

Asking for Directions & Bus Routes in Edinburgh

A2/B1 •
GENERAL
ENGLISH

60 minutes

Vocabulary

Reading

Listening

Speaking

Grammar

Lesson Objectives

- ✓ **Vocabulary:** Learn and use 9 key travel/transport terms (castle, double-decker bus, bus stop, day ticket, route, landmark, roundabout, tourist information centre, contactless card).
- ✓ **Grammar:** Form and use imperatives (Go, Take, Turn, Walk) and prepositions of place (opposite, next to, at the end of) to give clear directions.
- ✓ **Speaking:** Ask for and give directions confidently in a real-world roleplay, including bus numbers, journey times, and ticket prices.
- ✓ **Listening:** Follow spoken directions in an authentic short video and identify the key language used to describe locations.

1 Warm-Up

Look at the map of Edinburgh Castle above, then discuss these questions with your teacher:

- Have you ever asked a stranger for directions in a foreign city? What happened — did you understand their answer?
- Think about your own city or town. If a tourist stopped you near a famous landmark and asked, “Excuse me, how do I get to the train station?”, what would you say?
- Do you prefer following a map, asking a local person, or using a phone app when you are lost? Why?

- Looking at the castle map: if you were standing at the entrance, how would you describe the route to the building marked furthest from it?

2 Mix & Match: Key Vocabulary

Match each word (1-9) with its correct definition (A-I). These words appear throughout today's lesson.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Castle ____ | A. A well-known building or feature that helps people recognize a location. |
| 2. Double-decker bus ____ | B. A bank card you tap to pay instantly, without entering a PIN. |
| 3. Bus stop ____ | C. A large, strong historic building built for kings, queens, or military defense. |
| 4. Day Ticket ____ | D. A circular junction where traffic moves in one direction around a central island. |
| 5. Route ____ | E. The place where you stand to wait for a bus. |
| 6. Landmark ____ | F. A place where visitors can get free maps, advice, and tickets. |
| 7. Roundabout ____ | G. A ticket that lets you travel all day on buses for a fixed price. |
| 8. Tourist Information Centre ____ | H. A large bus with two levels, often used for sightseeing tours. |
| 9. Contactless card ____ | I. The specific path or road that a bus (or a walker) takes to reach a destination. |

3 Language Focus: Key Phrases for Directions

These are the core patterns you need — one column for asking, one for giving directions. Notice that giving directions uses the imperative (the base verb, with no subject: Go, Take, Turn, Walk).

Asking for Directions

Excuse me, how do I get to...?	<i>"Excuse me, how do I get to Edinburgh Castle?"</i>
Which bus goes to...?	<i>"Which bus goes to Craigmillar Castle?"</i>
Is ... within walking distance?	<i>"Is Holyrood Palace within walking distance?"</i>
Where is the nearest bus stop for...?	<i>"Where is the nearest bus stop for the Royal Mile?"</i>

Giving Directions (Imperatives & Prepositions)

Take bus number [X] towards...	<i>"Take bus number 14 towards Greendykes."</i>
Go straight ahead / Go past...	<i>"Go past the monument and turn left."</i>
It's opposite / next to / at the end of the street.	<i>"The museum is opposite the café."</i>
Get off at...	<i>"Get off at Craigmillar Castle Road."</i>

4 Dialogue: Exploring Edinburgh

Context: Elena is visiting Edinburgh for the weekend. She stops at the Tourist Information Centre on Princes Street to ask the guide, Ross, for help. Read the dialogue in pairs, then answer the questions that follow.

SCENE 1 — ASKING THE WAY TO THE CASTLE

Elena walks up to the information desk.

Elena: Excuse me, good morning! Could you help me, please?

Ross: Good morning! Welcome to Edinburgh. How can I help you today?

Elena: I want to visit Edinburgh Castle first, and later Craigmillar Castle. How do I get to Edinburgh Castle from here?

Ross: Edinburgh Castle is very close! You can walk. Walk up Waverley Bridge, turn right onto the Royal Mile, and go straight ahead. The castle is right at the top of the hill. You can't miss it.

SCENE 2 — GETTING TO CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE BY BUS

Elena asks about a second, more distant castle.

Elena: Great! And what about Craigmillar Castle? Is it within walking distance too?

Ross: No, Craigmillar Castle is outside the city centre. You will need to take a bus.

Elena: Which bus route goes there?

Ross: Walk to the bus stop on South Bridge and take the number 14 bus towards Greendykes. Get off at Craigmillar Castle Road, then walk for about five minutes.

Elena: Perfect. How much is a single bus ticket?

Ross: A single ticket is £2.00, but if you plan to travel a lot today, you should buy an Adult Day Ticket for £5.50. You can pay on the bus using your contactless card.

SCENE 3 — THE HOP-ON HOP-OFF TOUR & MORE SIGHTS

Elena asks about seeing the rest of the city.

Elena: That sounds very easy. I also heard about the open-top bus tours. Are they good?

Ross: Yes, they are fantastic! The City Sightseeing hop-on hop-off bus takes you to all the main attractions, including Holyrood Palace, the Scottish Parliament, and the Old Town. A live guide explains the history as you ride.

Elena: Wonderful! Where can I hop on the tour bus?

Ross: The main tour bus departure point is on St Andrew Square, right next to the tram stop.

Elena: Are there any other good places to visit near the centre?

Ross: I recommend walking up Calton Hill for great views of the city, or visiting the National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street. Entrance to the museum is free!

Elena: Thank you so much for your help!

Ross: You're very welcome! Have a lovely day exploring Edinburgh.

5 Comprehension Check: True or False?

Based on the dialogue, decide if each statement is True or False.

- 1 Edinburgh Castle is too far to walk to from the Tourist Information Centre. (True / False)
- 2 Elena needs to take bus number 14 to reach Craigmillar Castle. (True / False)
- 3 A Day Ticket costs £2.00. (True / False)
- 4 The tour bus starts from St Andrew Square. (True / False)
- 5 The National Museum of Scotland has free entrance. (True / False)

6 Comprehension Check: Fill in the Blanks

Complete each sentence with one word from the box: *hop-off* · *straight* · *off* · *get* · *opposite*

- 1 Excuse me, how do I _____ to the Royal Mile?
- 2 Walk _____ ahead for 200 metres.
- 3 You need to get _____ the bus at Craigmillar Castle Road.
- 4 With a tour bus, you can hop on and _____ whenever you like.
- 5 The museum is located _____ the café.

6B Find the Word: Synonyms in the Dialogue

Look back at the dialogue in Part 4. Find a word or short phrase that means the same as each definition below.

- 1 not part of the city centre (Scene 2) → _____
- 2 to suggest something is a good choice (Scene 3) → _____
- 3 very good, amazing (Scene 3) → _____
- 4 impossible to not find (Scene 1) → _____
- 5 a friendly greeting word for visitors (Scene 1) → _____
- 6 the space between two places (Scene 2) → _____

6C Sentence Rephrasing: Key Word Transformation

Complete the second sentence so it means the same as the first, using the word given. Use between **one and eight words**, including the given word.

1. Edinburgh Castle is very near.

CLOSE

Edinburgh Castle is very _____.

2. You must take the number 14 bus.

NEED

You _____ take the number 14 bus.

3. It costs £2.00 for a single ticket.

PRICE

The _____ of a single ticket is £2.00.

4. You can get on and off the bus whenever you like.

HOP

You can _____ whenever you like.

5. The museum has no entrance fee.

FREE

Entrance to the museum is _____.

7 Authentic Listening — Watch & Analyze

Starting Out — Episode 4: Where Are You? — British Council LearnEnglish · “Starting Out” video series · A1/A2 · approx. 2–3 min

This is a short, official British Council LearnEnglish video. Two characters, Sammy and Julia, arrange to meet in a department store but end up on different floors — Julia has to give Sammy directions inside the building (“go straight on, then left a bit”) while they try to find each other.

Watch: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/video-series/startingout/episode-04-where-are-you>

As you watch, note down: every phrase Julia uses to describe where she is and how to get there, and why the imperative form (no subject, base verb) is used each time.

8 Watch & Reflect: Synthesis Questions

- 1 Language: Write down at least two phrases Julia uses to give Sammy directions. Do any of them match the “Giving Directions” column from the Language Focus section?
- 2 Comprehension: Why do Sammy and Julia struggle to find each other, even though they are in the same building?
- 3 Your Take: Has something similar ever happened to you — did you follow directions correctly but still end up in the wrong place? What went wrong?

9 Speaking Roleplay: The Lost Tourist

Scenario

You are a tourist standing at Waverley Station in Edinburgh. Ask your partner (a local resident) how to get to Holyrood Palace by bus. Find out which bus number to take, how long the journey takes, and how much a ticket costs.

- Use at least three phrases from the “Asking for Directions” column in the Language Focus section.
- Your partner must reply using at least one imperative (Take / Go / Turn) and one preposition of place (opposite / next to / at the end of).
- Include a specific bus number, an approximate journey time, and a ticket price in £.
- Use at least one phrasal verb: get on, get off, or hop on/hop off.

“Excuse me, could you help me? I’m trying to get to Holyrood Palace.”

10 Homework & Extension Task

Write a short paragraph (60–80 words) describing how to travel from your hotel in Edinburgh to your favorite historic site using public transport.

Imagine you are writing this as advice for a friend who is visiting Edinburgh next month and has never used the bus system there before.

Your paragraph must include at least 4 of these target phrases

How do I get to... — used to open the direction you are describing

Take bus number... — used to name the specific bus

Get off at... — used to say where to leave the bus

It is next to / opposite... — used to pinpoint the final location

11 Wrap-Up

Key Expressions to Remember

ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS	GIVING DIRECTIONS	PHRASAL VERBS & VOCABULARY
Excuse me, how do I get to...? Which bus goes to...? Is ... within walking distance? Where is the nearest bus stop for...?	Take bus number... towards... Go straight ahead / Go past... It's opposite / next to / at the end of the street.	Get on / Get off Hop on / Hop off Route Day Ticket Landmark Roundabout