

Using Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference Co-ordinates

How to use 12 figure grid co-ordinates to locate a gazetteer address on a map.
For example: Land at NGR 307538 116625, Old Village, Burlescombe.
This is located due west of St Mary's Church (coloured purple on the map below)



These 12 figure co-ordinates locate a point on a map to an accuracy of 1 square metre, in this example a point approximately the centre of the field.

All OS co-ordinates have two sets of numbers: the Easting (printed on top and bottom of paper maps), which is the vertical grid line and the Northing (printed on left and right edges of map), the horizontal grid line. In this example E: 307538, N: 116625.

To locate a site on a paper map you only need part of the NGR co-ordinates, depending on the map scale. Using a Landranger 1:50,000 scale map, you only need six figure co-ordinates (i.e. 3 Easting + 3 Northing).

In the Burlescombe example above, the Landranger map covering this area is No 181. You only need the **second, third and fourth** numbers of each co-ordinate i.e. 075 166. On the map you find the Easting grid line 07 along the bottom and the Northing grid line 16 along the left side. Where they intersect is the bottom left corner of that 1 kilometre grid square. The third digit is the additional distance in tenths along each line to a point within the square. In this example, from the bottom left corner of the grid square you would estimate a further 5 tenths east and 6 tenths north.

On a smaller scale map, such as the 1:2500 plotting sheets used by Planning, you would use eight figure co-ordinates (second, third, fourth and fifth digits). This map has 3 digit Easting and Northing grid lines as the map is divided into 100 metre grid squares and the 4th digit represents the additional tenths within the grid square.

NOTE: Some of the Northing co-ordinates in the gazetteer system have only got 5 digits (e.g. 98765). This is because the system does not use a leading zero in the database field, however the full co-ordinate is 098765. In these cases the 9 (for example) is the second digit.

For further information visit the Ordnance Survey website
<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/education/teachingresources/nationalgrid/index.html>