Treasure hunt

A fun activity to help Scouts practise their navigation skills. Scouts will use a map and grid references to navigate between checkpoints

You will need:
■ copies of a map
■ lists of grid references
■ appropriate outdoor clothing and equipment
■ compasses (optional)
■ information, challenges or prizes for each checkpoint

Before you start
This activity could be done with a small group of Scouts preparing for their exploration or expedition, or with the whole section, split into smaller groups such as Patrols.

Decide on the scale of the treasure hunt. This could be anything from the area around your meeting place, to a route of several kilometres/miles. Think about the level of supervision that will be needed, which will depend on the age and ability of the Scouts, and the terrain and activities they will be doing. Leaders may want to meet the Scouts at each checkpoint, follow Scouts at a distance, or walk with the Scouts.

Plan a route from the start point to the chosen destination, with a number of checkpoints along the route. This could be a circular route from the meeting place. If doing this activity with multiple groups, groups could set off at intervals (eg leaving a 10 minute gap), go to the checkpoints in a different order, or start off in different directions along a circular route.

Record the grid references of the start point, the checkpoints and the final destination. Use an OS or similar map, a street map, a tourist map, or even a map of the area around your meeting place, with grid references drawn on. At each checkpoint, leave something for Scouts to find or collect, or a task for them to complete. If Scouts are collecting something, this could be colour-coded or labelled for their group/Patrol. Some ideas are provided below:

■ letters to spell out the final destination
■ parts of the grid reference of the final destination
■ plastic tubs or eggs, filled with chocolates or sweets, for an Easter egg hunt.
■ a challenge to take a photo of a particular thing or act out a scene

Make sure Scouts know what to bring for the activity (eg a waterproof coat, warm clothing and a bottle of water) and that parents/carers are informed of any changes to drop off and pick up points/times.

Instructions
1 If running this activity as a whole section, split Scouts into groups, such as their Patrols. Give each group a copy of the map, a list of grid references for each of the checkpoints, and a compass (if using one).
2 Make sure that all Scouts and the leadership team know what to do in an emergency. If Scouts are going to be unsupervised during the activity, make sure they know how to contact the leadership team.
3 Set the groups off together, or at intervals, depending on how you’ve set up the activity. Plan in some quick filler activities, for any groups that are waiting to start, and those who finish first.
4 At the end of the activity, check that each checkpoint has been left clear.

Time needed
30 – 120 minutes

Badge links
This activity contributes to the following badges:

Expedition Challenge Award
Navigator Staged Activity Badge

Take it further
■ Give Groups the grid reference of the first checkpoint at the start only. At each grid reference, they could find a hidden grid reference for the next checkpoint.
■ Scouts preparing for their Expedition Challenge Award could prepare this activity – planning the route and checkpoints.
■ This could be adapted into an incident hike, with volunteers running challenges or emergency/survival scenarios at each checkpoint.
Appendix 1: Grid references

Four figure grid references
Maps usually have a series of horizontal and vertical lines, dividing the map into a grid of squares. Each line is numbered on the sides of the map, so that each square can be identified by its horizontal and vertical numbers.

The numbers running horizontally from the left to the right (or west to east) are called the eastings, as they increase in value as you travel east. The numbers running vertically from the bottom to the top (or south to north) are called northings, as they increase as you travel north.

Each square on the map has a grid reference which you get by putting together the number of the easting and the northing which cross in the bottom left hand corner of the square.

For example, the coloured square below would have a grid reference of 17 51.

![Diagram of a grid reference with numbers 17 51 highlighted in a square]

The easting is always given before the northing, which can be remembered by saying ‘along the corridor, then up the stairs’.

Six-figure grid references
To pinpoint an exact location, six-figure grid references are used. The same method is used, but this time, imagine that each square is divided into 10 equal spaced vertical and horizontal lines, making 100 small squares within the original square.

Imagine that each of these lines is numbered from 0 to 9, from left to right, and from bottom to top.

By adding an additional number to the easting and to the northing in the four-figure grid reference, a specific point within the box can be identified.

For example, a point within the box below could have a grid reference of 175 512.

![Diagram of a grid reference with numbers 175 512 highlighted in a square]
Ordnance Survey maps
For mapping purposes, Ordnance Survey have divided the whole of the UK into 100km squares. Each square is identified by a two-letter code, such as NH or SX.

Each 100km square is then divided into numbered 10km squares, with eastings and northing labelled 0 to 9, so can be identified by a 2-figure grid reference such as SX73.

Each 10km square is then divided into numbered 1km squares, from 00 to 99, which can be identified by a four-figure grid reference, such as SX 77 34.

A more exact location can then be pinpointed using a six-figure grid reference, such as SX 776 343.

Further support
- Watch map reading videos from Ordnance Survey, where Scouting Ambassador Steve Backshall explains grid references and more.
- Read the Beginners Guide to Grid References on the Ordnance Survey website.