

Directions and routes (left/right, forwards/back, N/S/E/W)

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

SHA.SAL.3a describe, interpret and record directional instructions and location.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES

Directions tell the way you face or move: forwards, back, left or right. On a school-yard map North is at the top, East is right of North, South is at the bottom and West is left of North.

- Turning right at the school gate to face the pitch.
- Forwards two squares, turn right, forwards three squares.

MODEL THIS ON THE BOARD

OFFICE TO PITCH ROUTE

- 1 Start at the office, facing **North**.
- 2 Walk forwards **two** squares.
- 3 Turn **right** so you now face East.
- 4 Walk forwards **one** square.
- 5 You finish facing East after the full route.

DISCUSSION STARTER

REFLECT When giving a route, what helps most — left and right, or North, South, East and West?

LESSON ARC

Open with the schoolyard map on the board, North fixed at the top, gate and hall visible — pupils name which way they face, not just the place. Walk a counter across two demo routes on the visualiser: one in forwards/left/right, one in N/S/E/W, pointing at the compass rose so pupils see North never moves. Pupils write a route to their own seat in copybooks, then follow and write routes on circulated schoolyard maps in the Class Challenge.

TEACHING MOVES

1. **Getting Started.** Have the schoolyard map on the board before pupils settle, North marked at the top. Take three hands-up answers, not call-outs, and push each pupil to say which way they are facing, not just name the hall or pitch.
2. **Watch and Notice.** Walk the counter on the visualiser slowly. At every turn, point at the compass rose and say 'North is still at the top' so the class watches it stay put. Draw out the one distinction that carries the lesson: a turn changes facing, a forwards step changes position.
3. **Try It Together.** A pupil walks the counter square by square while the class checks aloud. At every turn ask the whole class 'which way are you facing now?' and revoice one answer before the next move. Rotate pupils and mix left/right routes with N/S/E/W routes so both stay live.
4. **Write Your Route in Your Copy.** Walk the room glancing for routes that are in order and would actually work. The commonest slip is writing places ('go to the bookshelf') instead of directions — prompt those pupils to turn each place into a forwards/turn step.

5. **Class Challenge.** Reveal one task at a time, keep board work brisk, and confirm each route works by walking the counter once at the end. Bring in the shortest-route stretch task only after the first three are secure.
6. **What Did We Notice?** Listen for pupils saying a route only works if each step follows the last. Revoice a strong answer — 'so the order is part of the route, not just the steps' — and head off the idea that the same steps in any order land you in the same place.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

⚠ A pupil turns left when the route says 'turn right' — they read the turn from their own body facing the board, not from the counter's direction of travel.

Pause and let the class spot it. Ask the pupil to point the way the counter is heading first, then decide the turn from the counter's point of view. Walk that step again slowly so the watching class sees the correction.

⚠ Pupils think North swings round to point the way the counter is facing after a turn, so they relabel directions each time it moves.

Each time the counter turns, tap the compass rose and say 'North is still at the top.' Show that N/S/E/W are painted on the map and never move, unlike left and right which depend on which way you face.

⚠ In the maths-talk, pupils claim swapping two steps still lands you in the same place — they treat a route like a shopping list.

Take one of their routes, physically swap two steps on the board, and walk the counter to show it lands somewhere different. 'The order is part of the route.'

DIFFERENTIATION

EMERGING

- Mark N, S, E and W on the corners of the printed map so these pupils read the fixed directions straight off the map instead of a separate compass card.
- Keep their copybook route to two steps from the door, and let them touch each square with the counter as they count so they don't lose their place.

DEVELOPING

- After a follow task, ask them to write the reverse route back to the start and check it by walking the counter.
- Give a route with one deliberate wrong turn in it and ask them to find and fix the step that breaks it.

PROFICIENT

- Narrate the stretch task as a harder variant at the board: find the shortest route between two places, then say which compass direction they travel in most — and justify why to the class.
- Ask them to write a route using compass points only, no left/right, and challenge a classmate at the board to follow it.

✂ **Cross-curricular:** Tie to Geography — pupils orient a simple map of their own locality with North at the top and describe the route from the school to a nearby landmark.

ANSWER KEY

Scaffold: visual check on the page

Q1: East

Q2: North

Q3: North

Q4: East

a) Always : East is always to the right of North on the map.

b) Never : Order matters; swapping steps sends you to a different square.

c) Always : Maps in this lesson always place North at the top.

d) Sometimes : Forwards is the way you already face, which may be any compass point.

EXTENSION SHEET · STRETCH ANSWERS

S1: West

S2: No. Eoin ends 2 squares North and 3 squares East of the start; Darragh ends 5 squares East.

S3: 2 squares East, then 3 squares South

S4: 6 squares; East

S5: on his left

Investigation: Route around the yard — open-ended; scan pupils' working for valid solution paths rather than a single answer.