

# Smashing My DofE



Dear Expeditioners,

This book is a quick read that will help you get ready for your expeditions, and remind you of everything you've learned in training. A DofE expedition is always going to be fun (granted, sometimes carrying a heavy pack up a hill is only fun afterwards...) but there's extra satisfaction in being well-prepared and seeing those preparations pay off.

There are tips on navigation, kit, menu choices, weather, teamwork and generally being a good human on DofE. You can download a PDF of this book and see other useful resources at:

[www.outspark.co.uk/smashingyourdofe](http://www.outspark.co.uk/smashingyourdofe)

Enjoy your expeditions!

Jason Buckley  
Founder, Outspark



Graphics on 10, 12, 15 & 17 are from Hillwalking by Steve Long. The rucksack graphic is from [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org)

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# Your Programme

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## TRAINING

Your team, usually of 7, take an extended walk with an instructor to learn the navigation skills and emergency procedures you need to walk independently. Also sessions on teamwork, cooking, tents, route-planning.

## PRACTICE

The practice expedition will be held shortly after the training. Use the skills you have learned to walk independently on a planned route, meeting instructors at checkpoints. More chances to make mistakes and learn from them!

## QUALIFYING

Your team will be self-sufficient and independent for the two days (Bronze) and overnight of your expedition. Our DofE-accredited assessors will meet you at the start to explain their role. They will see you a few times en route, and once during the evening to see your campcraft and cooking skills. Like all Outspark instructors, our assessors are good fun. They will help you take pride in your skills and abilities - they're not there to catch you out!

# Aim

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Your expedition needs an aim - something extra to just getting from start to finish. It should be a simple idea which keeps you interested in the area you are walking through, using and adding to the experiences you can have on your chosen route.

IDENTIFY as many different species of tree you can.



Alder



Ash

INVENT a set of signals to use within your team.



Sycamore



Field Maple

LEARN a fun team game or challenge each day.



Birch



Horse Chestnut

CREATE a video diary of your team's experiences, from camping and cooking to reaching your destination.

You'll likely need to do a presentation as a team about your DofE expedition to round off the section, and your aim can be a big part of that.

# Packing Your Bag

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## PACKING YOUR RUCKSACK

First, line the whole thing with a rubble bag or bin liner.  
Second, put your sleeping bag in a bin bag of its own.  
Third, put in **FIRST** what you'll need out **LAST**.

So at the bottom, put things you'll only need when you get to camp. Pockets and the top are for things you might need handy at any time, like waterproofs and water.

**Dry-bags or carrier bags** to keep things together are handy - one each for spare clothes, dinner, eating stuff

If you can, pack heavier stuff close to your back, so it won't pull you backwards. **Make sure your rucksack has an adjustable back** so an instructor can help you trim it. Much of the weight should go on your hips, not dragging down on your shoulders.

Your roll-mat can strap outside. Otherwise, with a 65 litre rucksack, if it won't fit, there's too much of it!

**Emergency medications (Epipens, inhalers...) should be easy to find. Tell your group where they are too.**



Snacks  
Head torch  
First aid kit  
Sun cream  
Toilet paper

Waterproofs, hat/gloves

Lunch

Liquid fuel

Wash kit

Survival bag

Water bottle

Stove  
Plates  
Camping kit

Tent

Sleeping bag

Food

Clothes

Roll mat

# Kit List

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Outspark/the school will provide **maps, compasses, and emergency phone, group first aid kit, stoves and gas**, so you don't need to worry about those. Some other kit may also be provided - see school staff for details.

**Rucksack** - **65 litre+** capacity with adjustable back. (A small day rucksack is handy for training walks too)

**2 litres water** - staying hydrated is crucial. If you don't like water, get some super-concentrated squash to add

**Sleeping bag** (mummy style, warm)

**Roll mat** (a must - or you lose heat to the ground)

**2- or 3-person tent**, lightweight with inner and outer layers. A single-skinned festival tent won't keep you dry. Spit the tent between you, e.g. poles, pegs and canvas

**Walking boots** (not shoes, you need ankle support) with **thick socks**. Buy and wear your boots in advance - you don't want to be breaking them in on your expedition!

**Waterproof coat and trousers**. (Not a puffer jacket etc.)



Wear layers for walking:

**T-shirt or shirt**

**Sweater** (woollen or fleece)

**Walking trousers** (NOT jeans, preferably not cotton)

**1 x complete change of clothes**, top to bottom, including walking socks

**Any personal medication**

**Personal First Aid Kit** (plasters, wipes, blister plasters...)

**Headtorch plus spare batteries**

**Personal munchies**

**Warm hat and gloves (whatever the weather!)**

**Sun hat (whatever the weather!)**

**2 x strong, large bin bags (to line your rucksack)**

**2 carrier bags**

**Knife, fork, spoon, plate, bowl, mug**

**Wash kit & towel (small)**

**Your lunches and snacks**

Flip flops for camp (optional)

As a group: cooking bits like oil, spatula, matches (kept dry!), scourer, tea towel, washing up liquid in a small container, and of course, food...

# Food

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Should be lightweight. Easy to cook. High in calories. Tasty.  
Need no fridge.

**LUNCH Something you don't need to cook.** Pitta bread beats sandwiches (less squashy more calories). Pre-cooked pasta. Fruit, malt loaf, chorizo, pepperamis, squeeze cheese.

**SNACKS** Sweets, chocolate, trail mix (**check team allergies**)

**DINNERS Carbs + protein + flavour! Fry or boil (no grill!)**

pasta		chorizo		packet sauces
rice	+	tofu	+	herbs & spices
mash		halloumi		veg!

Or go all-in-one with a ration pack. Having a dessert too is great - one luxury option is to melt chocolate in an enamel bowl that sits over your simmering stove, and dip marshmallows in it with cocktail sticks...

The best teams always eat together (with veggie option if needed). Each person doing their own thing is often a bad sign!

## BREAKFAST

Pre-cooked pancakes you can heat up, with fruit, maple syrup, nutella or honey. Or porridge pots with added fruit.

**AVOID** Pot noodles, microwave meals, glass jars, chicken/ham (goes off quick), fizzy drinks and **DON'T SKIP BREAKFAST**



# Navigation - The 4Ds

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Navigation should be something your whole team is involved in. You might take it in turns in pairs to lead a “leg” of your journey, one with the map, one with the compass.

Whether you're keeping on track, or trying to find your way back on track after... temporarily mislaying yourselves... it helps to have a simple way to remember everything you've been taught about navigation.

## **That's where the 4 Ds come in:**

**Direction** - Which way is north from your compass? Are you walking towards the church or away from it? Is it left next or right?

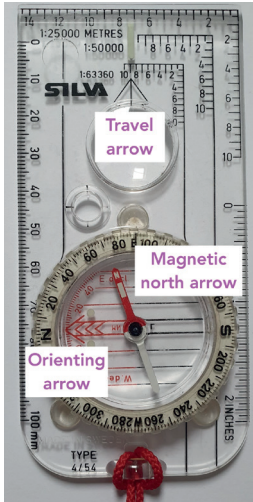
**Details** - you're on a footpath between two fences, you just crossed a stream, and you can see an electricity pylon up ahead - all of which are marked on your map

**Distance** - a square on your map is 1km; that should take you about 15 minutes at yesterday's pace - but you've been going half an hour, so you must have missed your turn

**Down** - you know from the contour lines on your map that the your path is the one off to the right at the bottom of the hill, so you won't miss it.

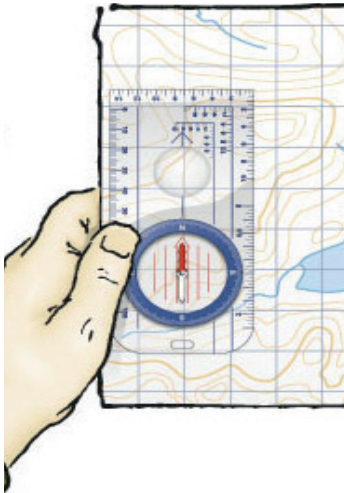
**If you get lost, work through the 4Ds** and see which will help you get back on track. Here are some more detailed reminders...

# Direction



Setting the map is getting the map lined up with the real world.

First, twist the round bit of your compass so all the arrows line up.



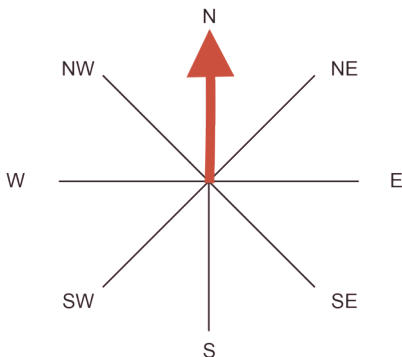
Now hold your map so the top of the map is at the top of the arrows. (All the place names will be the right way up).

Now your map is lined up with the real world - north is north!

# Direction

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As well as for setting the map, you can also use your compass to check you're going in the right general direction. Is the next bit of your route north, south east, west, etc?



It's good to keep a compass in your hand as you walk, and check it now and again. If it's round your neck, it's not much use.

Mistakes with compasses are usually BIG mistakes.

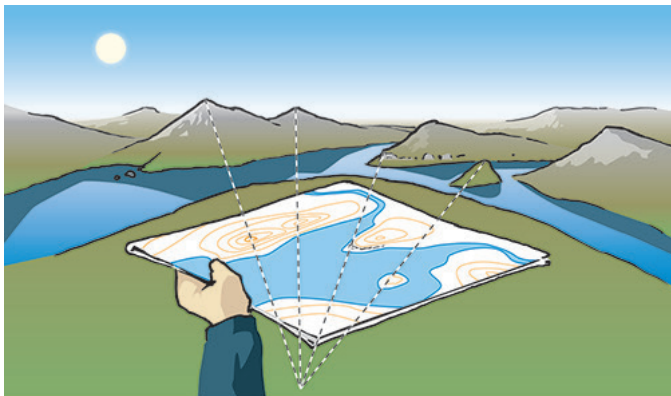
One is to just follow the red arrow all the time, so you're always going north - don't do that

The other is using the white (south) arrow to set the map, instead of the red magnetic north arrow so you are upside down!

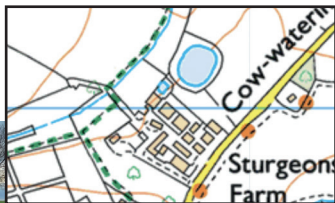
# Details

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Look up at the world, down at the map, match things up.



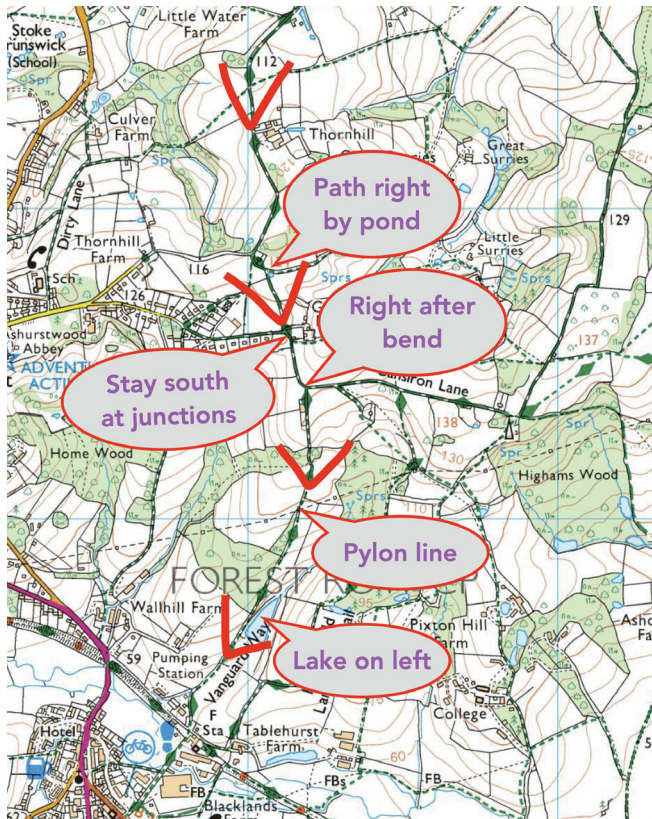
As above, details give you another way to set the map.



Looking from world to map and back, where was this pic taken?

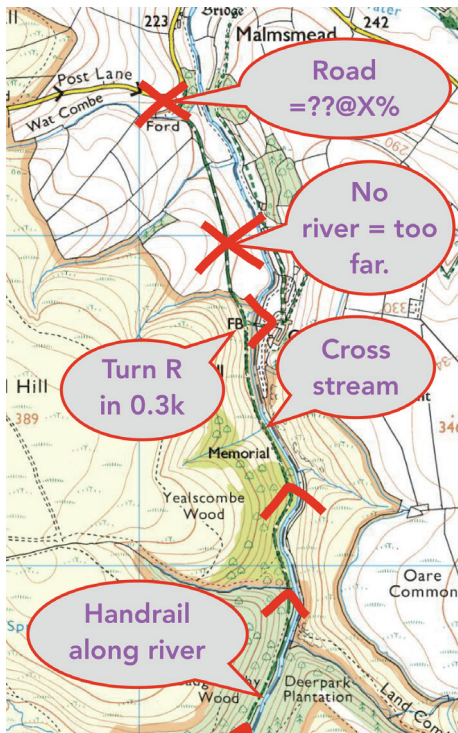
# Details

Mark your route with wide-spaced chevrons. “Tick features” are the things shown on your map that you can tick off as you pass.





**Catching features** are the things you'll see if you go too far.



**Handrails** are linear features you can walk along, such as streams and fences.

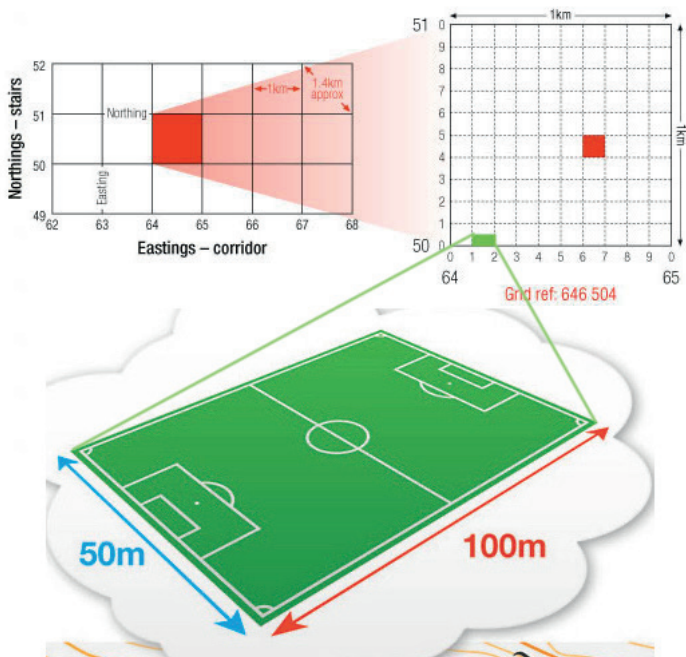
# Distance

Use grid references to say where you are on the map. Like coordinates in maths, it's "along the corridor, up the stairs".

One map square = 1k. The red square is 64 along, 50 up - 6450.

To be more accurate, split the square into 10 each way.

The small square is 64 and 6 tenths along (646) and 50 and 4 tenths up (504), so its reference is 646 504.



One tenth of a square, the green area highlighted, is 100m, the length of a football field. So to go directly across a 1km square on your map, imagine walking the length of 10 football pitches.

It's an acquired skill guessing distance by eye, so **time** is a good way to measure distance. Time how long it takes your group to walk 1km. 15 mins is a decent time for a fit, efficient group with no mobility issues.

Then, as long as you keep track of time at checkpoints and other obvious places (**write times on the map**) you will know, "Hang on, our next checkpoint was only 2k and we've been on this track for an hour. %¢&¢@!" - either you need to speed up or you've gone too far.

**Count 1**



**Count 2**

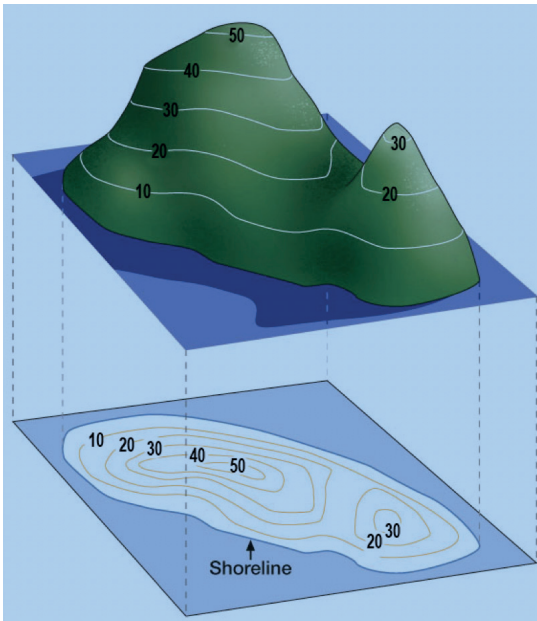


For more accurate distances, you can use **spacing**. On a known 100m stretch, silently count each double pace, for example, each time you plant your left foot. When you reach 100m, stop and remember your number. It's likely to be around 58 - 68. Then if you later need to, say, turn off in 300m and there are lots of similar paths so you want to get the right one, pace it.

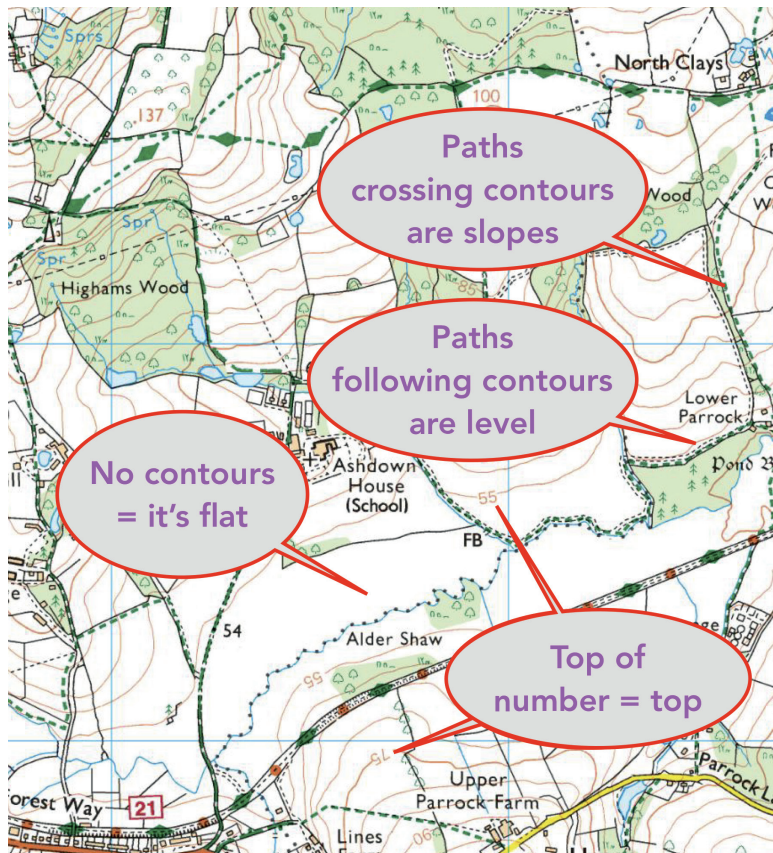
# Down

The contour lines on a map join places of equal height. They're usually spaced at 10m intervals, as with the exaggerated example below.

The closer contour lines are together, the steeper the slope. Especially when carrying a heavy rucksack, going up a slope will slow you down, and going steeply down will slow you up.



Knowing if a path on a map is level, heads straight up a slope or cuts across it diagonally helps you work out where you are.



# Route Planning

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When you're planning a route, you'll be given checkpoints to pass through. Here are some tips:

Mark your route with chevrons ("V"s). Space them well apart, so they don't hide your route, and avoid writing on important features.

You walk along footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths. Generally, green dashed lines are the things to follow!

Going up steep hills is hard work. Paths that zigzag or avoid hills will be easier - but it might be worth the view! You can expect each 10m contour line you cross uphill to add a minute or more to your journey.

If there's somewhere interesting en route, stop off and explore: you don't have to be walking all the time. You might be able to work it into the aim of your expedition.

It's a good idea to mark quarterpoints  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way along your route for each day. Then on the day, once you know what time you are setting off, you can write on your map when you expect to reach them.

**Most importantly, don't plan a route on roads, except where your instructors ask you to walk along a very short stretch of a quiet road between two footpaths. If you get lost, never walk along a road to get back on track: stop and ring us.**

# Getting Lost

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It would be unusual to get through your DofE without making a few navigational errors and having to work out where you are. So if the tick features you were expecting don't appear, or "it looks like the map is wrong", what should you do?

First, stop. (Don't go *more* wrong)

Second, don't get cross. It's to be expected. **Just use your 4Ds to get back on track.**

Set your map. Look at your compass to see what **Direction** you've been travelling in. Have you veered off course?

Narrow down where you could be by thinking when you were last sure of your location. How long ago/what **Distance** have you travelled since then?

Think, what did you pass on your way from there to here? (**Details**). Looking around you, what can you see now? Say the things out loud, ".path", "fence", "stream up ahead" and then match them up with what you can see on the map. Which way is **Down**? Does that fit with where you think you are?

Once you think you know where you are, work out how to get back on track without going along roads or walking where you shouldn't. But before you start, ask, "**What are the next three tick features we'll pass?**" so you can test that you were right.

# Walking as a Team

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There's a saying, "If you want to travel quick, go alone. If you want to travel far, go in a team."

One of the reasons teams move more slowly is that, obviously, a team needs to move at the pace of the slowest member. You can't abandon them to be eaten by wolves.

The more you stick together, the better. If you walk in a close bunch, everyone can hear the conversation and a slower walker has more motivation to keep up. The opposite of that is really miserable. If most of the group march off, then stop and wait for those at the back to catch up, then march straight off again, the people who need a break most don't get one, and get slower and slower. So walk at a steady pace you can all keep up with.

The other thing that slows teams down is people stopping one after another to faff with their kit. Bob's shoelace is undone. Two minutes later, Fred needs a pee. Two minutes later, Kezia wants to take her waterproof off because she's too hot. Then Lucy needs her water...

Instead, when Bob has to stop, assuming there's a bush handy for Fred, get all the faffing done at the same time, and then get moving. Another great hack is "**bottle buddies**" who each have their water bottles in the pocket of the other's rucksack. Then you can stop to take a quick drink without taking packs off.



Games where you all need to be within speaking distance of each other can help to keep the team together and smiling.

**Best X** - Someone chooses a category - films, takeaway orders, countries, assassination methods... and each other person suggests what the best is in that category. The category-maker choses a winner and the winner chooses the next category.

**The Stick of Shame** - For this, you will need a **stick**.



To get someone else to take the Stick of Shame from you, you have to get them to say Yes, No, Black or White. Not answering questions is cheating. It's very satisfying catching people out.

**Cats or dogs?** - Choosing between two options. Cooking or washing up? Sharing your house with 100 duck-sized horses or 1 horse-sized duck? Party or lie-in?

**Question Tennis** - Can you respond to everything with a question? Is that a game? Haven't you heard of it? Is it fun? How do you trip people up? Did you just ask a question? Would that have tricked you?

**Dream Life** - Describing your dream life now, or at 20, 40, 100...

# Working as a Team

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When you get to your campsite in the evening, you'll be tired and the first thing you'll want to do is flop down like a rucksack turtle. A quick rest is fine, but then there are tents to be put up, dinner to be cooked, and maybe some preparations to be made for the next day. Two principles will make it easy to get everything done and then be able to chill out.

## Finish, then fun.

There's not much to do once you've cooked dinner. But the longer you leave the few bits that need doing in the evening, the more tired you'll be, the more hungry, the darker it gets and so on. So start and actually finish things before they start to drag on, including the clearing up and washing up. Then you can enjoy yourselves while the other teams start to fall out with each other!

## Everybody busy until nobody's busy.

It's a good idea for people to have different jobs to work on - maybe four people putting up tents, while another two start dinner. But just because you've finished your job doesn't mean you can't then help get other stuff finished. If everybody's busy until nobody's busy and all the jobs are done, you can get things done very efficiently.

# Being a Good Human on DofE

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Litter used to be something we had to nag about a lot. Nowadays, everyone is made to feel so guilty in primary school about the environment that only a hard core of selfish twits still drop litter. Don't be one of them. **A pringles tube makes a good group rubbish bin while you're walking.**

Most other things are similarly obvious:

Don't light fires.

Don't break things or plants.

Leave animals alone.

Leave farm machinery alone.

Stick to marked paths unless agreed with your instructors.

Remember that though you're a visitor, others live and work in the area you're walking through. Don't make a commotion outside someone's house, or block the footpath with a picnic.

Leave gates as you found them (usually shut, but sometimes you'll find a gate that has been wedged open for a reason). Cross fences at stiles or gates, don't hop over them or they might need repairing. Plus you probably shouldn't be there!

Enjoy yourselves, and be nice to the people you come across. You'd be amazed by how much you can lift someone's day, simply by being a polite group of teenagers enjoying themselves in the countryside and saying hello.

# Whatever the Weather

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Something that might make you uncomfortable, even if it's unlikely to be extreme enough to cause danger, is the weather.

## RAIN

If it starts to rain, put your waterproofs on. You can always take them off if it's a quick shower. If it buckets down, seek shelter - it's likely to ease off again in a few minutes.

## LIGHTNING

If there's thunder and lightning forecast anywhere at all near, you're likely to have had a special briefing. If you see lightning, **count, and if it's less than 30 seconds** before you hear thunder, seek shelter and ring us. The big rule is **DON'T BE THE TALLEST THING** - or right next to it. So avoid high places, tall isolated trees, or being in the middle of a field. Get to low ground and ring for advice.

## COLD

Cold + windy + wet + tired is a really bad combination: you'll lose both heat and morale fast. If you're getting cold, put on more layers and get everyone to do the same. Remember that some people's kit may be better than others, so in poor conditions look after each other. In the unlikely event that someone gets hypothermia, they may become grumpy, slow, clumsy... before that happens, stop, find shelter or even put up your tent. Call us, and whoever has the best kit stay outside to make a hot drink!

## HEAT

At the other end, you can have an uncomfortable time if it's too hot. If very hot weather is forecast, your expedition leader will likely arrange an early start, shortened routes, and extra water supplies at checkpoints. But there are things you can do to stay comfortable, as well as safe.

Start hydrated - drink a whole 500ml bottle of water before leaving camp, and refill again so you are carrying at least 2l of water each.

Use and reapply sun cream. Wear a sun hat or at least a baseball cap.

Make good progress in the morning so you don't have to push hard in the hottest part of the day. If it gets hotter, pour water over your hat so it can cool you more.

Make a "kepi" - soak a T-shirt or teatowel and hang it down from the back of your hat to protect your neck.

Drink LOTS and refill at checkpoints to stay topped up - don't wait until you've nearly run out to refill, in case an instructor at a later checkpoint gets called away to help a group.

If it gets so hot that anyone is feeling ill or strange then RING us, find SHADE have them DRINK water and cool their SKIN with water (soak a T-shirt and wipe with it).

# Staying Safe

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The British countryside is generally a very safe place. If you do have any accidents or emergencies, the procedures to follow are with your emergency phone and you'll get trained in them.

## **STICK TOGETHER**

Avoiding dangers is mostly about sticking together as a team, and avoiding roads. The only time you split up is if you can't get signal to ring us for help, in which case a pair would go together.

When do groups forget that advice? On the rare times it happens, it's almost always towards the end of the last day, and when they have caught up with another group. Maybe some in one group are good friends with another; and in both groups some have tired legs and others are keen to get to the finish. The two groups merge, then string out, with the faster walkers from both groups getting ahead of the slower. Maybe the ones ahead take what they think is the right route, but those behind go a different way... and now we have two "new" groups... one could have two emergency phones and one, none...

That's why part of sticking together is...

## **STAY APART**

...from other groups. If you catch up with another group, either decisively overtake them or stop and let them go ahead. You have to be independent and self-sufficient as a group, and you

can't do that if you are following the steps of the group ahead. There's also a safety aspect to this. Psychologists have found that people, often young people, may **take risks in a group they wouldn't take by themselves**. That's more likely to happen if someone who is apt to show off has a bigger audience. If you think something is dangerous and you shouldn't be doing it, you're probably right!

### **DON'T CROSS ROADS OR WALK ALONG THEM**

At any busy road, there will be a checkpoint with an instructor. If nobody is there, don't cross, ring. Perhaps they've been called away to help with an emergency. **No instructor = don't cross.**

On any quiet roads that you are asked to cross unsupervised, take it seriously, cross in silence and remember your training. Cars drive fast down roads they expect to be empty! If you have to walk along a quiet road, go in single file, walking on the right so you face the traffic (other than on a blind bend to the right).

If you get lost and then find yourselves at road, and getting back to your planned route using footpaths would be a long walk, it is very, very tempting to walk down the road to get back on track, or to cross the road unsupervised. However minor the road, however short the distance, don't, instead.

### **STOP, SIT, RING**

**Stop, sit down safely, away from the road, and ring us.**

	No clue	Sort of	Got it!
<b>BEING PREPARED</b>			
We've decided our expedition aim.			
Packing a rucksack			
Adjusting a rucksack for comfort			
Bringing enough kit, not too much			
Using a stove safely			
Planning a good menu			
Setting up camp			
<b>TEAMWORK</b>			
Walking as a team			
Working as a team			
Being a good human on DofE			
Walking in all weathers			
Staying safe			
Emergency procedures			



	No clue	Sort of	Got it!
<b>NAVIGATION</b>			
Direction: points & parts of a compass			
Direction: setting map with a compass			
Direction: walking on a bearing			

Details: setting map with features			
Details: tick features			
Details: catching features			
Details: handrails			

Distance: map scale			
Distance: 6 figure grid references			
Distance: your pace for 100m =			

Down: contour lines & heights			
Down: ridges, valleys, slopes & flat			

Route planning			
Getting lost			

## MORE INFORMATION

Your instructors will teach you a lot more than could fit into this minibook, and they'll be happy to answer lots of questions.

You can download an electronic copy of this book, plus a kitlist, and see links to other resources including some useful videos at

[www.outspark.co.uk/smashingyourdofe](http://www.outspark.co.uk/smashingyourdofe)



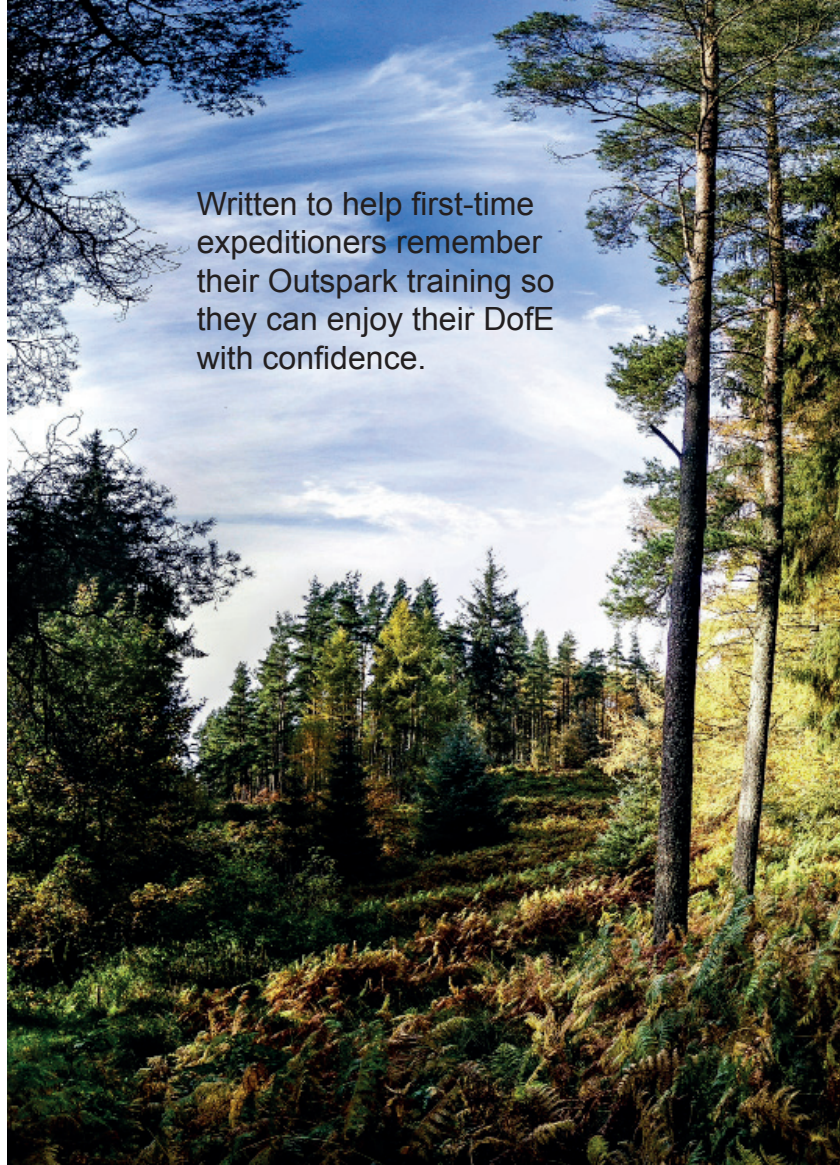
If you're looking for something for your Skills section and would like to meet new people your age from around the UK, check out our other organisation for Zoom sessions in Improv, Debate, Philosophy and Dungeons and Dragons.

[www.p4he.org](http://www.p4he.org)



We'd be a good place to get your DofE teammates to sign their names at the end of your successful qualifying expedition...

...in case they get to be famous.

A scenic view of a forest. In the foreground, there is a field of ferns, some green and some brown. In the middle ground, there is a dense forest of tall pine trees. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on the upper left part of the image.

Written to help first-time  
expeditioners remember  
their Outspark training so  
they can enjoy their DofE  
with confidence.