

Mystic @ Home Activity: Backyard Land Navigation



Incorporates: Exploration, understanding of angles, magnetic poles, cartography, navigation, history.

Summary: This activity will be the starting point to lots of cool orienteering based activities that you can expand on. Using a simple app on your phone (or a real compass if you have one) this activity will teach how to read the compass, take a bearing and create cool activities. The activity outlined in this example is creating a bearing based treasure hunt.

Equipment:

- Smartphone or compass
- Paper and Pen (graph paper works great)

Easy Step by Step:

1. **Learn how to use the compass:** Check out this awesome video from REI, you might want to watch it a couple times to really get the hang of it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cF0ovA3FtY>
2. **Select a spot in the yard to hide the treasure:** Pick a spot that is well hidden and plant a treasure. Maybe it's a box of candy or if you really want to make things interesting...hide their phone. Mooowahahaha!
3. **Select a starting point and plot the first waypoint:** Pick a spot to start at. From here, pick a spot or feature in the yard and calculate the bearing to that spot. Then measure out the distance to that spot. You could use a measuring tape or estimate "paces", whatever works for you. This is the first clue. Write this down on the treasure map as clue #1. Example: "From the bird bath, walk 10 paces in bearing 270.
4. **Plot the rest of the waypoints to the treasure:** Do the same thing from each waypoint and list them out as clues. You can spice it up by hiding riddles, parts of secret messages, or hide the next bearing and distance at each waypoint.
5. **Get to it!:** Start a participant at the start point and give them their first bearing and distance, have them work through the course and celebrate the accomplishment at the end!
6. **Spice it up!:** You can make all kinds of activities and scenarios for kids to work through and learn land navigation. Here's a couple examples: create a course to find a missing person in the desert, assemble secret messages and clues, create a map of the backyard with features.