

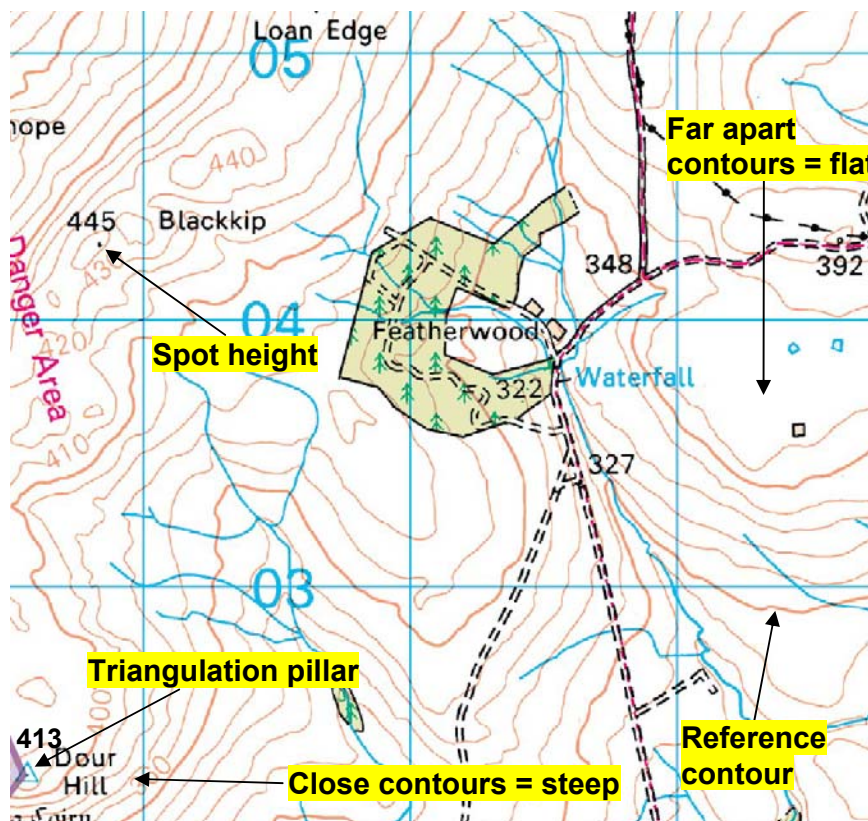
Map Reading – Relief and Vertical Interval (1)

1. Contour Lines:

These are lines that join places of equal height above mean sea level. The lines are coloured brown. The gap between the lines is called the 'contour interval' – usually 10 m. Every fifth contour is a slightly thicker line – this is called a 'reference contour'. Counting contours, each 10 m apart, is a quick way of roughly working out a height on the map.

The closer the contours the steeper the ground. The further apart the contours, the flatter the ground.

With practice you will be able to visualise the shape of the ground just by looking at the pattern of the contours – a very useful skill.



2. Spot Heights and Triangulation Pillars:

A spot height is an imaginary point on the ground where the height above mean sea level has been accurately measured.

A triangulation pillar is a physical stone pillar on the ground, used as a reference point by the map makers. The height of the pillar above sea level has been accurately measured.