Grid skills

Grid references are often placed around maps, aerial photographs and street maps to help users locate places. First, the entire map or photograph is divided into equal-sized squares to make the grid. Then alphabetical letters are placed along the top (or bottom) of the image for each column of squares starting with A on the left. Next, numbers are placed up the side of the image for each row of squares starting with 1 at the bottom. Both the letters and numbers are aligned centrally along their column or row. Now a location is described by an alphabetical letter followed by a number. For example, a place with a grid reference of E3 will lie completely or mostly inside the column E / row 3 square or cell.

Look at the first illustration on the left only. If you were asked to describe where the tractor is, what would you say?

When you have grid references, such as in the bottom illustration, you only need to give the co-ordinates:

Look at the first illustration again. If you were asked to describe where the lone white bull is, what would you say?

The other advantage of grid maps is that they always use a direct overhead view of the content to prevent any features or locations from being hidden by other elements. The last two illustrations clearly reveal the white bull at:

1. What are the grid references for:
   (a) the dam? ...........................................
   (b) the only single cow? ............................
   (c) the fallen log? ....................................
   (d) the four cows by the gate? .....................

2. What is at the following grid locations?
   (a) B4: .....................................................
   (b) A1: .....................................................

3. Add to the illustration at right, small sketches (to scale) of the following:
   (a) a farmer in E4
   (b) three ducks in B3
   (c) a trough of drinking water in D5.

References: SOSE Alive 1, p127 • Geoactive 1, pp10-11 • SOSE for Queensland 1, pp168-175
Jacaranda SOSE 1 2E, pp144-147 • Jacaranda SOSE: Geography 1, pp10-13
SOSE Alive Geography 1, p7 • Jacaranda Atlas 5E, p1