**Unit 3 Ask and give directions**

Here is some useful vocabulary for asking directions in English.

### Asking for directions

"How do I get to your office?"

"Can you tell me the best way of getting to your office?"

"What's the quickest way of getting to your office?"

"Where are you exactly?"

### Getting information

"Will you be coming by car or by train?"

"It's much easier if you take the train."

"Which hotel are you staying at?"

### General information in English

"We're not far from…" or "We're quite close to…"

"It's about a mile / kilometre / two blocks from…"

"We're opposite / next to / in front of / across the road from / round the corner from the supermarket."

### Giving directions in English

"Come off the motorway / highway at Junction / Exit 12."

"It's signposted 'Manchester'."

"Follow the signs to …"

"There's a one-way system in the centre of town."

"Take the 'A12' to 'Chelmsford'."

"Go straight on / left / right at the lights / at the roundabout /at the junction of … and …"

"Go past the supermarket."

"You'll come to / see …"

"It's the first turning on the right after the bank."

### Use landmarks to help

"You'll see a large sign / roundabout."

"On your left you'll see an industrial centre / a hospital / the police station."

"Just after the level crossing / shopping centre (or mall)."

"Go past the petrol station / the garage."

### Final tips

If you're giving directions over the phone, remember to speak slowly to allow the other person to write things down.

Check that the other person has understood.

If you're speaking face-to-face with someone, use your hands to show left, right, or straight on.

Use "please" when you ask someone to give you directions. It's polite, and will normally get you what you want!

**How to give directions**

There are two basic ways to give directions, the "route perspective" characterized by landmarks, and the "survey perspective" characterized by references to cardinal directions (north, south, west, east).[[1]](http://www.wikihow.com/Give-Directions#_note-0#_note-0) The system you use depends on where you are and who you're giving directions to. Most of the time it's best to use a combination. The most important thing is to be brief and clear!

**Think of the simplest route, even if it takes a little longer**. Shortcuts may be faster, but they can also be more complicated! If the person is lost or has poor navigation skills to begin with, give them directions with minimal turns. For example: Make a left on this street, then a right at the light, and go straight all the way down that road until you get to the highway.

**Specify distance**. How far along a particular road does the person need to go? There are several different ways to tell them:

* + How many blocks or streets they'll pass - e.g. continue down that street, passing 4 side roads along the way. This works better in a city than in the country, because in the city there are more cross-streets to count, whereas in the country the space between them makes it easier to lose count, and some driveways look like roads of their own.
	+ How many traffic lights they'll pass - this is good, but you must be right about the number!
	+ distance in miles or kilometers - e.g. go 3 miles on Holypoke Road
	+ How much time it'll take - this is better for when they'll be spending a short time on that path (less than 10 minutes); any longer than that, and your directions will become inaccurate depending on how fast the person drives (what's 15 minutes to you might be 30 minutes to a slow driver who's lost)
	+ Give them a *drop dead* point, a landmark that tells them that they've gone too far and have missed their turn.

**Indicate turns**. If it's not a simple, four-way intersection, give a few extra details. Otherwise, tell them to make a left or right. Give them a street name and one landmark (a traffic light, a particular store). If the person you're giving directions to is good with cardinal directions (north, south, west, east) and/or the city you're in is laid out like a grid (with all the streets perpendicular, running east-west or north-south) indicate the direction, too. E.g. Turn a left at the traffic light onto Foster, heading east. Tell the person what direction they need to turn in before telling them where (e.g., "Turn left onto Baker Street" instead of "At Baker Street, turn left"). 4

**Outline the entire route using the previous two steps**. Remember to be concise. Detailed directions are useless if you give so many details that the person driving gets confused. 5



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**Warn them about any confusing parts of the route.** For instance, if a lane ends or is right turn only, or a road they need to turn onto is small or hidden, you might want to mention that. If there's a turn that you know people tend to miss, tell them how they'll know they've gone too far - "If you start crossing the bridge over the river, you've gone too far, turn around".

**Mention which side of the street their destination will be found on**.

**Have them repeat the directions to you**. Whether or not they've written them down, make sure they heard you correctly and understand the route you laid out for them.

**Tips**

Start by giving the destination address and make sure they record that first. A mailing address is a more universally recognizable standard for location, and should the person get lost en route, they could use other resources to find their way.

* Women tend to use landmarks, men tend to use direction and distance.[[2]](http://www.wikihow.com/Give-Directions#_note-1#_note-1)
* If the person is present with you, have him or her turn in the direction s/he is headed, and use hand signals to reinforce the directions. The more senses you use, the more likely the person is to remember.
* Draw a simplified map if paper and pencil are available.
* If you are guiding someone while they drive, pay attention to which lane they are in. If the next move they need to make is a right turn, and they are driving in the left lane, suggest changing into the right lane well before the turn, so they can make that turn safely when they get to it.
* Use the word *right* only in reference to the turning direction, not a distance indicator -- Try to give directions such as "Turn left *immediately* after the light", not "Turn left *right* after the light." This language can be confusing to a person who is trying to remember which direction to turn.
* Using buildings or store names as a reference is not always a good idea, since the store could close or buildings torn down.

**Quotations about Travel**

Too often travel, instead of broadening the mind, merely lengthens the conversation. ~Elizabeth Drew

The World is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page. ~St. Augustine

I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move. ~Robert Louis Stevenson

When preparing to travel, lay out all your clothes and all your money. Then take half the clothes and twice the money. ~Susan Heller

Thanks to the Interstate Highway System, it is now possible to travel across the country from coast to coast without seeing anything. ~Charles Kuralt, On the Road With Charles Kuralt

I think that travel comes from some deep urge to see the world, like the urge that brings up a worm in an Irish bog to see the moon when it is full. ~Lord Dunsany

A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving. ~Lao Tzu

Wandering re-establishes the original harmony which once existed between man and the universe. ~Anatole France

No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home and rests his head on his old, familiar pillow. ~Lin Yutang

Travel and change of place impart new vigor to the mind. ~Seneca

The traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him. He goes "sight-seeing." ~Daniel J. Boorstin

It is not down in any map; true places never are. ~Herman Melville

What you've done becomes the judge of what you're going to do - especially in other people's minds. When you're traveling, you are what you are right there and then. People don't have your past to hold against you. No yesterdays on the road. ~William Least Heat Moon, Blue Highways

The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land. ~G.K. Chesterton

To get away from one's working environment is, in a sense, to get away from one's self; and this is often the chief advantage of travel and change. ~Charles Horton Cooley

And that's the wonderful thing about family travel: it provides you with experiences that will remain locked forever in the scar tissue of your mind. ~Dave Barry

Travelers never think that they are the foreigners. ~Mason Cooley

Most travel is best of all in the anticipation or the remembering; the reality has more to do with losing your luggage. ~Regina Nadelson

I soon realized that no journey carries one far unless, as it extends into the world around us, it goes an equal distance into the world within. ~Lillian Smith

Half the fun of the travel is the esthetic of lostness. ~Ray Bradbury

There are only two emotions in a plane: boredom and terror. ~Orson Welles

Now I know why they tell you to put your head between your knees on crash landings. You think you're going to kiss your ass good-bye. ~Terry Hanson

I have found out that there ain't no surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them. ~Mark Twain

I feel about airplanes the way I feel about diets. It seems to me that they are wonderful things for other people to go on. ~Jean Kerr, "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall," The Snake Has All the Lines, 1958

In America there are two classes of travel - first class, and with children. ~Robert Benchley

Just get on any major highway, and eventually it will dead-end in a Disney parking area large enough to have its own climate, populated by large nomadic families who have been trying to find their cars since the Carter administration. ~Dave Barry

If you reject the food, ignore the customs, fear the religion and avoid the people, you might better stay home. ~James Michener

If God had really intended men to fly, he'd make it easier to get to the airport. ~George Winters

I met a lot of people in Europe. I even encountered myself. ~James Baldwin

Whenever we safely land in a plane, we promise God a little something. ~Mignon McLaughlin, The Neurotic's Notebook, 1960

The only way of catching a train I ever discovered is to miss the train before. ~G.K. Chesterton

There's a book that tells you where you should go on your vacation. It's called your checkbook. ~Author Unknown

The time to enjoy a European trip is about three weeks after unpacking. ~George Ade, Forty Modern Fables

I did not fully understand the dread term "terminal illness" until I saw Heathrow for myself. ~Dennis Potter, 1978

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime. ~Mark Twain

I dislike feeling at home when I am abroad. ~George Bernard Shaw

I travel a lot; I hate having my life disrupted by routine. ~Caskie Stinnett

A passport, as I'm sure you know, is a document that one shows to government officials whenever one reaches a border between countries, so the officials can learn who you are, where you were born, and how you look when photographed unflatteringly. ~Lemony Snicket

To travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries. ~Aldous Huxley

The traveler sees what he sees. The tourist sees what he has come to see. ~G.K. Chesterton

We wander for distraction, but we travel for fulfillment. ~Hilaire Belloc

Like all great travellers, I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen. ~Benjamin Disraeli

The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people halfway. ~Henry Boye