



Map reading made easy



Understanding your map 1. The basics

There are some basic features that most maps will include:

- **Roads** tend to be marked in different colours depending on the type of road depicted. Roads on a map range from thick blue lines, showing motorways, to dashed lines, indicating an un surfaced minor road.
- **Footpaths** are marked on Ordnance Survey maps in various colours. On a 1:25 000 scale OS Explorer Map the public rights of way are marked in green and on a 1:50 000 scale OS Landranger Map they are marked in magenta. There are various types of public rights of way and public access, so please check the map key for full information. It is important to be aware that footpaths that are shown in black are not necessarily public rights of way.
- **Woods** are shown in green with a coiferous or non-coiferous tree shape printed over the top.
- **Buildings** are marked by small black squares. However, some particular buildings have their own special symbols, such as churches and windmills. Any of these buildings can be used as landmarks, helping you to check your position on the map.
- **Rivers and streams** are shown as blue lines. The width of the line is representative of the watercourse width (if the width of a river is more than 8 metres it is shown as two blue lines with a light blue area between). Rivers and streams can be extremely useful in determining your position on a map.
- **Scale** tells you how much the land has been scaled down to fit on the paper. If the scale of a map is 1:50 000 then everything on the map will be 50 000 times smaller than it is in reality.
- **Your Ordnance Survey map** will also contain other features and information that will be explained, along with the features above, in the key of the map.



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Other titles in the series

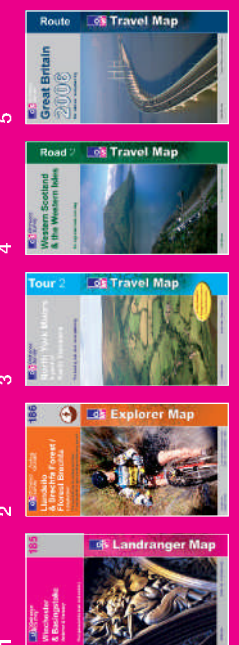


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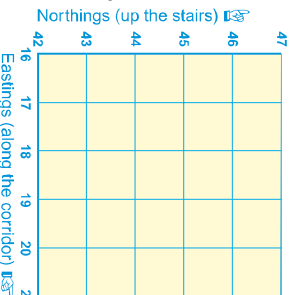
1. Your passport to town and country
2. The essential map for outdoor activities
3. For touring and local route planning
4. For regional route planning
5. For national route planning

Understanding your map 2. Grid lines explained

Ordnance Survey maps are covered in a series of faint blue lines that make up a grid. The lines have numbers accompanying them that allow you to accurately pinpoint your location on a map. Once you have located where you are, the grid system makes it simple to give the others (such as mountain rescue) an accurate description of your location. This description, which will be a series of numbers, is known as a grid reference.

Grid references

Before you begin to look at grid references it is important to be aware that all the numbers going across the face of the map, for example, left to right, are called eastings (this is because they are heading eastward), and similarly, all the numbers going up the face of the map from bottom to top are called northings (again because they are heading in a northward direction).



There are two main types of grid reference:

- **4-figure** – for example, **1945**, this indicates a single kilometre square on an Ordnance Survey map.
- **6-figure** – for example, **1924 54**, shows a point within a square.

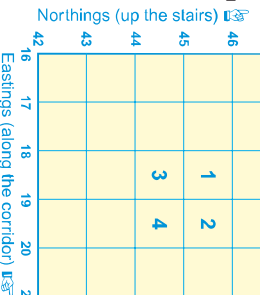
4-figure map references

When giving a 4-figure grid reference you should always give the eastings number first and the northings number second, very much like when giving the reading of a graph in school – you must go along the corridor/hallway (horizontal) and then up the stairs (vertical).

For example, the number **2** in the diagram opposite is **19** across and **45** up and therefore the 4-figure grid reference is **1945**.

The numbered squares on the diagram above would have the following 4-figure grid references:

- 1 = **1845**
- 2 = **19 45**
- 3 = **1844**
- 4 = **19 44**



What is a map? A map is simply a plan of the ground on paper. The ground on which the map is drawn normally will have the following features:

- A scale and a legend, to show the symbols that explain what the map means.
- A key, or a legend, to show the symbols that explain what the map means.
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6-figure map references

Having worked out the basic 4-figure grid reference, for example, square 3 below, imagine this square is further divided up into tenths. Using the example opposite, the grey box is in the square **1844**. More accurately, it is 7 tenths across and 8 tenths up within the grid square **1844** and therefore has the 6-figure map reference **187448**.

The squares on the map opposite would have the following 6-figure grid references:

- = **187448**
- = **185443**

National Grid lines

As well as numbered grid lines, Ordnance Survey maps have codes made of two letters. These two letter codes can be found printed in faint blue capitals on Ordnance Survey maps. The whole of Great Britain is divided into squares of 100 km and each square is given two letters. There will be a diagram within your map's key showing you which areas of your map fall into different squares of the National Grid.

When you quote your six-digit grid reference you should put the two letters of the area you are in before the numbers. This means that there is no doubt or confusion about your location. For example, you may be at grid reference **509 582** in south-west Scotland. The complete grid reference you should quote would be **NX 509 582** (without the letters the numeric reference would be repeated in every 100 km square).

					HP
			HT	HU	
		HW	HX	HY	HZ
		NA	NB	NC	ND
		NE	NG	NH	NJ
		NL	NM	NN	NO
		NR	NS	NT	NU
		NW	NX	NY	NZ
		SC	SD	SE	TA
		SH	SJ	SK	TF
		SM	SN	SO	SP
		SR	SS	ST	SU
		SV	SW	SX	SY
					SZ
					TV