

Using a TMAP While Exploring

Note: Throughout this lesson, the street that your destination is located on (the street contained in the address) will be referred to as Your Landmark Street. The building located at the address specified on the TMAP is referred to as Your Destination. Always be aware of your surroundings while traveling with your TMAP, and never stop to read or adjust your map while in a driveway, street, or other unsafe location.

Exercise 1 – Orienting Yourself Before You Leave

1. Before you begin, locate Your Landmark Street and the landmark symbol on the map. Orient the map so that Your Landmark Street runs from left to right.
2. Place one finger on the landmark symbol and spread your fingers out to gauge the distance from the landmark to each of the nearest streets to the left and right. Is the landmark symbol closer to one street, or does it appear to be centered between the two streets? This will help you gauge your position on the block.
3. If your landmark symbol is centered between the two streets, proceed to the next step in this exercise. If your landmark symbol is closer to one street than the other, use one hand to trace the closer street to its end in order to check for a street name. Also, make note of which direction this street runs and where it is in relationship to the landmark symbol (to the north, east, south, or west).
4. Trace a path away from the landmark symbol, moving toward Your Landmark Street. At this stage, your finger should be moving away from your body; if it is not, reorient the map so that it is. This ensures that the map will be oriented correctly for leaving Your Destination.

5. You are now ready to begin traveling. As you prepare to leave Your Destination, you will need to carry the map in a position that preserves its current orientation. Experiment with different ways of holding and reading the map when not sitting at a table. Many people find that holding the map against their body is the most natural position for reading while on the move, but feel free to experiment with other reading positions. Some people have found success supporting the map with one hand while reading (lightly) with the other, while others choose to carry a clipboard or binder. When you have determined how you will hold and read the map, proceed to Exercise 2.

Exercise 2 – Orienting the Map to Reflect Your New Heading

1. As you leave Your Destination, check for traffic to confirm that you have a street running from left to right (or right to left) in front of you. This should correspond with the way your map is currently oriented.
2. On the sidewalk, turn either to the left or right. Your Destination should now be on either your left or your right, and Your Landmark Street should be on the opposite side. You will now need to turn the map so that it reflects your new orientation. If you turned to the left, rotate the map to the right; if you turned to the right, rotate the map left. Although this seems odd, this should position the map correctly.
3. Use a compass, if necessary and available, to determine which direction you are now facing. iPhones have a built-in compass app that can be used for this purpose, as can many GPS apps and Microsoft Soundscape.
4. Place your finger on the map on Your Landmark Street, immediately adjacent to Your Destination. If you are holding the TMAP against

your body, the map should now be oriented so that Your Landmark Street projects a vertical line and your heading (the direction you are facing) should be on the side of the page that is closest to the ground. If you are holding the map horizontally, Your Landmark Street should project a line away from your body, and your heading should be on the side of the page that is farthest away from your body.

5. Before continuing, it is important to recognize that the lines on the map represent the street, not the sidewalk. Therefore, whenever you use the map to trace a potential route (or to retrace an actual route that you have just walked), you must remember that you are walking on either the left or the right side of the line (the street), not on it. If you are walking “on” the line, you are walking in the middle of the street with the cars! Even if you are walking on the side of the road in a sidewalk-less area, this is still true. This means that you will be using the left and right sides of your reading fingertip to track the lines, rather than tracking with the center of your fingertip.
6. Based on this new information, check your map and your traffic. If the traffic is currently to your left, you are walking on the right side of Your Landmark Street and your map-reading finger should be on the right side of the line (tracking with the left side of your fingertip). If the traffic is currently to your right, you are walking on the left side of Your Landmark Street and your map-reading finger should be on the left side of the line (using the right side of your fingertip).
7. As you explore away from Your Destination and make turns onto new streets, remember to stop after each turn and reorient the map so that it accurately reflects your new heading.

Tips

1. During Exercise 1, you begin using the map to acquire information that you will need to remember during Exercise 2. You may find it helpful to use a notetaking device to help you remember information, both as you explore the map and as you explore the streets.
2. Microsoft Soundscape can be a useful addition to your exploration, as it provides cardinal and intercardinal directions about your current heading, announces street names, and calls out the names of local businesses as you travel. This can help you discover the names of the streets that are not labeled on your TMAP, and nearby businesses can serve as useful landmarks. You can adapt your TMAP as necessary by adding braille street labels to unlabeled streets and by using adhesive tactile markers to points of interest.
3. Have fun! With a little bit of practice, exploration with a TMAP can and should be exciting and rewarding.