Your notes

KS3 Geography: revision notes

Map skills and grid references

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Direction and grid references

- The eight **compass points** are north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west and north-west.
- A four-figure **grid reference** gives a square: read the **easting** first (along the bottom), then the **northing** (up the side). Remember "along the corridor, then up the stairs".
- A six-figure **grid reference** gives an exact point, by imagining each square divided into tenths.

Scale and distance

- A **scale** of 1 : 50 000 means 1 cm on the map is 50 000 cm (500 m) in real life, so 2 cm is 1 km.
- On a 1 : 25 000 map, 1 cm is 250 m, so 4 cm is 1 km.
- Measure winding routes with a piece of string, then compare it with the **scale** line.

Height and symbols

- **Contour lines** join places of the same height. Close together means steep; far apart means gentle.
- Spot heights and triangulation pillars also show height.
- The key explains the symbols used, such as churches, footpaths and campsites.

The globe and GIS

- Lines of **latitude** run east to west and show how far north or south of the Equator a place is. Lines of **longitude** run from pole to pole and show how far east or west of the Prime Meridian (0°, through Greenwich) it is.

- GIS (Geographic Information Systems) are computer systems that show layers of data on digital maps.

Key terms

Compass points	The directions north, east, south and west, and those in between.
Grid reference	A set of numbers that locates a square or point on a map.
Easting	A vertical grid line, read along the bottom of the map.
Northing	A horizontal grid line, read up the side of the map.
Scale	The ratio between a distance on a map and the real distance.
Contour line	A line joining places of the same height.
Key	An explanation of the symbols on a map.
Latitude	Distance north or south of the Equator.
Longitude	Distance east or west of the Prime Meridian.
GIS	Computer systems that show layers of data on digital maps.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Which direction is opposite north-east?
2. In a four-figure grid reference, which number comes first?
3. On a 1 : 50 000 map, how far is 2 cm in real life?
4. What do contour lines show?
5. What do contour lines that are close together show?
6. How many figures are needed in a grid reference for an exact point?
7. What is the key on a map?
8. What does a scale of 1 : 25 000 mean?

Answers

1. South-west
2. The easting, read along the bottom
3. 1 km
4. Height, by joining places of the same height
5. Steep ground
6. Six
7. An explanation of the symbols used
8. 1 cm on the map is 25 000 cm (250 m) in real life

Your notes

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

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