

Map and Compass Activities

Setting up a course with map and/or compass

Trail signs

These are the most straightforward - set up the signs along the path, making sure to make them reasonably easy to see and placed every place that there could be a question about where to go (any trail crossing, for example). Give the girls copies of the trail signs possible and send them off.

Remember two rules of trail sign etiquette: If you come across a trail sign in the woods, leave it, because you don't know who needs to find it. And, if you know that you are the last group to use the trail sign, pick it up and scatter the pieces, so it doesn't confuse another group.

Compass Games

Compass Relay

Line up teams in relay formation, parallel to each other. Opposite each team a compass is drawn on the floor, the points indicated but only the North lettered. The leader calls out a point. The No. 1 girl in each team steps out and places a pencil on the compass, pointing in the given direction, before the leader has counted six. If correct, the player falls in behind compass; if incorrect, she goes back and falls in at the end of her team. Another point is called and the No. 2's step out. The first team to fall in complete behind the compass wins.

There should be a referee for each team to avoid time waste in verifying the compass directions shown.

Sixteen Point Compass Game

A circle is marked on the floor and sixteen cards are prepared each giving one of the sixteen compass points. These cards are placed face down on a table. Each of the sixteen players takes one of the cards at random. The umpire finds the player who has picked up the North card and places him anywhere on the circle. On the words, "This is North -- Fall in," the others take up their appropriate places in the circle. After the players have become thoroughly proficient the umpire should take any player (say ESE) place her anywhere in the circle and say. "This is ESE--Fall in."

North, South, East and West

Players are formed up in open formation. The four sides of the room are named North, East, South and West respectively. The corners of the room are named to correspond with the intermediate compass directions. Whenever the umpire names a direction the players immediately jump to face in the direction. Players who make a mistake, or who move too late, sit down in their places until only one remains standing. When the players have become thoroughly proficient the game should be stopped suddenly and another direction indicated as North.



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Dutch Compass Game

The fifteen players stand in a circle, 10' to 12' in diameter. The umpire stands in the center of the circle holding a staff upright with one end on the ground. On the words, "Fall In," players take up positions on the circle (facing inwards) to represent the compass points, the umpire indicating where a space is to be left to represent North. He commences by calling a compass direction say ESE and simultaneously releases his hold of the staff. The player occupying the ESE position on the circle must catch the staff before it has fallen. If she succeeds she returns to her place and another direction is called.

When a player fails, she goes to the North space on the circle and the place she left becomes the new North, all of the players immediately picking up their new compass points. The umpire calls new direction.

Compass Point Contest

Make two compass boards by drawing a circle on a piece of cardboard (one for each compass board) and securing it to a wooden board with brads at each of the eight compass points. Let the brads protrude about ½ inch, and mark one point N for North. Initial the eight points of the compass on small pieces of cardboard with a small hole in each label.

Line your contestants up in two teams (your guests, you should have some, could participate in this game). This is a team contest in which members (one from each team) compete in placing seven labels (omit North) on the brads quickly and correctly. A contestant receives one point for placing the labels correctly and a second point for doing so first. Winning team is the one with the most total points at the end.

Compass Golf

Bury a small tin can in the center of a large circle marked on the ground. Mark North, South, East and West with small pegs on the circle's circumference. These are used to tee golf shots toward the buried can. Record how many strokes you need to get in from each point.



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Compass Skills Patience

You will need: Sets of cards having the compass points printed on them. The ten cards for each team are laid out at random, face down on a table in front of them. One at a time the girls run up and turn over a card. If it is not the North card then they turn it face down again and run back to their team and the next player has a go. When the North card is turned up they can lay it face up at the front of the table. The next card needed is the South card and so on. Play continues until one team has all its cards turned face up in the correct order.

VARIATION: This game is played the same way as the previous game, but this time the girls have to place the cards at the correct compass position for that card. Suggested order for laying down cards: North, South, East, West, North East, South East, South West, North West, NNE, SSW, NNW, SSE, ENE, WSW, ESE, WNW

Cardinal Points

Materials: Compass, start marker (could be a flag, a ball, anything), spacious field or room

Goal: To learn how to use a compass, girls should have basic knowledge of the cardinal points (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW). This game requires basic knowledge of the cardinal points while using a compass.

Instructions: Select a starting point. Drop the start marker and using the compass follow these directions:

Walk 5 paces to the north, stop
Walk 10 paces to the West, stop
Walk 20 paces to the south, stop
Walk 15 paces to the east, stop
Walk 15 paces to the north, stop
Walk 5 paces to the west, stop

At this point, look down on the ground. You should be at the starting point!



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Compass Bingo

Materials: Give each girl a sheet of paper, divided into squares (much like a bingo card). Anywhere from 16 or 25 squares is good. For Brownies, at the top or bottom, put the 4 (or 8) points of a compass to help them learn.

The leader has a master card, with items pre-drawn on it. For example, in the top left corner might be the letter A, next to it a kite, next to that a hat, etc. Each space in the "bingo" card should be filled with something that is easy for the girl to draw.

How to play: The leader describes the location of a square using the compass points, then tells the girls what to draw in that square. As she goes, she marks it off on her sheet so she doesn't repeat any, and continues until all the squares have been marked off.

Example: "Find the squares that are at the north. Now go to the square that is as far west as you can go. Put an A there." (the girls draw an A). "Now go 2 squares to the east and one square to the south. Draw a tree there." Continue until all squares are filled. For younger girls, give them hints sometimes, like "this square is beside the tree".

When everything is completed, the girls can compare their drawings.

Find-A-Flower

Ahead of time, cut out construction paper in flower shapes, or animal shapes. Attach them to trees or bushes in the area with a pushpin. Girls go to starting point and follow their written directions: 12 paces E, 34 paces, left, etc. At the end of their directions, it should lead them to the tree or bush where the cut-out is. Each group of girls has a different tree or bush to end up at.

Lay a Trail

Give each patrol a piece of paper and a pen, and two popsicle sticks. Each patrol puts one popsicle stick at the starting point of their trail. Then the girls make up their own compass trail, writing down the directions as they go: 25 paces N, 40 paces S, 10 paces NW, etc. etc. At the end of their directions, the girls place another popsicle stick to mark the end.

The patrols can then swap their instructions, and follow another patrol's trail to find their popsicle stick. The girls were told where the starting point was. This game could also be played in the dark with flashlights!



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