



# how to measure wind direction using a compass

Wind direction indicates where the wind is coming from, not where it is going to. So, a southerly wind blows from the south to the north.

To determine wind direction:

- ◆ First turn your body until you can feel the wind at your back.
- ◆ Now hold the compass flat (the air bubble will guide you), level with your waist, and watch as the red arrow swings around to point north.
- ◆ Rotate the compass (without turning your body) until the north pointer printed on the base of the compass matches the red arrow.
- ◆ So, what direction is the wind coming from? The answer is the number or letter closest to your belly button. In the picture (right), the wind is coming from the west – a westerly wind.

Sometimes the wind changes direction quickly, making it hard to work out direction. Official wind readings are taken 10 metres above the ground because objects near the ground make the wind swirl and eddy. These winds are different to the prevailing wind.

## do's and don'ts

- ✓ Keep the compass away from other magnetic materials.

## how does it work?

Compasses contain a magnetic material that aligns itself in a north-south direction. Iron is particularly well known for having this property. The earth has a core full of iron that gives the planet the magnetic north and south poles. These differ slightly from the geographic north-south poles.

