

# Grid reference finder

Improve your map reading skills by learning how to read a 4-figure, 6-figure or 8-figure national grid reference. This grid reference finder is suitable for beginners and includes a short 'how to' video.

## Find grid references with a paper map

Understanding the National Grid

Diagram A

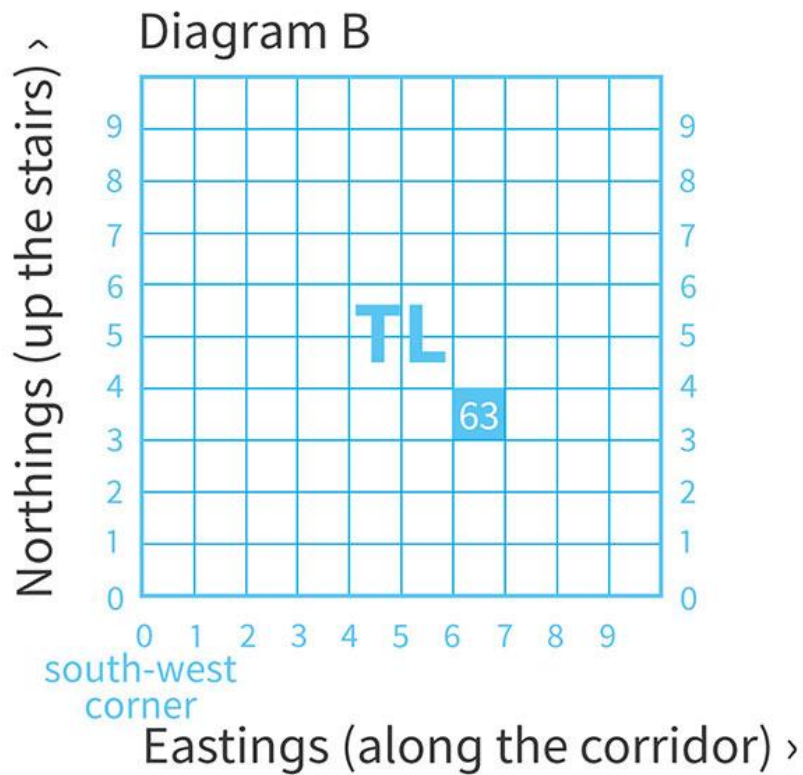
			HO	HP		
			HT	HU		
	HW	HX	HY	HZ		
NA	NB	NC	ND	NE		
NF	NG	NH	NJ	NK		
NL	NM	NN	NO	NP		
	NR	NS	NT	NU		
	NW	NX	NY	NZ	OV	
		SC	SD	SE	TA	
		SH	SJ	SK	TF	TG
	SM	SN	SO	SP	TL	TM
	SR	SS	ST	SU	TQ	TR
SV	SW	SX	SY	SZ	TV	

National Grid

## Eastings and Northings

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.

These are 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 and each grid square is identified by two letters, as shown in diagram A.



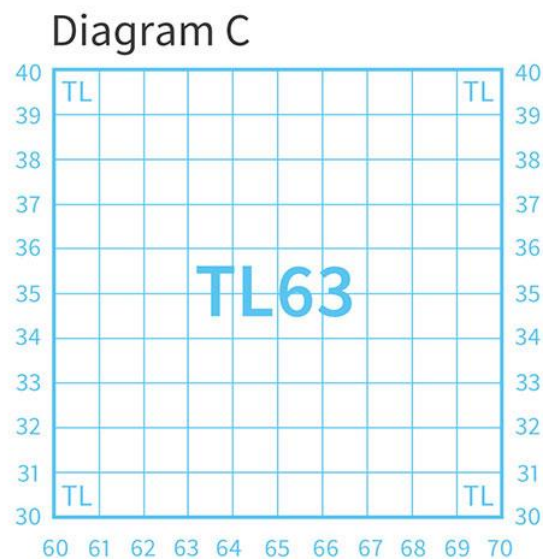
Map grid showing 10km grid squares and TL63 Eastin

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. You can see this in diagram B.

Using this eastings and northings system you can identify a 10 kilometre grid square. For example, the above image shows TL63. After the letters you can quote the eastings (6) first, then the northings (3).

#### Top Tip

If you have trouble remembering the order, say... *along the corridor, THEN up the stairs.*



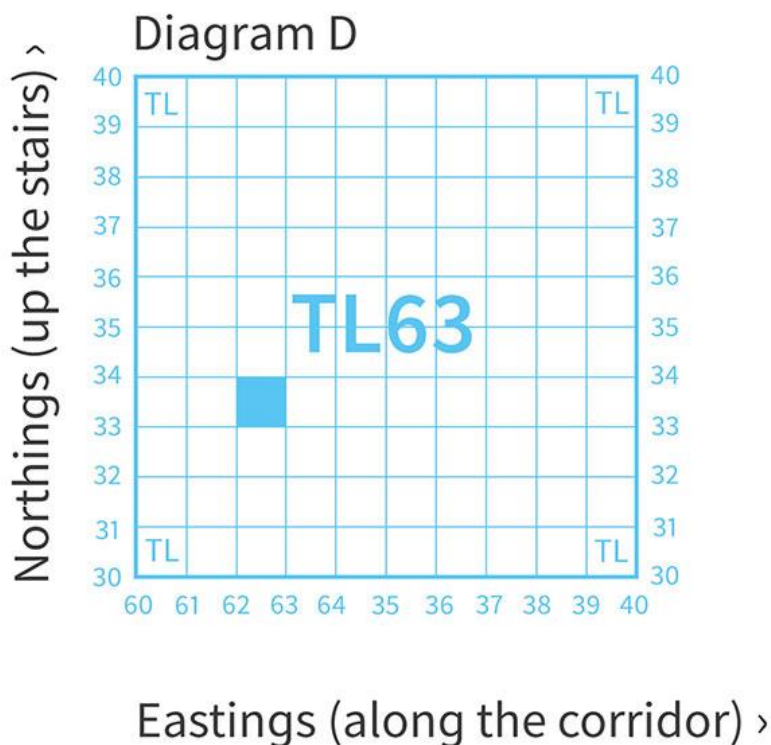
Map grid showing 10km grid squares and TL63

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 in diagram C.

## How do grid references help me find places?

To start, 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 northing 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 in diagram D: 62,33.



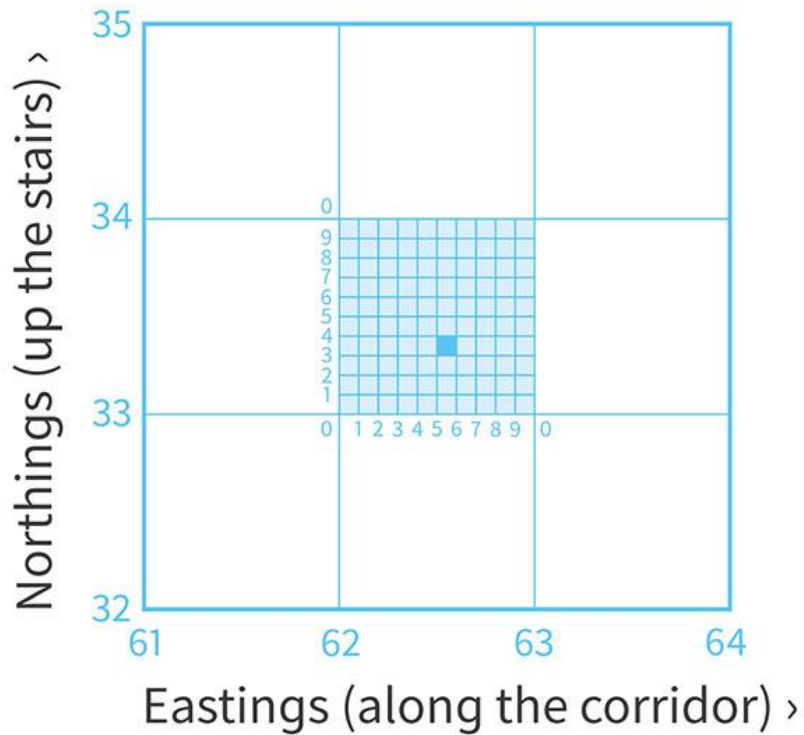
Finding grid square TL 62 33

## Six-figure grid references (used in Scouts)

If you want to pinpoint a more 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 in diagram E: 625 333.

## Diagram E



Showing how to calculate a 6-figure Grid Reference

### Top tip

When giving directions you can provide even more accuracy to your grid reference by stating a nearby landmark or feature. For example, *on the Bembridge OS Explorer map I am at grid reference SZ 644 874, at the crossroads.*