

INTRODUCTION

[<previous](#) - [next>](#)

It may be assumed that when man first began not only to relate to particular geographical objects in his environment but to convey their location to others of his species, he used verbal descriptions of the properties of the object in question, as well as physically pointing out their direct relation to the speaker.

An indication of distance must have come at a later stage. As was pointed out already in the introductory paper to this course (see Introduction to Toponymy), giving names to objects, must have been one of the earliest intellectual activities of the human race. However, before an object can be named it must be identified.

In the case of living things, which are mobile rather than fixed to a particular location, this usually involves relating to the properties of the subject. Identifying immovable objects, must involve a definition of location - otherwise there would be no possibility of distinguishing between them. This is particularly true of topographic features which make up categories or feature classes: mountains, rivers, lakes, islands and many others. In this lecture we shall briefly investigate how the location of geographical features - which are the objects of toponymy - can be defined.

Location can be defined on three main scales:

1. nominal - verbal description of location, i.e. by a name
2. ordinal - a named or numbered grid square forms an ordinal definition
3. quantitative - a location defined by its coordinates (geographic/cartesian coordinates).

In this module the focus is on the quantitative scale.

- [Home](#)
- |
- [Self study](#)
- |
- [Reference systems](#)
- |
- [Contents](#)
- |
- [Intro](#)
- |
- [1. Graticule / topographic grid](#)
- |
- [2. Projection Systems \(a/b/c/d\)](#)
- |
- [3. Plane rectangular coordinate systems \(a/b\)](#)
- |
- [4. Coordinate transformations](#)
- |
- [5. Satellite-based positioning \(a/b\)](#)

[<previous](#) - [next>](#)