



Orienteering for SGOs

SECONDARY

What's unique about Orienteering

Orienteering is the sport for everyone. Combining problem solving, teamwork and physical activity, it encourages students to explore the outdoors, develop map-reading and navigation skills, and think critically under pressure, thus developing a rounded learner.

The map-reading portion is as important as the physical side, meaning SGOs can engage students who don't usually enjoy traditional sports, and help them engage through their other skills to succeed!

Young people who have orienteered in schools tell us they're more confident, they feel more comfortable with leadership, and how enjoyable it was to have to problem solve alongside their physical activity.

What is the intent of your format



Engage new/target groups of young people (tackling inequalities)



Create positive experiences



Develop leadership, character, life skills

As a truly inclusive sport, Orienteering provides a fantastic experience for students to get active, build confidence, develop cross-curricular skills, and to reach students who don't usually engage with physical activity. Specifically:

- Orienteering's combination of physical literacy, map-reading, and problem-solving skills give every student a chance to succeed
- Map-reading is as important as your speed to the controls, engaging pupils who don't usually engage in sport
- Developing cross-curricular skills that are transferrable, into maths and geography
- Developing a rounded learner, through leadership, communication and problem solving
- Orienteering can be a team, or solo sport, so success can be measured by personal bests or teamwork.

It's just not Orienteering if you...

1

Don't use a map to find the controls

2

Follow other people – planning your own route and following it is part of the fun!

3

Don't enjoy the adventure!

Target group benefits



All young people



Behavioural challenges



Targeted groups of young people

Our school games offer can be delivered to target all young people, but the benefits for targeted groups of young people, and young people with behavioural challenges have been proven to successfully get them engaged with sport, the outdoors, and learning without even knowing.

Orienteering is a versatile sport, and our offer can utilise any space, big or small, to offer the feeling of adventure – indoors or outdoors.

For young people with behavioural challenges, the opportunity for teamwork, cooperation, and the positive outdoor experience has been shown to reduce stress, and benefit emotional well-being, engaging them through physical activity.



Orienteering for SGOs

SECONDARY

How to run inter-competition: Score Course



How to set up

- Place controls around the site, each with a unique number and point value
- Create a map showing all control locations for participants
- Prepare score cards so learners can record each control they visit
- Set a time limit for the activity
- Explain boundaries and safety before starting
- Start the timer and let learners choose their own route to collect as many points as possible within the time allowed.



Age group

KS3 (11-14 years old)
KS4 (14-16 years old)



Gender

Mixed



Participant numbers

1-50

Orienteering score courses offer a flexible approach to participant numbers, as the large number of controls will see pupils running in every direction!

Staggering the start until the first runner is out of sight can prevent pupils following one another, but with so many controls to choose from, this doesn't have to be too long.



Target audience

Orienteering invites all to take part but can particularly benefit less sporty and disengaged pupils, as well as those with behavioural challenges.

The outdoor adventure takes pupils who struggle in a classroom setting to the outdoors, where they engage more readily without even knowing!

With a score course, the challenge to visit as many controls as possible requires decision-making skills on the fly. The winners will be those who can identify which controls to visit, and which to avoid.



Benefits for YP

Orienteering can offer huge benefits for young people taking part.

Participants can have fun in the outdoors, and if used as a team event, the quick and strategic decisions required to pick the best route to visit all controls is key! This can develop teamworking skills, as well as thinking on the fly, and respect for others.

As a solo event, avoiding the temptation to follow people develops respect for others, and the independence of planning your own route is a fantastic opportunity to develop independent learning skills in unfamiliar situations.



Roles for YP

Roles young people can take on:

- Control setter — help place controls around the site and check they're visible, safe, and correctly numbered, as well as collecting them at the end
- Timekeeper — manage the start process, set off participants at intervals, and keep track of timing
- Finish marshal — record finish times, collect score cards, and ensure everyone returns safely
- Score checker — verify punches/answers and calculate total points.



Progression

Inter-school competition is the opportunity for young people to develop their skills. From map-reading, to navigation, to the strategy of which controls to visit and which to leave, intra-school competition is the competitive opportunity to put the skills they currently have to use and develop them before visiting larger competitions.



Orienteering for SGOs

SECONDARY

How to run inter-competition: Traditional Course



How to set up

- Place controls around the site in the exact order they must be visited
- Mark the numbered sequence clearly on each participant's map
- Prepare control cards with boxes for each control in the correct order
- Set a start and finish point that all participants must use
- Explain boundaries and safety before beginning
- Start the timer and let learners navigate through the course, visiting each control in sequence as quickly as they can.



Age group

KS3 (11-14 years old)
KS4 (14-16 years old)



Gender

Mixed



Participant numbers

1-100

Traditional Orienteering Courses are flexible for numbers – we have events with 5 participants, and some with hundreds!

To accommodate large groups, orienteering events stagger the start for each participant. This allows everyone to independently navigate the course, and most importantly choose how to start. Following is discouraged, because the best part of Orienteering is finding your own way!



Target audience

Traditional courses can engage less-sporty pupils well by utilising their map-reading, time management and planning skills.

Where sporty pupils traditionally have the upper hand in physical activity, planning the correct route offers a huge advantage. The best orienteers are those who can map read and take the most efficient route to the controls.



Benefits for YP

Orienteering offers huge benefits for young people, especially when they take part in a traditional course where controls must be visited in a set order.

Participants can enjoy being active outdoors, building confidence as they learn to navigate independently and make decisions using a map in real time.

Working through the control sequence together builds teamwork, communication, and quick decision making. Learners support one another, agree on approaches, and stay coordinated throughout the course.

Navigating alone encourages independent problem solving. Learners must rely on their own map reading, resist following others, and relocate calmly if they become unsure of their position—strengthening resilience and spatial awareness.



Roles for YP

Roles young people can take on:

- Control setter — help place controls around the site and check they're visible, safe, and correctly numbered, as well as collecting them at the end
- Timekeeper — manage the start process, set off participants at intervals, and keep track of timing
- Finish marshal — record finish times, collect score cards, and ensure everyone returns safely
- Score checker — verify punches/answers and calculate total points.



Progression

Inter-school competition is the opportunity for young people to develop their skills. As young people progress to traditional courses, they apply these same skills in a set sequence, developing accuracy, confidence, and readiness for larger competitions.



Orienteering for SGOs

SECONDARY

Additional support

Orienteering is a fully inclusive sport. To support you to adapt your practice, check out the [SEND Inclusion Toolkit](#) co-created by YST and the National Disability Sports Organisations (NDSOs) who are the leading experts within inclusive sport. They provide advice, support and opportunities for people of all ages with specific impairments. [The toolkit](#) provides you with an introduction to each Special Educational Needs and Disability, key top tips for creating an inclusive environment and signposting to further training and development opportunities within each National Disability Sport Organisation. It will help you adapt any practice in addition to our suggestions to make it inclusive for all.

Physical Literacy

We have designed these formats with physical literacy at their heart. We want all young people to have a positive experience with physical activity from an early age. As far as possible, we've considered opportunities for young people to move, think, feel and connect through our activities, and given you suggestions to make adaptations. But, if they don't work for you and your young people, then use the THRIVE principle to remove barriers, make changes and give young people greater ownership of their experience.

For further support, look to the Physical Literacy Enactment Guide - Community, which can be found by [clicking here](#), and going to the "Getting Started" guide section to download it.

NGB regional contacts

For more information and additional support to use Orienteering as part of your curriculum offer, you can:

- Get in touch with British Orienteering at schools@britishorienteering.org.uk
 - Here, we can offer tailored advice and support for your school, as well as helping connect you with local clubs, or our Recognised Delivery Partners
- Visit the British Orienteering website, where you can find information on Schools [here](#)
 - You can find all the information about what British Orienteering offer schools, as well as sign up for our Schools Newsletter, and find out more about regional, and national schools' events

- Get in touch with your local club – you can use our [Club Finder](#) to see which is closest to you
- Our local clubs are always keen to help schools in their communities – they can advise on getting maps created for your school, equipment, and offer their support for any Orienteering activities that your school would like to offer. Our clubs are also the next step for any pupils who enjoyed their Orienteering experience and would like to continue.

Personal development

If you are interested in learning more, then check out our courses via these links:

- [Introducing Orienteering eLearning Course](#), which aims to help you understand what Orienteering is and how to introduce it in a fun and exciting way
- [Orienteering Instructor Qualification](#) – If you are looking to run introductory Orienteering sessions this course could be for you! Instructors will be able to deliver high-quality introductory orienteering sessions that teach orienteering skills whilst working towards personal and group development outcomes
- [Young Leader Award](#) - Each session includes leadership activities and games that progress from the basics of Orienteering to outdoor environments, supporting young people on their leadership journey.

Where to participate next?

- Our network of orienteering clubs are regularly hosting smaller activities, and larger events, and are always excited to find new members. Many of these will be 'Come and Try It' events or targeted at Juniors. Find out where and when the next events for you could be with our [Event Finder](#).

Where to compete next?

- The British Schools Orienteering Association (BSOA) has information about the annual [Regional Schools Orienteering Championships](#) and national [British Schools Orienteering Championships](#).





Why Orienteering for your school?

Orienteering is an exciting alternative to traditional school sports, engaging learners in cross-curricular activity using PE, Geography, and Maths skills, as well as bringing the classroom outdoors!

Orienteering stands out from the crowd, as a great leveller for students – many excel at the physical aspect, many excel at the map-reading aspect, but very few excel at both! The sport is also inclusive, with no gender bias, and can offer excellent opportunities for teamworking in groups, developing leadership skills, as well as the enjoyment of getting out of the classroom to learn.

How to use activities in curriculum time

The cross-curricular nature of Orienteering allows Teachers to tailor Outdoor, physical activity across a wide range of subjects. By adding questions, tasks, or activities at each of the controls across a set course. Courses can be set within any space and to any level of difficulty using mathematical problem-solving or cross-curricular questions at checkpoints. As long as the learners use a map to find their way, it's cross-curricular orienteering!

Activities can be shortened or extended to fit lesson durations, with smaller course areas and fewer checkpoints used for introductory sessions.

Orienteering activities can form part of a wider Outdoor and Adventurous Activities (OAA) unit, helping pupils develop navigation, communication, leadership and problem-solving skills throughout a sequence of lessons.

Additional support

Orienteering is a fully inclusive sport. To support you to adapt your practice, check out the [SEND Inclusion Toolkit](#) co-created by YST and the National Disability Sports Organisations (NDSOs) who are the leading experts within inclusive sport. They provide advice, support, and opportunities for people of all ages with specific impairments. [The toolkit](#) provides you with an introduction to each Special Educational Needs and Disability, key top tips for creating an inclusive environment and signposting to further training and development opportunities within each NDSO. It will help you adapt any practice in addition to our suggestions to make it inclusive for all.

Physical Literacy

These formats and activities have been designed with physical literacy at their heart. We want all young people to have a positive experience with physical activity from an early age. As far as possible, we've considered opportunities for young people to move, think, feel and connect through our activities, and given you suggestions to make adaptations. But, if they don't work for you and your young people, then use the THRIVE principle to remove barriers, make changes and give ownership to your young people to have a positive experience with the activities to see their true value.

Thrive isn't a checklist – it's a lens to help you sense check quality and inclusion, so consider the following when choosing which format to deliver and how it supports your young people to have a positive experience with physical activity:

- **TAILORED:** does your event support the needs, strengths and circumstances of the group?
- **HOLISTIC:** do the selected activities support young people to move, connect, think and feel?
- **REFLECTIVE:** have you built in time to allow young people to reflect on their engagement and to make choices about what they want to take part in next?
- **INCLUSIVE:** does your event support all young people to engage, feel welcome and included to take part?
- **VARIED:** have you planned for activity differentiation with equipment, space, task and outcome to provide appropriate challenge and maintain interest for all?
- **EMPOWERING:** have you consulted your young people to ask what they want to do, and how they want the event to run? Often, they create better rules and adaptations than we do, which gives them ownership and a positive experience.

For further support, look to the Physical Literacy Enactment Guide - Education, which can be found by [clicking here](#), and going to the "Getting Started" guide section to download it.



Orienteering for Schools

SECONDARY

Personal development

- Visit the British Orienteering website, where you can find information on Schools here. You can find all the information about what British Orienteering offer schools, as well as sign up for our Schools Newsletter, and find out more about regional, and national schools' events.

If you are interested in learning more, then check out our courses via these links:

- [Introducing Orienteering eLearning Course](#), which aims to help you understand what Orienteering is and how to introduce it in a fun and exciting way
- [Orienteering Instructor Qualification](#) – If you are looking to run introductory Orienteering sessions this course could be for you! Instructors will be able to deliver high-quality introductory orienteering sessions that teach orienteering skills whilst working towards personal and group development outcomes
- [Young Leader Award](#) - Each session includes leadership activities and games that progress from the basics of Orienteering to outdoor environments, supporting young people on their leadership journey.

Where to participate next?

- Get in touch with your local club – you can use our [Club Finder](#) to see which is closest to you. Our clubs are also the next step for any pupils who enjoyed their Orienteering experience and would like to continue
- Our network of orienteering clubs are regularly hosting smaller activities, and larger events, and are always excited to find new members. Many of these will be 'Come and Try It' events or targeted at Juniors. Find out where and when the next events for you could be with our [Event Finder](#).

Where to compete next?

- For inter-school activities, contact your local SGO(s) for the next competition
- The British Schools Orienteering Association (BSOA) has information about the annual [Regional Schools Orienteering Championships](#) and national [British Schools Orienteering Championships](#).



Orienteering for Schools

SECONDARY

How to run intra-competition: Score Course



How to set up

- Place controls around the site, each with a unique number and point value
- Create a map showing all control locations for participants
- Prepare score cards so learners can record each control they visit
- Set a time limit for the activity
- Explain boundaries and safety before starting
- Start the timer and let learners choose their own route to collect as many points as possible within the time allowed.



Age group

KS3 (11-14 years old)
KS4 (14-16 years old)



Gender

Mixed



Participant numbers

1-50

Orienteering score courses offer a flexible approach to participant numbers, as the large number of controls will see pupils running in every direction!

Staggering the start until the first runner is out of sight can prevent pupils following one another, but with so many controls to choose from, this doesn't have to be too long.



Target audience

Orienteering invites all to take part but can particularly benefit less sporty and disengaged pupils, as well as those with behavioural challenges.

The outdoor adventure takes pupils who struggle in a classroom setting to the outdoors, where they engage more readily without even knowing!

With a score course, the challenge to visit as many controls as possible requires decision-making skills on the fly. The winners will be those who can identify which controls to visit, and which to avoid.



Benefits for YP

Orienteering can offer huge benefits for young people taking part.

Participants can have fun in the outdoors, and if used as a team event, the quick and strategic decisions required to pick the best route to visit all controls is key! This can develop teamworking skills, as well as thinking on the fly, and respect for others.

As a solo event, avoiding the temptation to follow people develops respect for others, and the independence of planning your own route is a fantastic opportunity to develop independent learning skills in unfamiliar situations.



Roles for YP

Roles young people can take on:

- Control setter — help place controls around the site and check they're visible, safe, and correctly numbered, as well as collecting them at the end
- Timekeeper — manage the start process, set off participants at intervals, and keep track of timing
- Finish marshal — record finish times, collect score cards, and ensure everyone returns safely
- Score checker — verify punches/answers and calculate total points.



Progression

Intra-school competition is the opportunity for young people to develop their skills. From map-reading, to navigation, to the strategy of which controls to visit and which to leave, intra-school competition is the competitive opportunity to put the skills they currently have to use and develop them before visiting larger competitions.



How to run intra-competition: Traditional Course



- Place controls around the site in the exact order they must be visited
- Mark the numbered sequence clearly on each participant's map
- Prepare control cards with boxes for each control in the correct order
- Set a start and finish point that all participants must use
- Explain boundaries and safety before beginning
- Start the timer and let learners navigate through the course, visiting each control in sequence as quickly as they can.



Age group

KS3 (11-14 years old)
KS4 (14-16 years old)



Gender

Mixed



Participant numbers

1-100

Traditional Orienteering Courses are flexible for numbers – we have events with 5 participants, and some with hundreds!

To accommodate large groups, orienteering events stagger the start for each participant. This allows everyone to independently navigate the course, and most importantly choose how to start. Following is discouraged, because the best part of Orienteering is finding your own way!



Target audience

Traditional courses can engage less-sporty pupils well by utilising their map-reading, time management and planning skills.

Where sporty pupils traditionally have the upper hand in physical activity, planning the correct route offers a huge advantage. The best orienteers are those who can map read and take the most efficient route to the controls.



Benefits for YP

Orienteering offers huge benefits for young people, especially when they take part in a traditional course where controls must be visited in a set order.

Participants can enjoy being active outdoors, building confidence as they learn to navigate independently and make decisions using a map in real time.

Working through the control sequence together builds teamwork, communication, and quick decision making. Learners support one another, agree on approaches, and stay coordinated throughout the course.

Navigating alone encourages independent problem solving. Learners must rely on their own map reading, resist following others, and relocate calmly if they become unsure of their position—strengthening resilience and spatial awareness.



Roles for YP

Roles young people can take on:

- Control setter — help place controls around the site and check they're visible, safe, and correctly numbered, as well as collecting them at the end
- Timekeeper — manage the start process, set off participants at intervals, and keep track of timing
- Finish marshal — record finish times, collect score cards, and ensure everyone returns safely
- Score checker — verify punches/answers and calculate total points.



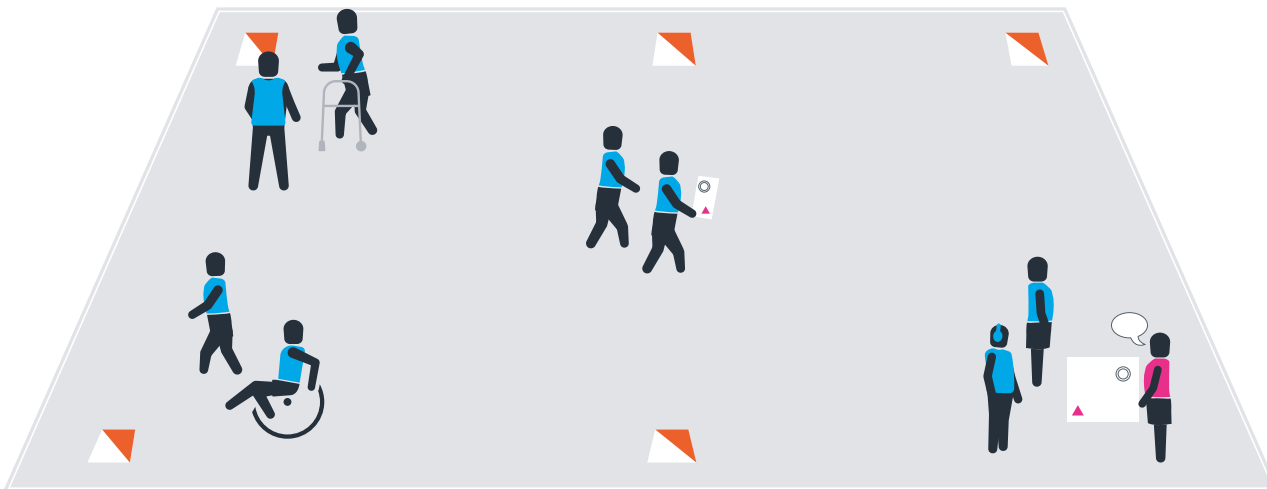
Progression

Inter-school competition is the opportunity for young people to develop their skills. As young people progress to traditional courses, they apply these same skills in a set sequence, developing accuracy, confidence, and readiness for larger competitions.



Score Course

SECONDARY



How to make it easier

- Make the course smaller
- Use less controls, or increase the time they have for the course
- Make the controls more visible

How to make it harder

- Send the participants out in smaller groups, so there's less chance of people following each other!
- Add more controls, or reduce the time they have to find them
- Make some of the controls challenging – hide them somewhere that isn't easy to see from a distance

Space required

- Any outdoor space your school has! From a netball court to a field, this activity can be adapted to meet the space your school has available
- You can choose the size of your course, make certain areas out of bounds, and adjust any aspects of the space to fit your needs.

Spirit of the Games



- Did you have any problems finding some of the controls? And how did you solve them?
- Did you get lost at any point? How did you get back on track?



- How did you and your team decide your route together?
- How did you all work together to get to the controls and find them?

How to play

- The score competition involves players planning their own routes to visit as many points ('controls') as possible in a given time on an enclosed mapped site
- The game can be played individually, in pairs, or as a team competition
- A network of controls are planned which are distributed over a mapped site (e.g. school playing field)
- The control sites can be control markers with a marking device (e.g. punches); questions to answer at each control site or given number values (e.g. based on difficulty or distance from the start/finish points)
- Players have cards on which they make a mark to show they have visited that control
- The player/team that visits the most controls in the given time wins
- A team competition can involve pairs or groups of three going round together or individually
- If controls are worth a numerical value, the player or team that scores the most points in the given time wins.

Safety

- Follow the instructions carefully
- Be aware of the boundaries for the competition
- Be clear on any out of bounds areas (e.g. car parks)
- Be mindful of other competitors when running with a map
- Know where you are on the map at all times.

Equipment required



Map of the site



Controls (with punches, numbers, questions, or any other activity you'd like)



Map with control locations marked on them – enough for each competitor or team



Score cards, with each control and space for answers listed (e.g. space for punching, or writing numbers/answers)



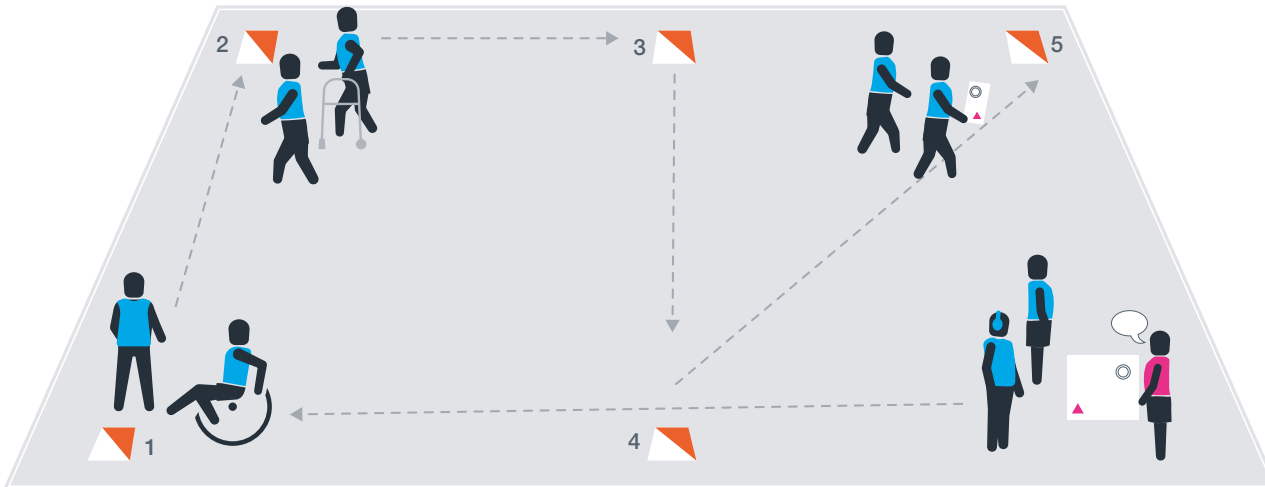
Whistle and stopwatch, for starting and timing the competition





Traditional Course

SECONDARY



How to play

- The Traditional Course requires players to visit each control in a set order, following the numbered sequence on the map
- The game can be played individually, in pairs, or as a team competition
- Controls are placed around the mapped area and numbered to match the order on the map
- The control sites can be control markers with a marking device (e.g. punches); questions to answer at each control site or number values (e.g. based on difficulty or distance from the start/finish points)
- Players have cards on which they make a mark to show they have visited that control
- The player/team that visits all the controls in the correct order, and in the fastest time is the winner
- A team competition can involve pairs or groups of three going round together or individually.

Safety

- Follow the instructions carefully
- Be aware of the boundaries for the competition
- Be clear on any out of bounds areas (e.g. car parks)
- Be mindful of other competitors when running with a map
- Know where you are on the map at all times.

Equipment required

-  Map of the site
-  Controls (with punches, numbers, questions, or any other activity you'd like)
-  Map with control locations marked on them – enough for each competitor or team
-  Score cards, with each control and space for answers listed (e.g. space for punching, or writing numbers/answers)
-  Whistle and stopwatch, for starting and timing the competition

How to make it easier

- Reduce the distance between controls
- Use less controls in the course
- Make the controls more visible

How to make it harder

- Send participants out individually and allow a minute between starts – to ensure there's no following!
- Add more controls, or increase the distance between them
- Make some of the controls challenging – hide them somewhere that isn't easy to see from a distance

Space required

- Any outdoor space your school has! From a netball court to a field, this activity can be adapted to meet the space your school has available
- You can choose the size of your course, make certain areas out of bounds, and adjust any aspects of the space to fit your needs.

Estimated set-up time

- 15 minutes – to lay out your controls, and mark where they are on the maps for your participants!

Difficulty level



Spirit of the Games



- Did you visit any of the controls in the wrong order? How did you solve this problem?
- Did you get lost at any point? How did you get back on track?



- Did you all stay together as a team? Or did anyone run ahead of everyone else?
- How did you all work together to visit the controls in the correct order?