



Compass course – reaching the goal by bearings

AT A GLANCE



Place

Outdoors on a meadow or in open woodland



Key idea

Getting to know the baseplate compass and finding a course using bearings and pace counts



Effort

Materials 15 min · Preparation 30 min



90 minutes



teams of 2–3



8–12 years



baseplate compass



Materials

- ☐ one baseplate compass per team
- ☐ a whistle for the leader
- ☐ route cards with a bearing and number of paces for each station
- ☐ pens and clipboards
- ☐ station signs with letters (which together make a solution word)



Schedule

0–15'

Getting to know the compass – Name the parts: magnetic needle, rotating bezel with degrees, direction-of-travel arrow. North is 0°, east 90°, south 180°, west 270°.

15–30'

Counting paces – Each child measures how many double paces they need for 10 metres.

30–70'

Course – Teams go from station to station with a route card: set the bearing, sight the direction, count paces, note the letter.

70–80'

Solution word – All teams meet and put the letters together.

80–90'

Devotion – Proverbs 3:5–6: Trust in God with all your heart; he will show you the right way.



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How it works – simply explained

- 1 Set the bearing on the bezel and hold the compass flat in front of your tummy.
- 2 Turn round until the red needle lies exactly inside the orienting arrow ("red in the shed").
- 3 Now the direction-of-travel arrow shows the way: sight a clear landmark.
- 4 Walk to the landmark, counting double paces.
- 5 At the target look for the letter and set the next bearing.

 **Example:** "Red in the shed! Can you see the big tree the arrow is pointing to? That is where we are going – count with me: one, two, three ..."

Safety

- Mark the area clearly; teams are never out on their own.
- Agreed signal: three whistle blasts means "everyone to the meeting point at once".
- Keep phones, penknives and metal away from the compass – they deflect the needle.

Variations

- Star course: all stations start from the same central point.
- For advanced groups: take the bearing from the map and then walk it in the terrain.

Something to think about

Who do you trust when you do not know the way?