free to use these maps as templates for your projects. Follow the instructions below if you don't know how.

1. Open 2 instances of RPG Maker VX. In one is the sample data, in the other is your project.
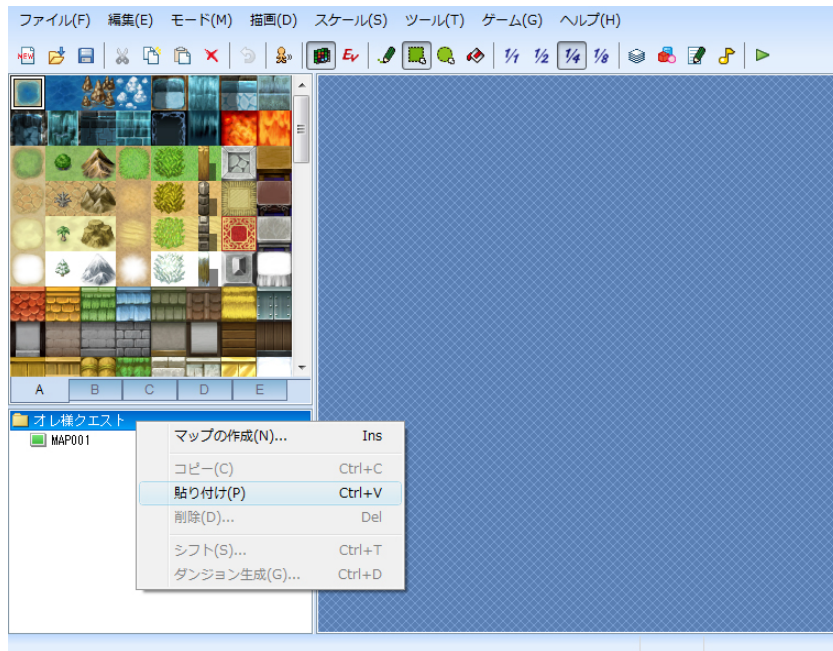

*Opening 2 instances.

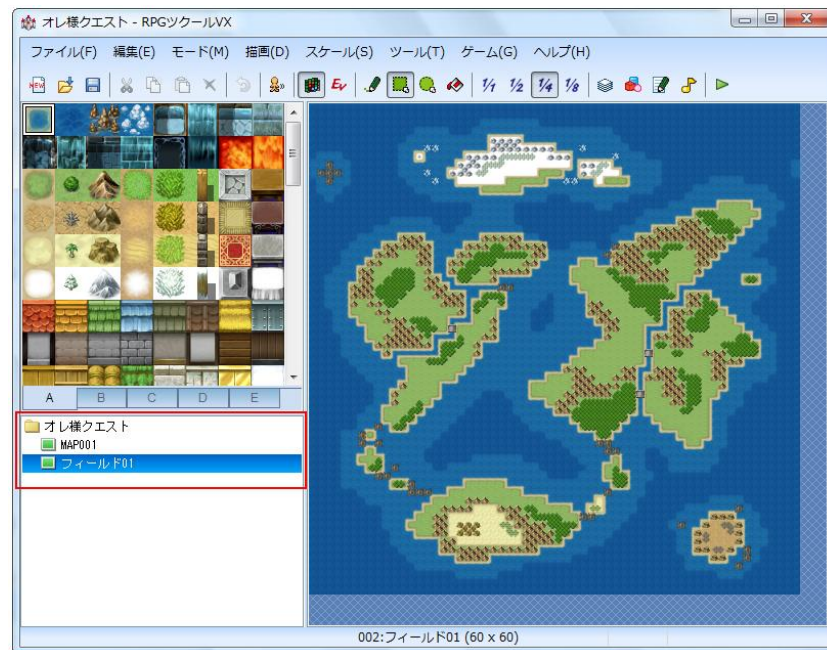2. Copy the map of your choosing by right-clicking it in the map tree and selecting "Copy".
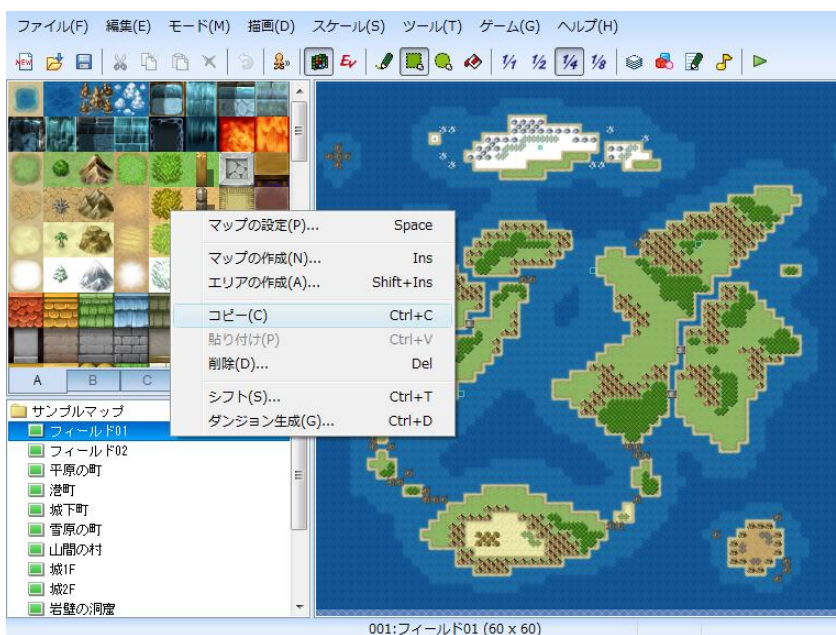
*Copying a sample map.

3. Past the copied map into your project by right-clicking in your map tree and selecting "Paste".

*Pasting the sample map.

*Completed copy!

Each map contains only the bare minimum necessary. Symbols for towns and dungeons, decorations inside rooms and other details still need to be added. Use the above explanations as a base to create your own original worlds.

Sample map data: vx_sample_map.exe

NOTE: "Open Project" is not availabel in a trial version of RPG MAKER VX. In order to import this sample data, you'll need a full version of RPG MAKER VX.