

Finding Your Way by the Sky

Practical skills

Locating north from the stars, in both hemispheres.

A backup when a compass is unavailable.

1

Northern hemisphere: find the Plough

Also called the Big Dipper. Seven bright stars.

2

Follow the pointers

The two stars at the end of the 'pan'. Extend that line about five times.

3

That is Polaris

The North Star. Its altitude equals your latitude.

4

Southern hemisphere: find the Southern Cross

Extend the long axis about 4.5 times its length.

5

Drop to the horizon

That point is roughly due south.

BY DAY

The sun rises roughly east, sets roughly west

At solar noon it is due south in the northern hemisphere

A shadow stick gives an east-west line

Polaris is not especially bright. Following the pointers is far more reliable than looking for the brightest star.