

Understanding scale

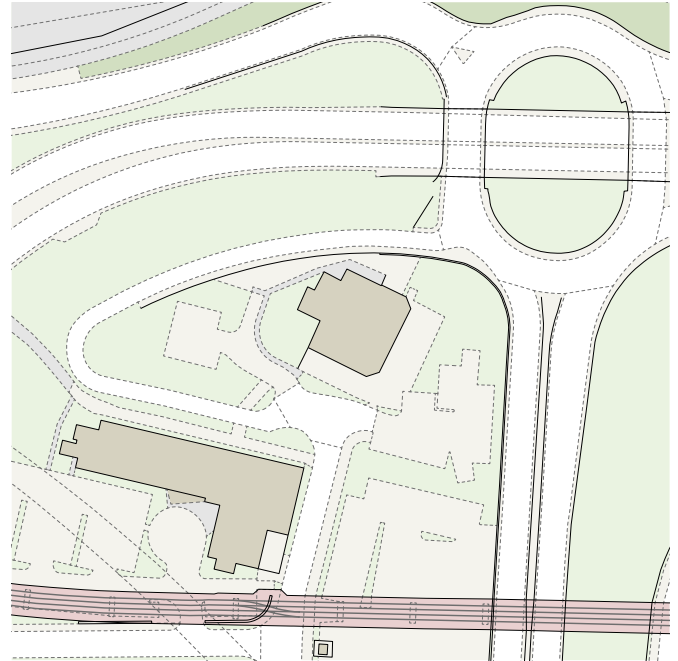
It wouldn't be possible for maps to show things the size they are in real life, so maps make things smaller using scale. Drawing something to scale means showing it at a different size to what it is in real life.

When maps are drawn to scale, things are made many times smaller than they really are. Because maps are important to a lot of people, this process has to be very accurate.

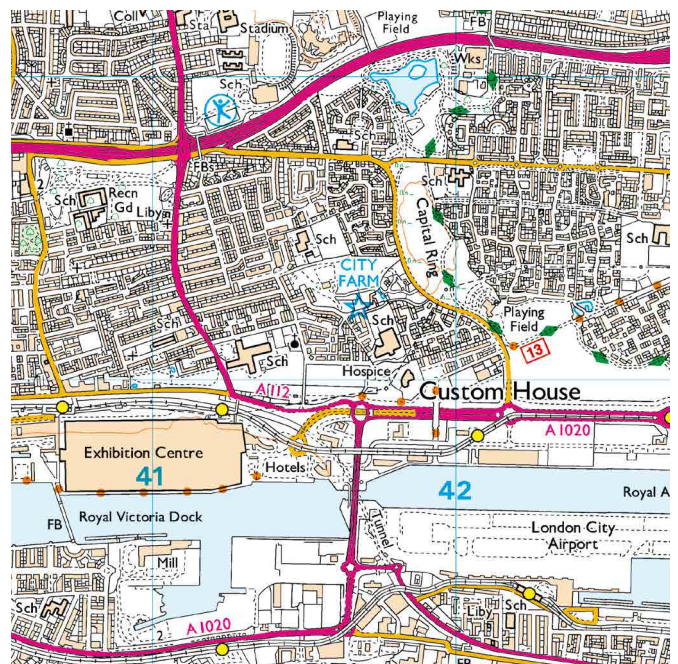
Every map has its scale printed on the front. It is usually written like this: 1:25 000. This means that one unit of measurement on the map (a centimetre, for example) represents 25 000 of those same units on the actual ground the map covers.

Maps are sometimes called large or small scale.

Large-scale maps – These are better for showing individual buildings in detail because they only cover a small area of land.



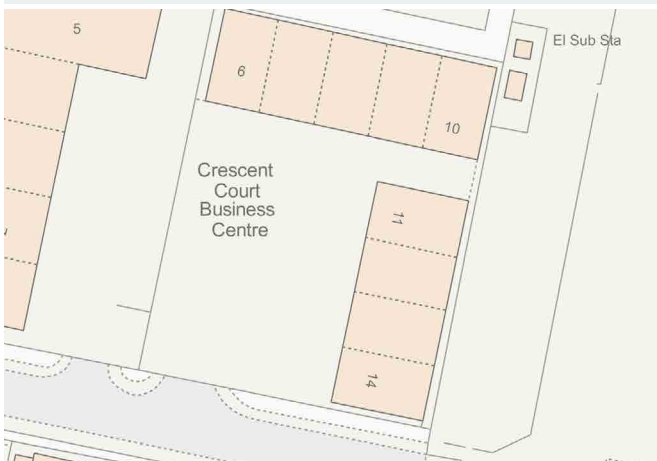
Small-scale maps – These are ideal for travelling either by car or walking because they cover large areas of land.



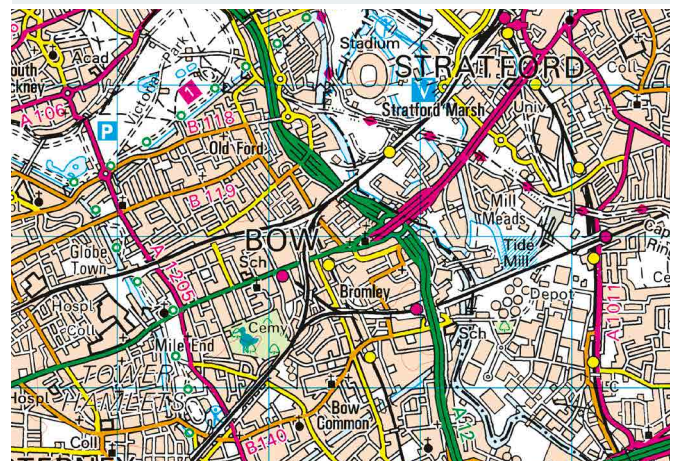
What are different scales used for?

OS produces different maps for different uses. Each of these uses normally requires a different scale.

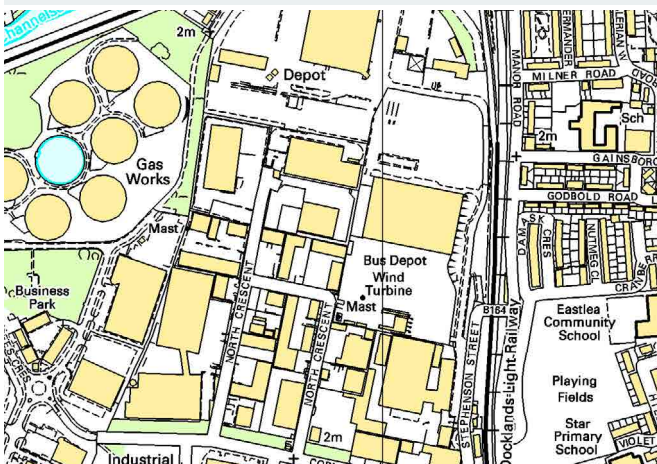
1:1250 scale – Ideal for architects



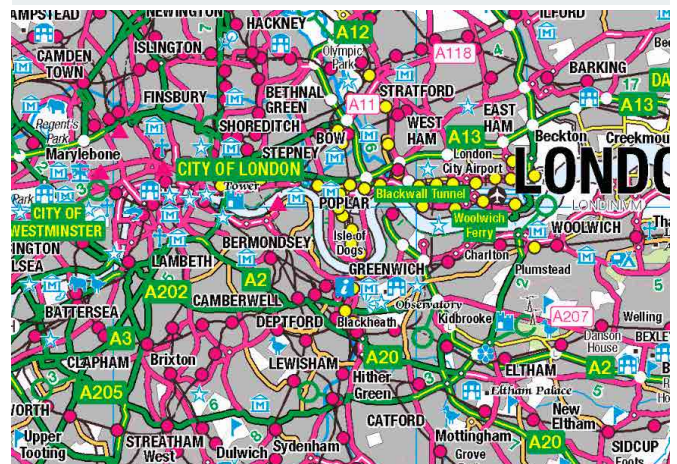
1:50 000 scale – Ideal for planning a day out



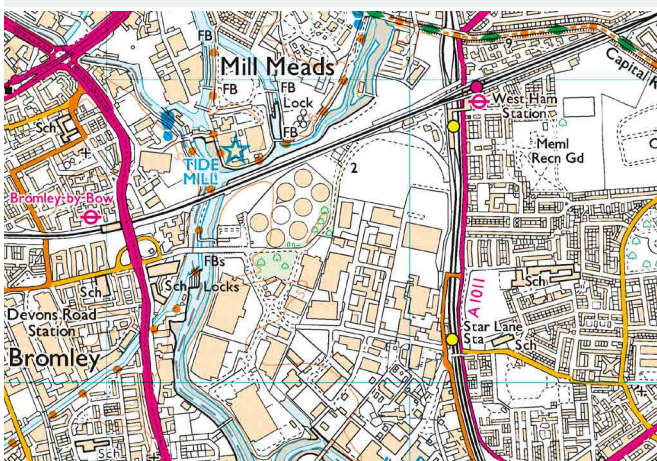
1:10 000 scale – Ideal for town developers



1:250 000 scale – Ideal for motorists and longer journeys



1:25 000 scale – Ideal for outdoor activities



1:1 000 000 scale – Ideal for seeing the whole country

