

# 8

## Let us engage in outdoor activities

Most people in society today have been adapted to a competitive as well as monotonous lifestyle. Think of a place where you would like to spend time leisurely taking some rest from your strict, dull routine. Just imagine how comfortable and relaxed you would feel when you are in some natural environment, in a forest, near a lake or a waterfall. Without engaging only in studies and being confined to the classroom, engaging in outdoor activities to gain such knowledge related to natural phenomena is called outdoor education. We agree that admirable qualities like good discipline, leadership, follower-ship, patience and ability to handle challenges effectively can be enhanced by engaging in outdoor activities in addition to classroom activities which help to produce physically and mentally healthy persons.

You gained some basic knowledge about outdoor activities when you were in Grade 10.

In this lesson we will learn further about mountaineering, jungle explorations and study of jungle crafts.



### Activity

- i. Make a list of outdoor activities that students can engage in.
- ii. Write a list of benefits that can be gained by engaging in outdoor activities.

(Recollect what you learnt when you were in Grade 10)

### Organizing outdoor activities

It is very important to plan outdoor activities following the three phases given below and the activities should be organized according to the prepared plan.

1. Pre - preparation
2. Implementation
3. End (conclusion)

## Pre-preparation

Pre- preparation is essential for the successful organization of any activity.

- **Deciding on the date, time, venue, objectives, and what activities to participate in**

- **Obtaining permission**

First, permission of the class teacher should be obtained for the outdoor activity to be organized. Then written permission should be obtained from the principal for organizing the activity and from parents giving their consent for students to participate.

To implement the activity, permission of relevant authorities should be obtained before entering areas like forest reserves or other places as required.

It is important to obtain the necessary permission from the Divisional Secretary, Grama Niladhari, Officer-in-Charge of the police station, Forest Rangers, and the heads of the religious institutions in the relevant areas as required and also to keep them informed of your intended activity.

- **Preparing a participant information sheet**

It is important to prepare a participant information sheet before the activity. The following information should be included in the information sheet:

- ▶ Name of the participant
- ▶ Address
- ▶ Class
- ▶ Telephone number
- ▶ Name, address and telephone numbers of the person who should be informed in case of an emergency

- **Gaining awareness**

It is very important that you are aware of matters relating to the activity and receive the guidance of your teacher, which will enable you to implement the programme with minimum problems. Gaining knowledge related to the following before engaging in the activity is important:

- ▶ information gathered through previous studies
- ▶ ethics
- ▶ rules and regulations
- ▶ climate and weather conditions of the area

- ▶ health and sanitary arrangements
- ▶ road signs
- ▶ first-aid
- ▶ map reading
- ▶ using the compass
- ▶ making maps
- ▶ protecting the environment with love for nature
- ▶ use of equipment
- ▶ safety precautions



Figure 8.1

- **Identifying the objectives**  
You plan to engage in outdoor activities in order to achieve one or several objectives. Clear identification of those objectives will let you achieve them successfully.
- **Deciding on the items to be taken and arranging them**  
Make it a point to take only what is necessary for you in implementing the activity. A list of items that are commonly needed given here:
  - ▶ pure water
  - ▶ food
  - ▶ clothing
  - ▶ some ropes
  - ▶ a knife
  - ▶ an electric torch
  - ▶ a compass

- ▶ a notebook, a pen or a pencil
- ▶ materials necessary for putting up a tent
- ▶ a camera
- ▶ a road map of the area
- ▶ a mobile phone
- ▶ a small radio
- ▶ a binocular



Figure 8.2

## Implementing the activity

Once the preparations for the activity have been completed, it has to be implemented on the scheduled date. During the implementation of the activity, the participants have to engage in various tasks. It is important to pay attention to the following in order to carry out the tasks successfully:

- ▶ using the compass
- ▶ reading the map
- ▶ providing water
- ▶ cooking food
- ▶ pitching tent
- ▶ arranging health and sanitary facilities
- ▶ finding a safe place to spend the night
- ▶ video recording and taking photographs
- ▶ drawing pictures and taking down notes
- ▶ collecting items such as plants, stones and feathers etc.



Pitching a tent



Using the composer

Figure 8.3



Cooking

## End (conclusion)

At the end of the activity, the team should hold a meeting and attention should be paid to the following:

- sharing the experiences
- examining the material collected
- identifying the difficulties faced
- discussing the remedies taken to overcome the difficulties
- discussing the weaknesses and strengths in organizing the activity
- preparing the final report



Sharing experiences



Preparing the final report

Figure 8.4

**Let us study further the following activities that come under outdoor activities:**

1. study of jungle crafts
2. mountaineering
3. jungle explorations

### Study of Jungle crafts

When we engage in outdoor activities, we should be armed with the necessary skills to successfully overcome the challenges we confront. Identifying various environmental conditions and natural phenomena and being prepared to face those situations is especially important when participating in outdoor activities.

The objective of studying jungle crafts is to acquire the ability to identify the nature of action that should be taken to overcome the challenges of nature and to be prepared for that. This can be considered as gaining knowledge about nature including animals.

The following are some of the skills that we should develop in studying jungle crafts.

- Forecasting weather by observing animal behaviour
- Finding sources of water
- Camping
- Ability to tie different types of knots
- Utilizing equipment such as knife, axe
- Measuring the height of trees
- Measuring the width of a river
- Making a bridge
- Setting up a bonfire
- Methods of cutting down trees
- Identifying the directions by studying the position of the sun, moon, and stars
- Cooking food without using utensils
- Making fire if required
- Observing the footprints of animals and identifying them



Tying various knots



Producing fire

Figure 8.5

We should find information about the trees, animals, sources of water, mountains, caves and caverns that we come across in the natural environment while studying jungle crafts.

## Challenges confronted when studying Jungle crafts

When we are in the wild, we become exposed to various hazards. Such hazards can be categorized as follows:

1. hazards related to weather
2. hazards caused by animals
3. hazards related to food
4. hazards related to water
5. confusions regarding the direction
6. diseases

## Important observations in overcoming the challenges confronted in the wild

### Footprints

Observing footprints is very important in dealing with the hazards confronted in the wild. Observe the footprints of several persons and observe the differences in those footprints.

Then examine the footprints of some animals. You may examine the footprints of animals such as the elephant, deer, cattle, dog, and pig. Make notes of the special features of those footprints. Draw pictures of their footprints in a notebook. Now look at the pictures you have drawn and identify the animal by studying the features of the footprint. Also study how the animals move, and the time, speed and the direction in which they have moved.



Figure 8.6 - Various footprints

### Landmarks

Landmarks are very important for us to move about in the wild without facing hazardous situations. Natural features in the environment can be used as landmarks and sometimes we have to make landmarks by ourselves. Some examples for using landmarks are as follows:

- breaking a twig from a branch of a tree and hanging it by the side of the way.
- keeping some fairly big stones arranged in a particular shape
- leftover parts from what animals have eaten while they were moving about
- places where animals are couched
- crushed grass or other plants



Figure 8.7 - Places where animals lie

**We study jungle crafts to protect from hazardous situations that we may encounter in the forest. The following are some of the strategies that we can adopt while we are in a forest area.**

**Camouflaging**

if we are clearly noticeable to animals, there is greater possibility of being attacked by them. Therefore we should be camouflaged in the forest. For that we should wear clothes that have the same colour as plants and trees and the ground.

**Walking cautiously**

When we are inside the forest we should walk slowly and quietly taking cover behind trees and by crawling when we pass an open air stretch.

**Imitating animals**

Imitate animals always as much as possible. Animals can be imitated by making sounds similar to theirs and by imitating their actions.

**Knowledge on food available in the forest**

We need to have acquired adequate knowledge on how to find food when we are in the wild in case we run out of or run short of food supplies we carry with us. Forests usually have various kinds of food like yams, fruit, jack and breadfruit. However when you go in search of such food, you may come across poisonous foods, too. In order to refrain from consuming such poisonous food, you can select only those that are eaten by animals.



## Mountaineering



Figure 8.8 - Mountaineering

Climbing mountains which do not have roads for easy access under difficult weather conditions like hot sun, rain and wind can be called mountaineering. Mountaineering is a very good activity for strengthening self confidence. In mountaineering, it is very important that every participant acts with a deep sense of team spirit. Negligence or carelessness of one participant may create a grave danger for the whole team.

### Facts to be taken into consideration in mountaineering

- Gaining understanding about the flora and fauna of the area.
- Gaining understanding about the condition of soil and rocks in the area.
- Learning the facts that the previous explorers have reported.
- Getting the participation of explorers who have experience in mountaineering.
- Gaining awareness as to how action should be taken and who should be informed of in case of an emergency.
- Arranging only the essential items so that they can be carried in a rucksack.
- Gaining full understanding and training in utilizing safety equipment.
- Refraining from engaging in unnecessary, unsafe activities.
- Respecting leadership and following orders.
- Always working with team-spirit.
- Having received training in rope climbing.
- Having developed skills in tying knots with ropes.
- Using a stick as a support for walking.

## Jungle exploration



Figure 8.9 - Jungle exploration

Man who evolved gradually over the era of the hunter stepped into the agricultural era. Man in the era of the hunter lived a completely savage life in the jungle.

But today the prime objective of jungle exploration is to study the biodiversity of the relevant area. Through jungle explorations we can learn about the animals, birds, insects and reptiles living in the wild, the nature of vegetation in the area, streams, brooks and rivers flowing there, topographical features, nature of soil and the rainfall of the area.

It is important that participants in mountaineering should be in small groups and take special care about their safety. As there are dangers involved with this activity, participants should get advice from adults experienced in jungle exploration.

### **Facts that special attention should be drawn to in jungle explorations**

- Gaining adequate understanding about the animals living in the wild.  
Having adequate knowledge about animals including snakes living in the area, their behaviour and their food varieties help a great deal in jungle exploration.
- Gaining understanding of the vegetation  
Having adequate knowledge of the types of plants, trees and creepers in the area, the edible parts of jungle vegetation is important in jungle exploration.
- Gaining awareness on dealing with an emergency.
- Providing clothes necessary to prevent snake bites and leeches.
- Refraining from making noise while staying in the forest as it could provoke animals.

- Making marks along the path used for walking and using those to find the way.
- Gaining knowledge on how to use the compass and maps.
- Gaining skills in identifying footprints of animals.
- Mapping the route used for the exploration.
- Making notes, videoing or taking photographs of places of particular significance in the forest.
- Taking safe food and water.
- Carrying only the essential items.



### Activity

Write a list of benefits that you can gain by participating in outdoor activities. Add some fresh ideas in addition to what you learnt in Grade 10.

### Summary

In outdoor activities, we engage in various tasks involving ourselves with the natural environment. Outdoor activities are organized under the three phases of preparation, implementation and conclusion.

In this lesson we learned about the study of jungle crafts, mountaineering and jungle explorations which come under outdoor activities.

Through the study of jungle crafts we gain knowledge about nature of animals, plants and trees.

Mountaineering is an outdoor activity which helps develop self-confidence.

The main objective of jungle exploration is to study the biodiversity.

We gain various benefits by engaging in outdoor activities and we should be careful about our safety when engaging in such activities.



### Exercise

1. What are the steps you would follow in organizing an outdoor activity?
2. What are the challenges you may have to face when you go to the wild for studying jungle crafts?
3. Write eight facts that you would take into consideration when engaging in mountaineering.
4. Write five factors that should be taken into consideration in jungle explorations.