

Direction skills

When giving directions, you should always use compass directions as they never change. North is always north no matter where in the world you are! If you offer instructions like 'travel right' or 'go to the top of the park', not only can these be misunderstood, but they also might be wrong. You need to give definite directions like 'travel north' or 'go to the south-east end of the park'. Obviously, we can use maps to help us reach our destination, but they'd be of little use if we were lost in thick bushland or out at sea. In this case, direction is all-important and the best way of finding any direction is to use a magnetic compass.

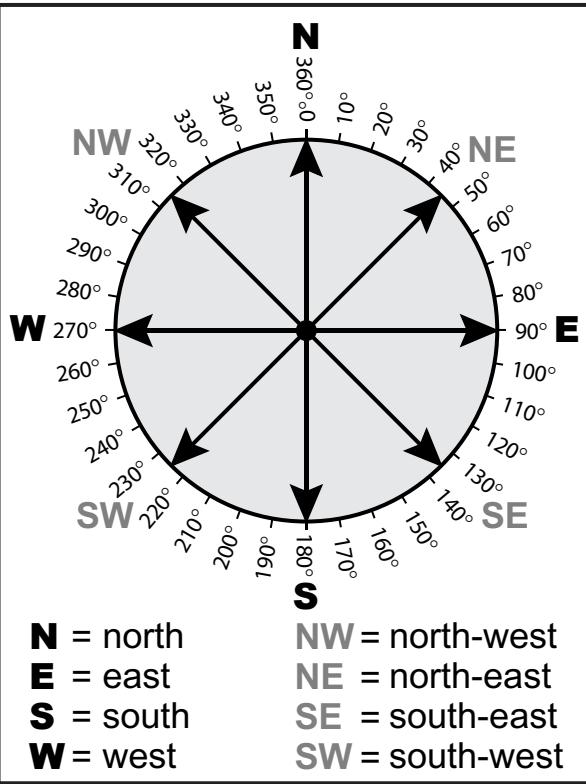
A magnetic compass contains a magnetised needle that always points to the Earth's magnetic field near the North Pole (unless affected by local magnetic fields). Because the needle always points north, compasses can be used to work out any direction. The needle end pointing north is always labelled 'N' and all quality maps should have a north point clearly marked on them to show where north is. A compass has four main cardinal points: north, south, east and west. If you're facing north, then south is behind you, your left and east is to your right. There are also

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four inter-cardinal points: north-west, north-east, south-east and south-west. All compass points describe the direction of travel or the position of one place in relation to another.

Apart from compass points, directions can also be given as compass bearings in degrees. Because a compass is a perfect circle, it's been divided into 360 equal parts. Each part is called a degree (1°) so every compass circle covers 360 degrees. Compass bearings can be calculated by measuring the angle from north in a clockwise direction. Above is a compass showing the main points and bearings. North = 0 and 360 degrees, east = 90 degrees, south = 180 degrees and west = 270 degrees. The inter-cardinal points lie midway between these points: north-east = 45 degrees, south-east = 135 degrees, south-west = 225 degrees and north-west = 315 degrees.



THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS RELATE TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE TWO:

- The people in the car at the bottom right yelling 'Momma!' are lost. They are trying to visit friends who live in the house at the top left of the picture with the big tree out the front. Tell them how to get there using compass directions.

- Which way is the water in the drain flowing?
- Which direction is the house burglar fleeing?
- Which way is the car-chasing dog running?
- The police in car 121 get a radio message to attend a nearby stereo noise disturbance. What directions are they given?

- In what compass direction do the following lie from the hovering helicopter?

 - the collision at the corner of Wood Street and Station Road:
 - the jogger choking on fumes from the car travelling along Bridge Street:
 - the lady in the middle of Bridge Street saying 'Yes... Hello':
 - the feuding neighbours in Station Road:

References: SOSE Alive 1, p129 • Geoactive 1, p9 • SOSE for Queensland 1, pp176-177
 Jacaranda SOSE 1 2E, pp136-137 • Jacaranda SOSE: Geography 1, pp18-19
 SOSE Alive Geography 1, p9 • Jacaranda Atlas 5E, p4

