



GET OUTSIDE
THE CLASSROOM

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Handbook

This guide has been put together by staff using the knowledge and experience within the GOTC team.

It is designed to help you prepare for your expeditions. There is also masses of further information out there.

www.dofe.org is a great place to start and YouTube plays host to lots of 'how to' guides.

To complete your expedition section of your DofE Award you MUST meet the 20 Conditions:

1. Your expedition must be by your own physical effort, without any motorised or outside assistance.
2. Your expedition must be unaccompanied and self-sufficient.
3. Your expeditions must be supervised by an adult who is able to accept responsibility for the safety of you and your team.
4. Your expedition must have an aim.
5. You must be properly equipped for your expedition.
6. You must have completed the required training and practice expeditions.
7. You must undertake at least one practice expedition at each level of the programme. You should do this in the same mode of travel and in a similar environment to the qualifying expedition.
8. You and your team must plan and organise your expedition.
9. You must be assessed by an approved Assessor accredited by the DofE.
10. There must be between four and seven people in your team (eight people may be in a team for modes of travel which are tandem).
11. You must be within the qualifying age of the DofE programme level.

12. All the people in your team must be at the same level of assessment.
13. Your team must not include anyone who has completed the same or higher level DofE expedition.
14. Your overnight accommodation should be camping.
15. Your expedition must be the minimum number of days required for your DofE level.
16. Your expedition should normally take place between the end of March and the end of October.
17. Your expedition should be in the recommended environment for your DofE level.
18. You must do the minimum hours of planned daily activity for your DofE level.
19. You should cook and eat a substantial meal each day.
20. You must create and deliver a presentation after your expedition to complete the section.

So how are you going to successfully achieve these 20 conditions and complete this section?

Keep reading!

How far do we have to walk? (Often, the first thing asked!)

There is no set distance for your expedition, but you will need to meet the hours of activity required for the appropriate level; **6** at Bronze, **7** at Silver and **8** at Gold.

You don't have to spend all your time walking. Some can be spent on your aim. You need to plan this carefully before you arrive so that you complete the required time during each day as camping is not included in the time. You should not, therefore, simply take the shortest/fastest route – the DofE expedition is never a race.

Choosing an aim – You need one

Some examples of different aims you could choose include:

- **Environment:** list and film all the different birds you see along your route.
- **Teamwork:** make a video diary of your team's experiences.
- **Conservation:** make a report on the litter (and collect if you can) you find on your journey.
- **Physical:** monitor changing heart rates and body temperatures on your route.
- **Literature:** use your funniest moments to create a play and perform it as your presentation.

This list is by no means exhaustive - for more ideas visit:

https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/programme_ideas_-_expedition.pdf

Your group's aim can be as individual as you are. Just remember that you will need to present your ideas to your assessor, supervisor and/or DofE leader, to complete expedition section.

Don't forget to add your expedition aim/objective to your expedition section within eDofE. Your DofE leader cannot do this for you and won't be able to approve the section until you do.

Group sizes

Groups need to be a minimum of **4** people with a maximum of **7** (8 if canoeing).

It is also well worth walking in a group with the same people you are sharing a tent with. **Most GOfC tents are '3 man'. A group of six is then probably ideal.**

Only under very rare circumstances will someone be allowed to sleep in a tent alone and mixed sex tents are not an option.

Suggested Kit List DofE:

<https://www.dofe.org/shopping/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/DofE-Expedition-Kit-List-April-21.pdf>

Each tent group will need to carry:

- o Tent and Trangia (shared between tent group)
- o Fuel in a dedicated fuel bottle
- o Maps
- o Pan Cleaning kit (brillo pad, jay cloth/tea towel)
- o Long Matches

Individually you will need:

- o A wristwatch – time is hugely important when navigating.
(Phones are poor for this use – please don't try).
- o Rucksack **65L**
- o Sleeping bag – wrapped in a bin bag
- o Roll /Sleeping Mat
- o Spoon/Bowl/Mug (a spork is ideal!)
- o Water – 2L lemonade/coke bottles are perfect
- o Torch
- o Clothes including **waterproofs**
- o Footwear (boots to walk in/something for the campsite)
- o "Ouch Pouch" – Plasters, personal medication etc.
- o Small personal hygiene kit, including hand sanitiser – think travel size!

Clothing

There is no need to make this complicated and expensive, but it is worth putting some consideration in to what you will wear. For example - look at the weather forecast before you go on the expedition, if it's cold, take a warm hat, if it's sunny, a cap and sun cream.

Proper waterproof coat and waterproof trousers - these **MUST** be an **ADDITIONAL layer that go OVER the top/trousers you are already wearing.** They are key pieces of kit and **MUST** be carried.

Take a mid-layer, something like a fleece as it can get cold when the sun drops away and you are tired from the walk. Remember you can always add the waterproof for warmth - they are not just for the rain.

A lightweight t-shirt like a sports top is ideal, polo shirts are also great as they protect your neck from the sun and help prevent rubbing. Wear one and bring one spare. This layer will help to take the sweat away from your body and keep you dry.

Do not bring vest tops they usually result in sunburn/friction burns and the rucksack straps rub blisters raw, so they drip – horrible but true!

Leggings or lightweight tracksuit bottoms are perfect for walking in, shorts too if it's warm enough but beware nettles are likely to be found along countryside paths. Bring one set to wear and one spare.

One pair of socks for each day. Lightweight walking socks are best if you can get them.

An old set of trainers/Crocs are a must for the campsite. Bare feet or just socks are not allowed (flip flops leave feet exposed and at risk from an accidental spill of a stove and impalement on old tent pegs).

Pack your own rucksack - Always use the ABC's of packing. Use the following links to help:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xg8W709w8Yw>

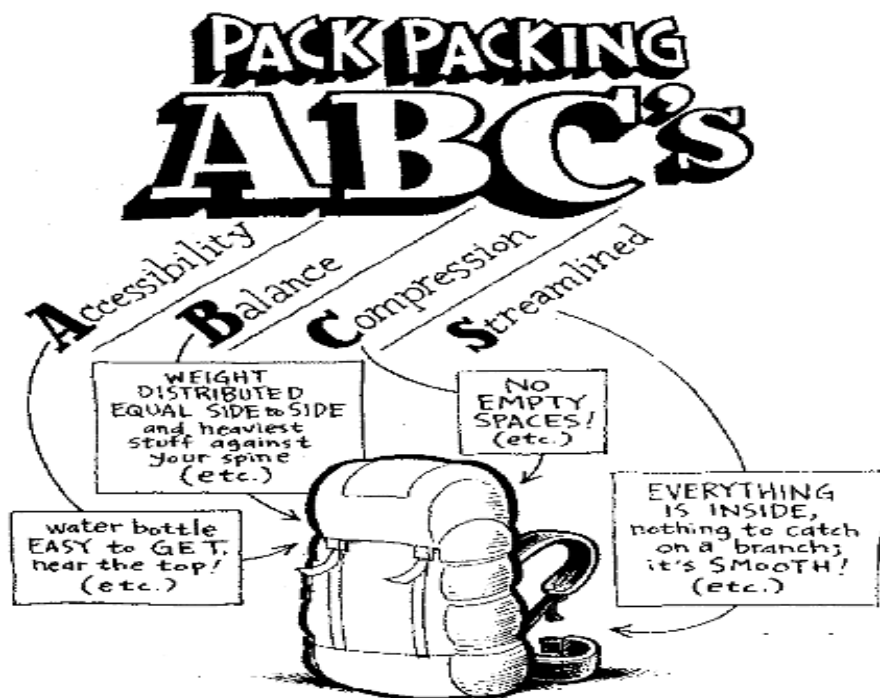
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwfmVD77ins>

[How-to-pack-your-DofE-rucksack-April-2018.pdf](#)

[rucksacks-and-packing](#)

<https://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/the-knowledge/walking/how-to-pack-a-rucksack.html>





Mum's and Dad's – hands off!

We know you love them, and we know you care but it's all got to be carried by the participant. The little extra 'just in cases' tend to be added by well-meaning others. The lighter the bag the easier the journey!

Remember if somebody else packs your bag you will not find the important bits you need and you will carry too much.

Top tip - Pack in two phases. Gather everything you plan to take and lay it out (see video advice in the links above). Next day, check the forecast for the area you are going to, go through it all again, be ruthless and then pack as shown in the diagram above into your rucksack.

Fitting a rucksack

Don't suffer - Take the time to adjust the straps on your rucksack and ask for help if needed. It will be more comfortable and will be easier to walk with.

These links are for how to fit the rucksacks GOfC have:

[Downloadable-Fitting-Guide-for-Mission-rucksack.pdf](#)

[Downloadable-Fitting-Guide-for-Ridge-rucksack.pdf](#)

BACKPACK FITTING INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Measure your torso and pick a bag of an appropriate size. If the bag has an adjustable yoke, adjust it up or down accordingly.


SIZE	TORSO-LENGTH
S	40-48cm
M	49-53cm
L	54-58cm

Load with at least 1kg of weight, and enough to fill out the pack. Loosen all straps and harnesses. Put on the pack.
- 2** Secure and tighten the waist belt over your hip bones. The majority of the weight should be distributed onto the hips, with minimal load carried by the shoulders.


Recommended weight distribution
- 3** Tighten shoulder straps until the pack is in as much contact with the back as possible. Minimise any space between the shoulders and the pack.


CHECKLIST

- Ensure good contact between harness and your back.
- You should be able to stand and walk with your back straight, not bent forward.
- The shoulder straps should not be too wide or high that they chafe the chest or underarms.
- Secure and adjust the sternum strap to ensure the shoulder straps remain straight.

ROMAN
Born to conquer

Food

You will need to plan your menu for your entire trip. Food needs to be easy to cook, light to carry and give you plenty of energy.

<https://www.dofe.org/shopping/expedition-kit/expedition-food/>



When menu planning consider:

1) Weight - as light as possible, for example do not bother with multiple ingredients in multiple packets, avoid jars and cans. Take boil in the bag!

2) Suitability – food is going to be compressed into your rucksack and will not be kept fresh, especially over

longer expeditions therefore avoid breakables and perishables for example raw eggs and fresh chicken.

3) Calories - you will be exercising all day for two days. Eat a lot and drink (water) regularly to stay fuelled. Balance sugars with slower releasing energy foods. Haribo cannot fuel your whole expedition.

4) Emergency rations - do not eat all your food on the last day. You must keep some back in case of emergency. Your supervisor/assessor may well ask to see your emergency rations at the end. A small packet of sweets and breakfast bar are good for this.

Breakfast

You won't have to carry your first breakfast so make it a BIG breakfast.

Whilst cooking a fry up sounds great the reality is it burns quickly and creates a LOT of washing up as Trangia's don't have non-stick pans. Porridge is a good option, especially on a cold morning.



Snacks / Lunch

Eat little and often. Keep food in your pockets and snack throughout the day. You will not be able to cook for lunch so make easy food to take with you like wraps and packets of dried fruit, chocolate, and nuts.

Dinner

Noodles, pasta, and rice all make good dinners; they are light weight, quick and easy to cook. Boil in the bag versions of food can be ready in minutes, create no washing up, generally taste pretty good and leave you with a pan of hot water to make a hot drink or soup with.

The efficiency of food is more than how long it takes to cook. How small and light it is, and how much energy you will get from eating it should also be considered. Packaging too can be a waste of space and add weight. Remove what you can where you can.

Group menu plan

Have a go at making your own menu plan in the boxes below! Group evening meals are loads easier to organise than individual.	
Lunch Day 1	
Snack Day 1	
Evening meal Day 1	
Breakfast Day 2	
Snack Day 2	
Lunch Day 2	

Emergency rations	
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Water

Staying hydrated is really important, especially when exercising. In fact, it is more important to drink than it is to eat. **Take at least 2 litres** and avoid Coke/ Lucozade etc. One of the little juice concentrate bottles will add flavour for your whole walking group for a weekend if you need it.



Using a Trangia

Ensure you have watched one of these videos (one is for a gas Trangia and the other for meths Trangia - GOtC use both):

[resources-lava](#) (gas) or [resources-lava](#) (meths)

Never use a stove in a tent or try to refuel direct to a burner that appears to be out.

1. Put the stove together and check you have all components before you start. Site it on flat ground (not a table/bench) and ensure everyone has room to move around the stove.
2. Give the pans a quick rinse to remove any dust.
3. Fill the burner from the fuel bottle (well away from the cooking area). Secure the bottle and leave it away from the cooking area.
4. Light the fuel (long matches recommended). Blow out the match and check it's lit by placing the spent match back in the burner. Remove and blow it out again.
5. **Once lit you MUST always have someone next to (and responsible for) the Trangia until the flame is no longer alight.**
6. Use the handle to move all pans on and off the stove.
7. If you run out of fuel you must leave the burner to cool. Be careful checking as it gets very hot. It must be cool enough to carry to the fuel to be refilled.
8. If finished, you can snuff the flame out with the 'simmer ring' if you are planning on using it again before packing into your rucksack. Never ever try to blow it out. If you will be packing it into a rucksack you need to let the burner burn dry under your own supervision.

Rule of thumb

Be careful, the pans can stay hot for a long time after the burner has gone out. Slowly check the temperature by moving your thumb down the inside of the windshield and towards the burner. If it is too hot to touch, it is too hot to refuel or take apart!

The Trangia must be returned clean and dry.

It's a good idea to bring a Brillo pad, half a washing up sponge with green scrubbing stuff on one side, drizzle of washing up liquid in an old hotel shampoo bottle and a tea towel/jay cloth.

You will not be able to leave the campsite on your last day without proving all the components of your stove are present, clean, and dry – ensure you keep all the parts together whilst cooking and clear up as soon as you have finished eating.

Replies to questions/instructions asked by an instructor (usually nominated the 'Trangia Monitor') that take the lines of "it was like that when I got it" or "someone stole my big pan" don't tend to work out well for you. You will be asked to replace missing items.

On the campsite

Remember that there may be other people on the campsite at the same time as you. We need to be considerate of other campsite users and sharing facilities.

The first thing you'll probably want to do when you reach your campsite is collapse on the floor in relief! However, it's important that you get your camp set up as soon as possible.

You will be expected to always keep the camp site clean and tidy with your kit inside tents (once pitched) and all rubbish put into bins. Before leaving camp in the morning, you should do a litter sweep of your camp area.

You should NOT use speakers on a campsite.

Pitching a tent

Ensure you have watched one of these videos (two styles of tent that GOfC use):

[resources-neos](#) or [resources-refuge](#)

- 1) *Before pitching* - Check the site for stones, holes, and sharp twigs. These will not only make your night more uncomfortable but may puncture the groundsheet and then let water in.
- 2) ***Do not lose the storage bags*** - As soon as you take the tent, poles, or pegs out of their bags put them inside your pocket and when finished inside the awning so they do not blow away.
- 3) *Keep your tent clean* - Take your shoes off, try not to get mud on the side of the tent. Always tie back the doors when they are open. If a tent gets dirty this negatively affects its waterproofing. They get retired quicker, and costs go up for future expeditions.
- 4) *Use the zips* - If you open the tent by simply pulling on the material this will weaken the zips and may cause them to break. If your zips break from misuse, you will be in for an uncomfortable night and an uncomfortable bill.
- 5) *Allow the tent to ventilate* - If your tent has solid inner walls then it is important to keep the inner door open a little. If you do not then condensation from your breath will collect on the walls and make the inside of the tent, you and your sleeping bag damp. Even if it is cold a small gap will keep you dryer and therefore warmer.
- 6) *Do not under ANY circumstances* - smoke, mess with deodorant, cook in or near tents. A tent can catch fire in seconds, burning anyone and anything inside it.
- 7) You will always be responsible for ***drying the tent*** when you get back, during a lunch break on your last day or at the end of the trip. Take the tent out of its bag and hang it up to dry (even if you think it is dry).

Equipment

You are responsible for all borrowed equipment whilst on your expedition and subsequently any damage that occurs. Accidental damage can sometimes be seen as wear and tear providing you tell us and it is appropriate. Intentional damage, or damage resulting from a lack of care will end up with you being charged for replacements.

Please note - Participant's will not receive an assessor report if monies are owed for damaged equipment.

Risk Assessment

When operating in the outdoors, our risk assessments need to be **dynamic** this means that because we are in an ever-changing environment, our risk assessments also need to be ever-changing to suit the terrain. For example, walking through an empty field presents different hazards to walking through a field of cows, a forest or on uneven rocky terrain. Everything changes again if it is raining or if a thunderstorm hits.

Hazards- What are the potential/likely hazards of this activity	What do we do to minimise/prevent risk of harm control
Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Drink lots▪ Encourage team to drink▪ Drink at regular intervals▪ Carry 2 litre bottle of water (2 litre)
Sun stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wear sunglasses▪ Sun hat▪ Cover skin with clothes
Sun burn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sun cream and hat▪ Cover body with clothes
Food poisoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ If unsure – over cook▪ Wash hands – hygiene.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good hygiene when washing cutlery.
Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If wet, change clothes quickly ▪ Layers ▪ Stay dry ▪ Wear waterproofs if raining.
Slips, trips, falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate footwear ▪ Take care on uneven ground.
Blisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apply blister plasters before blister forms.
Burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold under running cool water for 20 mins ▪ Cling film ▪ Be careful with naked flames
Midges (allergic reactions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avon ▪ Mesh nets ▪ Antihistamine tablets ▪ Cover body with clothes ▪ Avoid being outside at dawn/dusk ▪ Insect repellent
Stranger Danger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group always stays together. ▪ Make sure more than one person is in each tent.
Water purification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range of water purification solutions
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wear seatbelts ▪ Travel sickness bands ▪ Do not wander off at service stations ▪ Be careful of traffic.

2) *Cuts and Grazes*

Prevention: Use sharp objects sensibly. Avoid trips, slips, and falls.

Treatment:

- Clean the wound properly to remove dirt and germs
- Cover the wound with a dressing and compress firmly
- Elevate the wound above the head

3) *Breaks and Strains*

Prevention: Wear good boots. Take special care when it is slippery, steep, or uneven underfoot.

Treatment:

- Treat as a suspected fracture: Rest, Cool, Compress and Elevate as appropriate.

Call your supervisor if you have an injury, which makes it too painful to continue.

4) *Hypothermia (Also known as Cold Exhaustion)*

This is most likely in cold, wet, and windy conditions. Illness and fatigue also increase the risk. Symptoms include complaining of cold, becoming less communicative, disorientation and loss of co-ordination.

Prevention: Wear warm, waterproof, and windproof clothes as appropriate. It is very tricky to detect in yourself so get into buddy pairs or threes and keep an eye on each other especially if the weather starts to deteriorate.

Treatment:

- Get to shelter (e.g. a tent).
- Remove wet clothing, once in shelter, and replace with warm, dry clothes or a sleeping bag.
- Drink warm drinks and eat high-energy food.
- Call your supervisor.

5) Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion can occur due to loss of salt and water through sweating. Symptoms may include headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea, sweating with pale clammy skin, cramps, and rapid weak breathing.

Prevention: Eat, drink and rest appropriately. Wear appropriate clothing.

Treatment:

- Get to a cool place or create some shade if this is not an option.
- Consider splashing water on exposed skin and fanning.
- Drink plenty of water
- Call your supervisor

6) Dehydration

Symptoms include feeling thirsty, very concentrated yellow urine, tiredness, disorientation, vomiting.

Prevention: Drink plenty of water, or water with fruit juice. A good idea is to drink lots when you arrive at a campsite, and again before you leave it, as you will have plenty of water on the sites, then top up from your bottle during the day.

Treatment:

- Drink water regularly

If you are suffering severe dehydration you will need to rest and drink small amounts of water at a time to prevent more vomiting.

7) Blisters

The most common reason for people not completing their expeditions is blisters on your feet! If your shoes start to rub then it is really important that you stop straight away to sort them out, before a sore spot turns into a full blister. Fabric plaster strip, or a fabric plaster without the pad, can stop a sore.

Prevention: Wear well-fitting boots or shoes and suitable socks; try and keep your feet and socks dry.

Treatment:

- Apply a plaster, preferably a blister plaster as soon as a sore spot develops.
- If a blister develops, do not burst it, but keep it covered with a blister plaster.

Music

We recommend that iPod or other devices are not brought. Neither teaching staff nor assessors ever expect to hear your music as you walk, and there will be times when it is inappropriate to listen to music at all, especially when walking along a road. Please follow advice and instructions as they are for your safety and the countryside is there to be enjoyed by everyone. Please discuss with GOfC staff if you wish to use any device on camp.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are common place and a part of everyday life. In the context of an expedition, they are to be brought as part of your groups/personal emergency equipment only.

If you have one with you, it is your responsibility to ensure that the phone is not damaged and the battery has life right until the end (smart phones discharge quickly even when dormant and charging opportunities are very unlikely, charging blocks just add weight). At best a parent may expect a single text message, no news should be taken as good news. Reception can vary hugely depending on location of the camp and surrounding network.

Every year we have several incidents of lost and/or broken phones. When it is probably one of participants most valued possessions it causes emotional upset and can lead to poor decisions being made which can even compromise safety. It is simply not appropriate for Facebook or Snapchat to provide a running commentary of your expedition. Downloading films and having a 'twilight fest' in your tent is not acceptable.

Your phone is for emergency backup only. Update your social media accounts with what you are doing and tell all you will be in touch at the end.

Make sure the phone is charged, wrapped in a zip lock style bag, and stored somewhere safe in your rucksack. At best send one text 'we are at the campsite, tired but all ok and looking forward to tea'.

Keep it simple. Make life easy. Be safe.

In the event of an incident/emergency, participants should follow the protocols taught during their training. Please do not call home as your first choice as it rarely helps the situation for any one Chinese whispers kick in, emotions run high, people tear off across the country to an unknown location. All for what probably started out as a missed footpath junction 5 minutes ago.

Trust your training and the support available from GOtC Staff.

Practice Expedition Notes

Your practice expedition is a chance to try out and expand some of the skills that you have learnt during training. The first day will be spent walking with an instructor focusing on navigation techniques. With this in mind we usually try to get all tents/stoves/fuel left at the campsite, so you do not have to stop start with a full weight pack.

On day two you will get the chance to each take a turn navigating either with your instructor present again or whilst being supervised through a series of check points. Your practice expedition is also a good opportunity to practise using a Trangia and sorting out what you actually needed in your rucksack. During review sessions most participants can find things they will not bother to bring back for the qualifying. Few need to add stuff they forgot.

It is a practice after all, you will probably make mistakes and it's just a part of the learning process. Staff are there to try and support and help your learning journey. Give it your best, take on the advice offered, and you are more than likely to succeed on the real thing.

Qualifying Expedition

Your final expedition will be observed by an Accredited Assessor. These are outdoor professionals who will not have been involved in your training. There is no need to fear them. They are there on behalf of the award to just make sure that you meet the 20 conditions. You should feel free to ask questions but just ensure that you are showing that you are in control of the expedition.

It is largely similar to the practice. You just have to show yourselves to be independent. Mistakes can happen, you can get navigationally challenged but ultimately you are able to sort yourselves out and get back on track. 'Have you got any matches' or 'I cannot fit my tent in my rucksack' are frequently asked but how do you think those conversations go?

You will be planning your own route with a supervisor and travelling on your own in your walking groups. Your supervisor will meet with you at various points throughout your expedition to check on your progress and will have shared numbers with you to use in the event of an incident.

REMEMBER it is important that you meet the 20 conditions during your expedition as they are essentially the criteria that you will be marked by. The assessor can only take snap shots of your performance. **You need to look engaged and do your fair share throughout the expedition.**

Finally

Good luck, enjoy and don't forget to thank all those around you who helped you tackle one of life's best challenges.