

THE GREAT OUTDOORS! ➡

Hiking and Backpacking

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KEY ICONS TO LOOK FOR



Words to Understand: These words with their easy-to-understand definitions will increase the reader’s understanding of the text, while building vocabulary skills.



Sidebars: This boxed material within the main text allows readers to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspectives by weaving together additional information to provide realistic and holistic perspectives.



Research Projects: Readers are pointed toward areas of further inquiry connected to each chapter. Suggestions are provided for projects that encourage deeper research and analysis.



Text-Dependent Questions: These questions send the reader back to the text for more careful attention to the evidence presented here.



Series Glossary of Key Terms: This back-of-the-book glossary contains terminology used throughout this series. Words found here increase the reader’s ability to read and comprehend higher-level books and articles in this field.



Educational Videos: Readers can view videos by scanning our QR codes, providing them with additional educational content to supplement the text. Examples include news coverage, moments in history, speeches, iconic sports moments and much more!



WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

calories a measurement of energy burned by a body

loop trail a hiking path that begins and ends at the same point

trailhead the point at which a hiking path begins

Take a Hike!



Imagine a **loop trail** that takes you and your friends through a forest to the top of a hill. It returns along a stream. In your day pack you have all the right gear and best trail mix ever (because you made it yourself).

At first your group travels through the forest. The birds are singing and it's easy hiking. Then the trail climbs above the trees and gets very steep. Goodbye shade, hello hot slopes. You zip off the legs of your pants and turn them into hiking shorts. It's hard walking uphill, even though you're on a well-built trail.

One of your friends is new to hiking and is having trouble keeping up. You stop for a drink of water, give her some trail mix (with chocolate!) and tell her, "You can do it!" You put her in the

front of the line and all of sudden she turns into a rocket ship and blasts up the hill! Before you know it, you've all reached the top.

What a view! Mountains and more mountains. And lots of blue sky.

Then you hike down the mountain to a meadow where a deer leaps across the trail. As the deer looks back at you, you act quickly and take some great pictures of the deer standing in some wildflowers.

Near a stream you reach a trail junction without a sign. You know to take a left and hike downstream back to the **trailhead**. But after a few minutes you realize you're not going in the direction of the waterfall. You check the map. Oops—should have gone right back there instead of left.

You double back and soon reach the waterfall, which isn't very big, but big enough to fill a waist-high pool. Time for a quick dip to cool off!

As you head downhill to finish your hike, you remember the great pictures you took . . . of your friend new to hiking looking sad and then happy . . . of splashing in the water, and everyone standing proudly on the top of the mountain.

Those pictures—and your memories—will be great to share with family and friends until you start planning your next hiking adventure!



Well-marked trails point the way.



Amazing vistas await hikers who head into the backcountry or the hills.

Super Popular



What's the most popular form of outdoor recreation in North America?

No, it's not swimming or soccer or bike riding.

It's hiking. And most adults who enjoy time on the trail got started as kids or teens.

Hiking is taking a walk on a trail in nature. Walking to school on sidewalks is not hiking, and neither is walking around the mall. But walking a path in the forest or a trail in the mountains is hiking. So is walking a path in the desert or along the seashore. Every hike is a walk, but not every walk is a hike.

Hiking takes you to beautiful places you can only reach on foot. Trails lead to waterfalls, meadows full of wildflowers, mountaintops, swimming holes, picnic areas and campgrounds.



Taking a walk in the woods with friends makes the walking much easier!

The dictionary definition of a hiker is a simple one.

hiker: *one who hikes (especially frequently); a foot traveler; someone who goes on an extended walk in the mountains or country (for pleasure)*

In other words, a hiker is one who likes to walk in nature just for fun!

Lots of young people like to hike. They hike with their friends, their families, the Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, and other groups. They hike with their teachers and classmates and with rangers and guides in nearby nature parks.

About one in every five people in the U.S. and Canada go hiking every year. Hiking is also very popular in Europe. Chances are if you like walking in nature and getting away from it all, you're a hiker. You just haven't thought of yourself that way.

You don't need to travel far away to go hiking. You might discover wonderful hiking trails in parks and nature preserves close to home.

A hike can be as short as a half-hour or a half-day, or many days long. Some people hike the same trails near home over and over again. Others explore new trails in faraway mountains.

Physical Benefits of Hiking

Backpacking is a combination of hiking and camping. A backpacker hikes into the backcountry to spend one or more nights there, and carries supplies and gear for preparing meals and sleeping. A backpacker can travel farther into wilderness areas away from people and cities than a day hiker can. Many backpacking trips take place over a weekend while others are a week or many weeks in length.

Hiking is one of the simplest outdoor activities that people can take part in. It is also one of the most rewarding. It's a great way to spend time with your friends and family. It feels good to be out in the fresh air, get some exercise and enjoy the wonders of nature.

Not everybody sees the joy in hiking, though. To some people, hiking means being too hot or too cold, blisters and mosquito bites, and fears about snakes, bears and getting lost. Some people think hiking is just too hard and nature too scary, and they want no part of the challenges that come with being in the great outdoors.

For sure hiking, like all outdoors sports, has its challenges.



Adding elevation to your hike increases the physical benefits.



HIKERS DICTIONARY

Hikers have their very own vocabulary. Here are a few “hiker words” to get started.

Backpack (*noun*) A large pack worn on the back to carry camping gear; (*verb*) to go on an overnight hike carrying your gear in a backpack.

Day hike A hike that begins and ends during daylight hours.

Day pack Small, soft backpack made especially for hikers.

Degree of difficulty Measurement of how hard the hike is; ratings include easy, moderate, and difficult.

Elevation Measurement of altitude above sea level; the difficulty of a hike goes along with how much elevation gain is required.

Fleece A soft, lightweight fabric.

Junction The point at which a trail meets another trail.

Layering Wearing several thin layers of outdoor clothing rather than one heavy one.

Nature The world of living things and the outdoors.

Nature trail A path with signs identifying plants and describing other natural features.

Pace The speed at which you hike.

Summit The top of a mountain.

Switchback A zigzag, back-and-forth route up a mountain.

“Take a hike!” “Leave!” or “Go away!” But for hikers—taking a hike is a good thing!

Terrain The natural features of the land.

Zip-off pants Pants that can be unzipped to become shorts.

But overcoming those challenges—steep trails, difficult weather conditions, feeling like you can’t take another step—to complete your hike is very satisfying. Even if a hike gets very difficult at times, you’ll feel proud of yourself once you’ve accomplished what you set out to do.

Hiking is known as “a lifetime sport”—a fun outdoor activity you can do your whole life. Hiking has many benefits: it makes the heart stronger, improves balance, and increases endurance. Hiking can lead to a happier, healthier, and often longer life.

Hiking has many of the same benefits as walking and running, and some special ones, too. Because every step a hiker takes along a trail is a little bit different (uphill, downhill, over rocks), hiking gives muscles a special kind of workout.

Hiking really burns off the **calories**. Someone weighing 100 pounds (45 kg) burns off 360 calories per hour while hiking hills and 285 calories per hour hiking flat trails. (Swimming uses 275 calories per hour, riding a bike uses 250 calories per hour.)

Hiking with a pack increases the calories burned; so does hiking faster and going uphill. By comparison, sitting around watching TV or play-



Burn calories, get fit, and create memories when you strap on a backpack.

ing video games burns only about 50 calories an hour. There's no question that hiking is a lot better for you than gaming and many people say it's a lot more fun, too.

A lot of young people feel rushed and overscheduled (with more organized activities and homework than their parents had), under pressure to get good grades, and spend way more time than they'd like riding around in a bus or car. And then there are those typical teen concerns about fitting in and figuring it all out.



Exercise . . .
and calm: Benefits of
the outdoors.

Mental Benefits, Too



hike in nature can help you relax. In recent years, a whole lot of research has suggested that hiking helps students get more focused and helps put people of all ages in a better mood.



Some hikers think it's pretty funny that scientists are finally "proving" that hiking is good for you!

So what is there to learn about hiking? You just put one foot in front of the other, right? It's so simple.

Well, not that simple. And actually there's more to hiking than just walking.

This book shares the basics of hiking so that you can better enjoy this fun way to spend time outdoors. You'll learn easy ways to select hiking gear you really need, how to choose a hike that's right for you, how to trav-

The solitude and quiet of nature on a hike can provide lasting and relaxing benefits.

el safely and have a great time in nature. Plus you'll get some great tips on how to make the most of your time on the trail.

You don't have to be super-fit to be a hiker. You can choose a hike that's right for you, and have a great time in the great outdoors. Nature might be closer than you think, and you can learn about it—just by hiking through it.

This book will help you think, then act like a hiker; you'll become a hiker by actually hiking. We learn by doing, whether that's snowboarding, playing the guitar, or hiking.

So let's gear-up and get ready to take a hike. And consider telling your friends, parents and teachers to "Take a hike!", too.

In a nice way, of course.



TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the word for the beginning of a trail?
2. Name a physical benefit of hiking.
3. Name a mental benefit of hiking.



RESEARCH PROJECT

Find three different trails in your area. Look at maps of each and write a short report about it. Describe the length, the direction, the type of terrain covered, and what people might see on the way.

