



OS FACTSHEET

Using the National Grid

You might have noticed by now that OS maps are covered in a series of blue grid lines. These grid lines help you to pinpoint an exact location anywhere on the map.

The vertical lines are called eastings, as they increase in value as you travel east on the map. The horizontal lines are called northings as they increase in value as you travel north on the map.

They're linked to the National Grid which provides a unique reference system, and can be applied to all OS maps of Great Britain, at all scales. Great Britain is covered by grid squares measuring 100 kilometres across. Each grid square is identified by two letters, as shown below.

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

On OS maps, these squares are further divided into smaller squares by grid lines representing 10 kilometre spacing, each numbered from 0 to 9 from the south-west corner, in an easterly (left to right) and northerly (upwards) direction, as shown below.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 09 | 19 | 29 | 39 | 49 | 59 | 69 | 79 | 89 | 99 |
| 9 | 08 | 18 | 28 | 38 | 48 | 58 | 68 | 78 | 88 | 98 |
| 8 | 07 | 17 | 27 | 37 | 47 | 57 | 67 | 77 | 87 | 97 |
| 7 | 06 | 16 | 26 | 36 | 46 | 56 | 66 | 76 | 86 | 96 |
| 6 | 05 | 15 | 25 | 35 | 45 | 55 | 65 | 75 | 85 | 95 |
| 5 | 04 | 14 | 24 | 34 | 44 | 54 | 64 | 74 | 84 | 94 |
| 4 | 03 | 13 | 23 | 33 | 43 | 53 | 63 | 73 | 83 | 93 |
| 3 | 02 | 12 | 22 | 32 | 42 | 52 | 62 | 72 | 82 | 92 |
| 2 | 01 | 11 | 21 | 31 | 41 | 51 | 61 | 71 | 81 | 91 |
| 1 | 00 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 |
| 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Northings (up the stairs) >
south-west corner
Eastings (along the corridor) >

Using this system you can identify a 10 kilometre grid square. For example, here is TL63. After the letters you can quote the eastings (6) first, then the northings (3). If you have trouble remembering, say... **along the corridor, THEN up the stairs.**

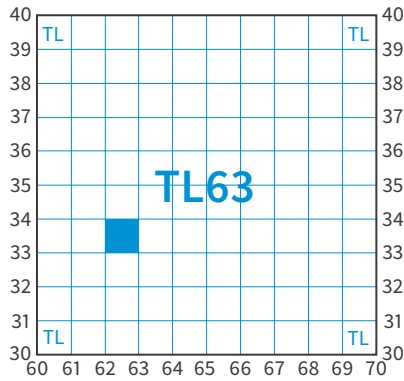
On an OS Landranger map you can find the two main grid letters (in this case TL) on the legend or the corner squares of the map. The grid is further divided into 1 kilometre intervals, as shown below.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 40 | TL | | | | | | | | TL | | |
| 39 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 38 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 37 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 36 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 35 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 34 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 33 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 32 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | TL | | | | | | | | TL | | |
| | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 |

How do grid references help me find places?

A four-figure grid reference is a handy way of identifying any square on a map. Grid references are easy if you can remember that you always have to go along the corridor before you go up the stairs. To find the number of a square first use the eastings to go along the corridor until you come to the bottom left-hand corner of the square you want.

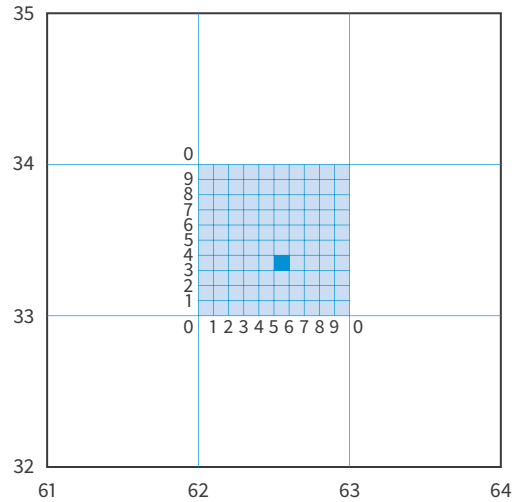
Write this two-figure number down. Then use the northings to go up the stairs until you find the same corner. Put this two-figure number after your first one and you now have the four-figure grid reference, which looks like the example below: 6233.



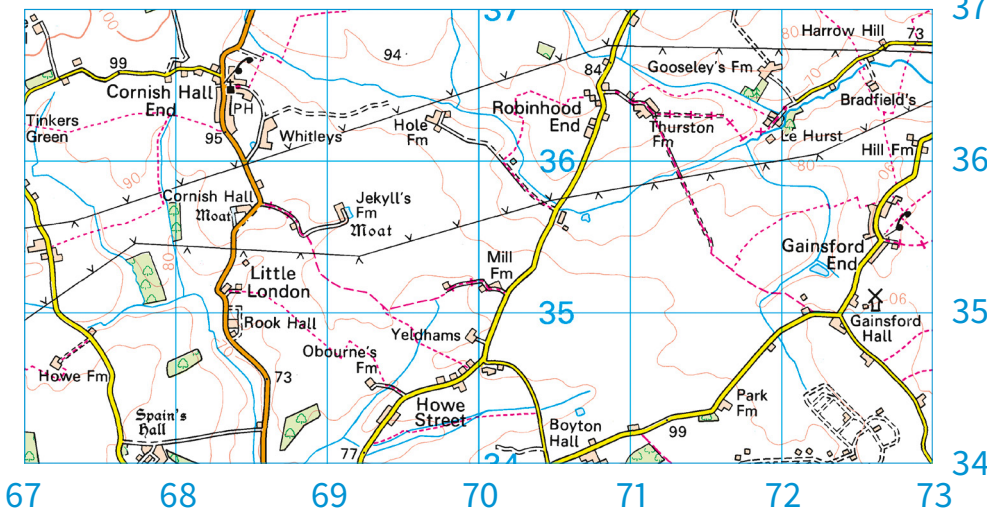
Six-figure grid references

If you want to pinpoint an exact place on a map, such as your own house, you will need to use a six-figure grid reference. First find the four-figure grid reference for the square and write it down with a space after each set of numbers, like this: 62_33_

Now imagine this square is divided up into 100 tiny squares with 10 squares along each side. Still remembering to go along the corridor and up the stairs, work out the extra numbers you need and put them into your four-figure grid reference like this below: 625 333.



Map extract from OS Landranger map sheet 154



Here is an extract from a 1:50 000 scale map. Use the National Grid reference system to find:

- The Church at TL683365
- The Windmill at TL726350
- Mill Farm at TL701352

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