

# **NAVIGATION**

## **A LESSON SERIES OVERVIEW**

### **PLANNING AHEAD**

Read maps for the area you're heading to and build an understanding of the terrain. Pre-download maps onto electronic devices before losing service. Think through different scenarios ahead of time can come up with backup plans.

### **READ THE TERRAIN**

Where is a creek compared to you? Is a slope on the side you were expecting? Does what I see match what I expected? Rather than constantly referring to a compass or GPS, look for landmarks, such as a creek, lake, distinctive tree or mountain, to orient yourself while walking. You can sight these with your compass then walk to them before checking your compass again. Reading terrain can prevent getting lost.

### **TOPOGRAPHY MAPS**

Although digital navigation tools, such as a GPS or cellphone maps, are popular and a great tool to bring, it's still important to also bring a paper map. Cell service and battery power is limited and not always entirely accurate. Being able to read a paper map is an important skill for navigating in the outdoors.

### **USING A COMPASS**

Skills to learn include setting declination, taking a bearing, and locating yourself on a map. When following a bearing, it's not always possible to walk in a straight line. To detour, use the compass to make a right-angle turn (90° turn). Then count your steps to know approximately how far off your bearing you are traveling. Complete the detour with more right-angle turns and counting your steps to return back to your original route. Traveling in straight lines with your compass while counting your steps is also a way to explore your area with the ability to return to where you started.

### **IF YOU GET LOST**

If you get disoriented, try to stay calm and suppress any panic. Try to retrace your steps to where you last knew where you were. S.T.O.P.: Stop and assess the situation; Think about when you last recognized the area; Observe your current surroundings and compare to your map; Plan whether you should stay put or, if you've been able to get an idea of where you are, try to return to the trail. Also consider the weather and if you should set up a shelter.



## REFERENCES

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