

# Maps, scales and coordinates

**How to use:** Print first for the main practice. Then use the device to repeat activities and save progress.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Identify the main features of a map including compass rose, scale bar, legend, and grid
- 2 Use coordinates to locate places on a grid map
- 3 Explain what the scale bar tells a map reader
- 4 Match common map symbols to the features they represent

## MINI LESSON

A map is a flat drawing that represents a part of the Earth's surface from above. To make sense of a map, you need to understand the tools it uses: a compass rose, a scale bar, a legend (also called a key), a grid, and coordinates. Together these features turn a flat picture into a powerful navigation tool.

### The Compass Rose

The compass rose is a symbol on a map that shows the four main directions: North (N), South (S), East (E), and West (W). It is usually placed in a corner of the map. When you read a map, always find the compass rose first so you know which way is North.

### The Scale Bar

The scale bar is a small ruler on a map that shows you the relationship between distance on the map and real distance on the ground. For example, 1 centimetre on the map might equal 10 kilometres in real life. By measuring the scale bar you can calculate real distances between places.

### The Legend (Key)

The legend, sometimes called the key, is a box on the map that explains what each symbol, colour, or line means. Without a legend you cannot know whether a blue line is a river or a road, or whether green shading is a forest or a park. Always check the legend before reading the map.

### Coordinates and the Grid

A grid is a set of evenly-spaced lines running across and up a map. The vertical lines are labelled with letters (A, B, C...) and the horizontal lines are labelled with numbers (1, 2, 3...). A coordinate is the combination of a letter and a number that names a specific square on the grid. For example, B3 means the square where column B meets row 3. Always read across first (the letter), then up (the number).

#### Reading a coordinate

#### How do you find grid square C2 on a map?

Start at the left edge of the map and move across to column C, then move up to row 2. The square where those two lines meet is grid square C2.

### Other Common Map Features

- Contour lines — curved lines that join points of equal height, showing hills and valleys on the land.

- Blue shading — represents water: oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers.
- Green shading — usually represents forests, vegetation, or parks.
- Red lines — often mark main roads, borders, or important routes.
- Grid lines — a regular network of lines that helps you locate any place using coordinates.

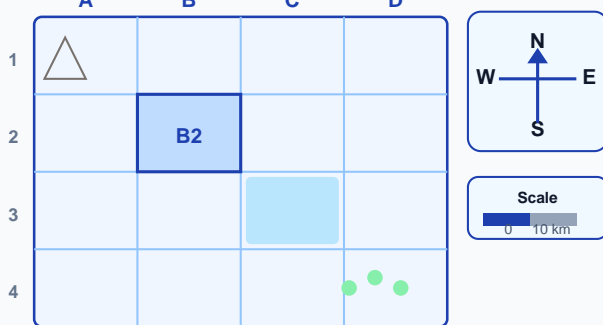
! Tip: the saying "along the corridor, then up the stairs" helps you remember to read coordinates across first (the letter), then up (the number).

#### VOCABULARY

<b>map</b>	A flat drawing that represents part of the Earth's surface viewed from above.
<b>compass rose</b>	A symbol on a map that shows the four main directions: N, S, E, W.
<b>scale bar</b>	A ruler on a map that shows the relationship between map distance and real distance.
<b>legend</b>	A box on a map (also called the key) that explains what each symbol or colour means.
<b>grid</b>	A network of evenly-spaced lines across and up a map used to locate places.
<b>coordinate</b>	A letter-number pair (e.g. B3) that identifies a specific square on a grid map.
<b>contour lines</b>	Lines on a map that connect points of the same height, showing hills and valleys.
<b>symbol</b>	A small image or colour on a map that stands for a real feature such as a road or forest.

### Grid Map and Coordinates




Read across (letter) then up (number) to name a square.



Coordinate B2 = column B, row 2. Always read ACROSS then UP.

### Common Map Symbols

Check the legend every time you use a new map.

- N** **Compass rose**  
Shows the four main directions: N, S, E, W
-  **Scale bar**  
Measures real distances — e.g. 1 cm = 10 km
- KEY** **Legend (Key)**  
Decodes every symbol and colour used on the map
-  **Contour lines**  
Connect equal-height points; show hills and valleys
-  **Shading colours**  
Blue = water | Green = forest | Red line = road/border

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## GUIDED PRACTICE — WRITE YOUR RESPONSE

Read the prompt and use at least 6 of the vocabulary words below. Write at least 45 words.

### Prompt

Write 3-4 sentences explaining what you have learned. Use at least 6 of the vocabulary words below.

### VOCABULARY — USE AT LEAST 6

compass · scale · legend · grid · coordinate · contour · symbol · map

*Write at least 45 words.*

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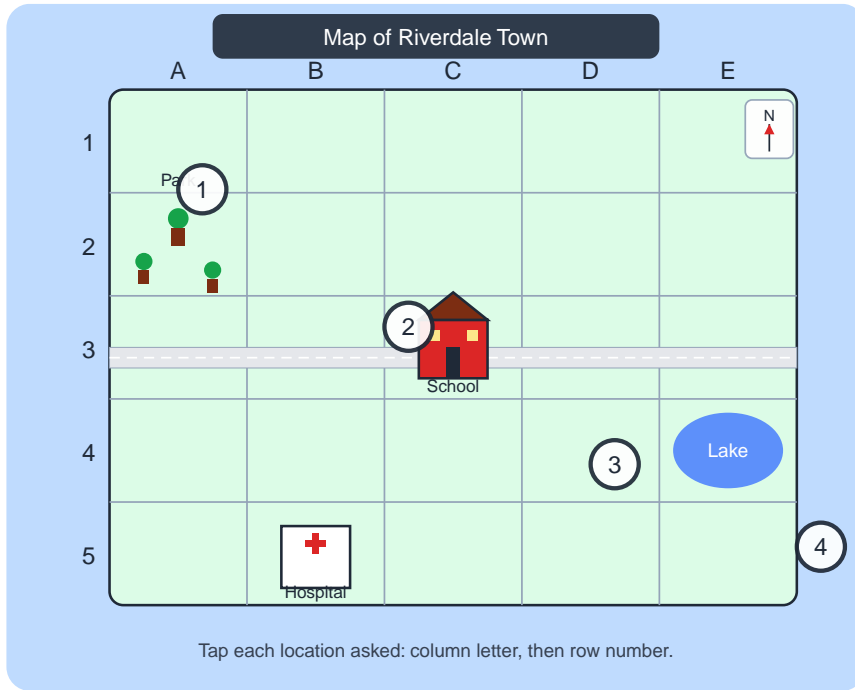
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## EXERCISES — LABEL THE DIAGRAM

Look at the numbered places on the diagram. Write the name of each one on the line below.



1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

"Flip the page upside down to see the answer key"

1. A1 2. B2 3. C3 4. D4

### EXERCISES — MATCH THE PAIRS

Draw a line from each map feature to what it represents.

1. Compass rose

2. Scale bar

3. Legend / Key

4. Contour lines

5. Grid lines

6. Blue shading

7. Green shading

8. Red line

A. Show elevation and height of land

B. Explains what each symbol means

C. Helps measure real distances on the map

D. Shows directions (N, S, E, W)

E. Often marks a main road or border

F. Represents forests or vegetation

G. Represents water (lakes, rivers, sea)

H. Help locate places using coordinates

Write the matching letter next to each number (e.g. 1-B, 2-A, 3-C...).

1 — \_\_\_\_ 2 — \_\_\_\_ 3 — \_\_\_\_ 4 — \_\_\_\_ 5 — \_\_\_\_ 6 — \_\_\_\_ 7 — \_\_\_\_ 8 — \_\_\_\_

“Flip the page upside down to see the answer key “

1-D 2-C 3-B 4-A 5-H 6-G 7-F 8-E

## PRACTICE — DICTATION / TYPING

Without looking, explain in your own words how to use a grid map.

**Imagine a friend has never used a map before. In two or three sentences, explain what a compass rose, a scale bar, and coordinates are, and how you would use them to find a place.**

*Think: which direction is North? How far is it? Where exactly on the grid?*

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“Flip the page upside down to see the answer key “

compass / scale / legend / grid / coordinate / North / distance / symbol

## EXERCISES — MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the best answer.

**1. What does the compass rose on a map show?**

- The distance between two cities
- The directions North, South, East, and West
- The symbols used on the map

**2. What is the scale bar on a map used for?**

- To show which direction is North
- To explain what each colour means
- To measure real distances from map distances

**3. Which part of a map explains what each symbol or colour means?**

- The scale bar
- The legend (key)
- The compass rose

**4. To find grid square C3, which direction do you read FIRST?**

- Up (number 3 first)
- Across (letter C first)
- Diagonally

**5. What do contour lines on a map show?**

- The borders between countries
- The elevation and height of the land
- The direction of rivers

**6. On most maps, blue shading represents...**

- Forests and woodland
- Roads and motorways
- Water such as oceans, lakes, and rivers

**7. A grid coordinate like "B3" means...**

- The square where column B meets row 3
- The third city on route B
- A distance of 3 km north of point B

**8. Which tool would you use to find out whether two towns on a map are 50 km apart?**

- The compass rose
- The legend (key)
- The scale bar

## ASSESSMENT

### PARENT / TEACHER CHECKLIST

- Identifies the compass rose, scale bar, legend, and grid on a map
- Uses coordinates correctly to locate a square on a grid map
- Explains how to use the scale bar to calculate a real distance
- Matches common map symbols (blue shading, contour lines, grid lines) to their meanings
- Reads across then up when locating a coordinate