



THE WAY AHEAD IS CLEAR

Supervising or assessing members of an expedition team who are confident navigators usually makes for a straightforward expedition. *Expedition Guide* author **Alex Davies** takes a look at supporting essential navigation skills.

From the start, set out to ensure navigation is shared equally between the team. If every group member has navigation skills it makes a big difference in shared responsibility and ownership of the DofE expedition. It also means there is communication, usually the best way for errors to be spotted before they have an impact.

When groups go off course, it is usually a brief lack of thought or concentration that was the cause. Equip the team with several compasses and copies of the route and route card. Remember, every team must have one full OS (or appropriate) map for the area they are in, not just a focused route print-out.

Here is some good advice I have seen from DofE Leaders this expedition season...

- Task a group member to always have their **thumb on the map** exactly where they are. They should check off features and objects as they pass them to stay accurate.
- Teach teams to make the most of **field boundaries**, comparing them to the map, as often they are all you can see on the ground.
- **Use features** like forest edges, power lines, fields and ridges as guides to keep on track.
- **Print and laminate** some copies of the 'Silva 1-2-3' simple bearing method, it's a great reminder for teams when out. <http://silva.se/silva-1-2-3>
- **Remind** participants that every 0.1 of their grid reference (1/10th of a km box) is 100m on the ground, it helps them to think about how far until a feature or turning.
- **Look around!** It is amazing what teams fail to notice; footpath signs, church spires and so on. These can be as useful for working out where they are when they have gone wrong as well as for stopping them going wrong in the first place.
- The golden rule: '**check twice, travel once**'.
- **Don't be afraid** of teams going wrong. Teach teams what to do and remind them that they should stay on the footpath until they can find another one that takes them to where they need to be. Don't cut across fields, walls and fences to try and get back on track.

Find more navigation advice, downloads, videos to show teams and tips from the experts in the expedition area of the DofE shop. www.shopDofE.org.

Navigating at speed

Top tip for Bronze participants

Always keep your map orientated. Predicting what the ground is going to look like from the map can be tricky at first but keeping the map orientated to north helps you match the features you see back to the map. So if your mapped route turns right, then you turn right on the ground too.

Top tip for Silver participants

Always trust your compass. Mistakes are often made because we trust our heads, not our compass. It can look so simple on the map but it is always worth checking your compass at these points as even the smallest variations in approach angles can lead to greater errors later on.



Top tip for Gold participants

Listen to the alarm bells. When people get lost they can usually point to a moment early on where things just didn't quite fit. As soon as something isn't quite right then it is worth a quick check. It is much better to invest a couple of minutes checking rather than assuming the map is wrong or carrying on regardless.



Tips from Tessa Hill (four times British Orienteering Champion who came fifth at the 2013 World Orienteering Championships.)