Map Scales and Measuring Distances

Map Scales

1 : 1

One on the map = One on the ground

1 : 2

One on the map = Two on the ground

Therefore on a 1:50,000 OS map one centimetre on the map is 50,000 centimetres on the ground and likewise with a 1:25,000 OS map one centimetres on the map is 25,000 on the ground.

Measuring Distances

To measure a straight line distance between two points lay the straight edge of a piece of paper against the two points and at each point mark the paper with a dash. Then lay the paper along the scale line at the bottom of the map

To measure the distance along a road or a river which is not straight, lay a piece of paper along the first section and mark it with a dash at the start and end of that section. Then pivot the paper about the second dash until it lies along the second section and repeat the process, and so on, until the last point is marked. The total distance along the road is then recorded as a straight line on the piece of paper and as before can be read off against the scale line at the bottom of the map.