



Jargon buster....

Orienteers sometimes appear to speak their own language, so here's a few terms that you might hear people speaking about. Once you get into the sport they'll become second nature but we thought this might help you as you start out in the sport. If you hear other terms used, don't hesitate to ask other members to explain. There's also a special section of our website at www.halo-orienteeing.uk/page/jargon with a few other things you might find useful.

Age Group	We're all given an age group so that we can compete against others of similar age. Mostly, from age 35 onwards, age groups go in 5 year bands with M (men) or W (woman) in front. So a 51yo man would be an M50, and a 39yo woman be a W35. The open age categories for adults are known as M21 and W21. Age groups for juniors are in 2 year bands from 10yo to 20yo.
Bearing	Most experienced orienteers use a compass to take a bearing so they know which direction to go - but you can start orienteering without being an expert with a compass.
Colour-coded courses	Colour coded courses use a particular colour to indicate length and difficulty, and give consistency of events. The usual courses are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ White: easy; short; all on paths or tracks. ➤ Yellow: slightly less easy; a little longer. ➤ Orange: not all on paths; longer again. ➤ Light green: navigation skills needed; longer again. ➤ Green: the shortest 'technical' course. ➤ Blue: technically difficult; medium length. ➤ Brown: technically difficult; long. ➤ Black: even more so (only found infrequently). Courses are graded from TD1 (easiest) to TD5 (hardest). Green, Blue and Brown courses should all be TD 5. Orange courses should be TD 3, and offer a good starting level for adult beginners.
Contour interval	The distance between heights is shown on maps by contour lines. These are usually at 5m distances, but check on your map.
Control / Checkpoint	Each control or checkpoint which competitors must visit is marked with a circle on the map. When in the circle, you're near the control but may not be able to see it immediately. Look around for a kite or flag, with attached means of proving that you've been there - usually an electronic unit.
Control Code	Each kite/electronic unit will have a code on it (usually 2 or 3 numbers, sometimes 2 letters). This will be clearly visible, and you should always check the code of each control to make sure it really is the one you are looking for. (Some planners are crafty and locate controls from different courses close to each other!)
Control description	This is usually a symbol, though sometimes there's also a description in words (especially on simpler courses). It tells you about the feature where the control is placed. These can take some time to learn but there are legends/keys that you can download from our website and carry with you.
Crossing point	To avoid damage to walls and fences, and sometimes for your safety when crossing roads etc, there are times when you can only cross 'obstacles' at specific points. These will be shown on your map, and the control description sheet will say "use crossing point". If it is marked as a compulsory crossing point, you can be disqualified for crossing elsewhere.
Dibber / SI Card	The electronic gizmo carried by participants in an event using electronic controls. It is inserted into the electronic unit at each control to prove you've been there. Make sure the unit beeps and flashes each time. As a member, you can use one of ours until you decide to buy your own.
Download	After you finish an event, you must go to download to register the fact that you are back

	safely and find out how long you've taken. Please do this even if you stop partway round so that we know you're safe.
Feature	A distinct topographical or built object marked on the map eg. stream, boulder, hill, ruin
Kite / Flag	A white-and-orange/red fabric marker that is hung at each control.
Line feature	Something like a path, track or stream, which you can follow easily. When you're new to the sport you might want to use these instead of just heading hopefully into a forest.
Map	Orienteering maps are very detailed and are produced by specialist map-makers. They're usually at a scale of 1:5,000 or 1:15,000 and cover an irregularly-shaped area of between 1 and 10 sq km. Colours carry different meanings from Ordnance Survey maps - particularly worth remembering is that white on an orienteering map indicates an area of trees! Most maps have a legend showing the meanings of symbols and colours, but there are legends/keys that you can download from our website and carry with you.
Night Orienteering	Yes, this is simply orienteering in the dark! A good headtorch is essential.
Printout / Splits	After you've finished and downloaded, you'll be given a printout showing your total time and splits. Splits are the time you take to go from one control to the next. You might be surprised how soon you start comparing splits with others on your course!
Punch	No, neither a drink nor a violent act! Once upon a time you proved you'd been to a control by marking a card with a punch (or clipper) which had pins in a particular pattern. Although the process is now mostly electronic, the term has stuck – as has the term “mispunch” for when you put your dibber in the wrong control or don't wait for the beep and flashing light.
Questions	Anything that remains unanswered by this document! Don't be afraid to ask event officials - or indeed any other member or competitor. We're all quite friendly really! You can also check our website once you get back home again.
Results	Interim results are usually displayed at the event, especially with HALO events as we have some wonderful techie people who give their skills to do this. Final results are available on the internet soon after events.
Route	One of the joys and challenges of orienteering is choosing how to go from control to control. On all but the simplest courses there is usually a choice of routes. A particular pleasure and learning experience comes from discussing your routes with others on your course after the event!
Scale	The scale of most orienteering maps is 1:5,000 or 1:15,000. Always check this when you get your map. A scale of 1:10,000 means that 1cm (about the length of the nail on your little finger) on your map shows 100m on the ground, ie. the length of a football pitch.
Score event	A less common type of event, in which instead of following controls in a set order you have to find as many controls as possible in a fixed time. The number of points scored for each control can vary according to distance and technical difficulty. You can choose which controls to go to; and there's a penalty if you take longer than the time allowed.
Start / Finish	On orienteering maps, the start is marked as a triangle. A kite marks the spot on the ground and there will also be a start control to punch with your dibber. Just before, or enroute to, the start, there will be an electronic unit which clears previous data stored on your dibber. Hold your dibber in it until it beeps 2 or 3 times. The finish is marked on maps as a double circle. Whilst there will be an official at the start, events using electronic punching often don't have officials at the finish - just the electronic unit at which you should punch. Remember then to go to Download!
Start Times	At most events, competitors start when they're ready, and are set off at intervals of between 1 to 4 minutes. In some events, you're given a specific time at which you start. The time you take to complete the course will be calculated from this time, so make sure you aren't late! Sometimes all or some of the competitors start at the same time. This is called a mass start, and is only used at events that are in some other way out of the ordinary.

Above all, we hope you have fun enjoying our sport safely....