



THE GREAT OUTDOORS! ➡

Survival Skills

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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!



Staying Alive



It all started when Christopher Traverse made a wrong turn. And then another. He thought he was heading south. In fact, he was traveling north, deep into the snowy wilderness of Manitoba, Canada. When his snowmobile ran out of gas 19 miles (30 km) later, Chris knew he was in trouble. He had no food. No water. No matches to start a fire. It was late in the day, and the temperature was a frigid 14 degrees F (-10 degrees C). Overhead, the sky darkened with a brewing snowstorm. He was in a battle for his survival.

Chris set to work. He used twigs and branches to build a shelter around his snowmobile. He cut the seat apart to make a pair of goggles to shield his eyes. Then he hunkered down as a blizzard howled through, bringing a foot of snow. Chris made it through that first night, but his struggle was far from over.

The next morning, Chris started to walk out. Each day he slogged through waist-deep snow for 12 hours a day. He climbed trees to see his surroundings better. That helped him figure out his location and kept him heading in the right direction. At night, he made shelters from their branches. Staying warm was critical. Chris had dressed in layers for the trip, so each day he wore only one of his two pants. That kept the other pants dry for sleeping. He knew he would get too cold if he ate snow, so he melted it before he drank it for water.

Five days later, Chris finally reached the highway and was rescued. He had almost no supplies when he got lost, but he did have two very important things that helped him through his ordeal. One was the desire to get home.

The other was the knowledge of how to survive until he did.



Sometimes survival means
knowing when to call for help.



WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

bushcraft wilderness skills, named for the remote bush country of Australia

grid the large systems in society that help run it, such as power and technology

predators animals (usually large) that eat smaller or weaker animals

rewilding returning to a more natural state

Into the Great Outdoors!



Sometimes the weather turns nasty. That marked trail? Suddenly it disappears. Someone gets hurt and now you're stranded. Campouts, fishing trips, and hikes do not always go the way they are planned. When that happens, it's a good idea to have some basic skills that will help you get through. This book can't teach every skill or cover every possibility that might happen, but it can be a guide to some important skills. You can use it as a starting point to learn more about surviving in the wild.

Ready for Anything



Survival skills get a lot of attention these days, but they are nothing new. In fact, knowing how to survive in nature has been around as long as humans have. Obviously, the earliest people did not have heated houses or canned food or electric lights. They learned to use what nature provided. Over time, people figured out easier ways to do things. As that happened, many people lost the ability to interact with nature one-on-one. Still, those skills are part of our history. They can be learned with a little bit of work.



When visiting a new place, finding expert local advice from a guide is key.

Survival boils down to a few main priorities. People have to stay warm and protect themselves from the weather and from **predators**. They have to eat and drink. They need to stay healthy and recover if they get sick or injured. It is difficult to do all these things in the middle of the wilderness, where there are few supplies or help. With a little training, though, you can learn to do the basics: start a fire, build a shelter, and get safe food and water. Then you can do the most important thing—get out!

Getting Started



Survival situations are usually not planned. That does not mean you can't plan for them. Don't get in the position of being stranded on a snowy mountaintop with no idea what to do. Instead, set up a headquarters at home to get organized. Call it your "Kitchen Command Center." This is the time to think about what skills you want to learn. Make lists of necessary items and tools, and make sure you pack them for every trip into the wilderness.

The best time to practice survival skills is when you don't really need them. It's tricky to make a roaring fire with a pile of wet wood and no matches. Hardly anyone succeeds on the first try! Wilderness schools or classes are good places to start. After that, it's a matter of practice. You may have access to some remote areas where you can try your skills. Remember that many places have strict rules. It may be illegal to hunt or start fires except under certain circumstances, even on private land. Be sure to check in advance. You do not have to "think big." If you do not have a wilderness area near your home, you might be able to use your own backyard.

You can divide your learning into steps. In a true survival situation, getting shelter would be your first priority. Building one could take several hours. In real life, you might not have that much time. You can still practice the skill, however. Work on it a little bit at a time, and take up where you left off. Even if it takes five hours spread over five days, you still have a shelter at the end. Next you have to sleep in it. How are you



TRACES AND TRAILS

Practicing wilderness skills can be a messy business—so learn to clean up after yourself! Always start fires in approved areas, and make sure you put them out fully. Do not leave trash lying around. Avoid stripping branches from live trees. In short, be careful about how you treat the natural environment. In many places, it is illegal to hunt, fish, or collect food without permission. The exception is if you are in a true survival situation. In that case, you may live off the land. It is okay to leave a trail of where you have been to help rescuers find you.

feeling halfway through the night? Is it so cold and drafty you need to go inside? If so, it is a good thing you practiced in your backyard! You can learn from your mistakes to make it better the next time. You can use this step-by-step approach for learning other skills, too.

Be Uncivilized



Unluckily, most people do not get into such sticky situations that they must use their survival skills just to stay alive. Survival skills are also called wilderness skills or **bushcraft** skills. People like to use these skills for a lot of reasons—not just to survive! They may like the idea of living “off the **grid**.” This means that they do not depend on technology. Instead of using an electric stove, they make fires. They build their own shelters and grow or gather their own food. The trend for people to use wilderness skills as part of their daily lives is called human **rewilding**. Basically, this means that people are learning to get back in touch with nature. They are putting ancient skills to work.

Only a few people do this long term. Many more could be called “weekend survivalists.” They just like to go out in nature and see what they can accomplish on their own. It’s a challenge—and it’s fun!



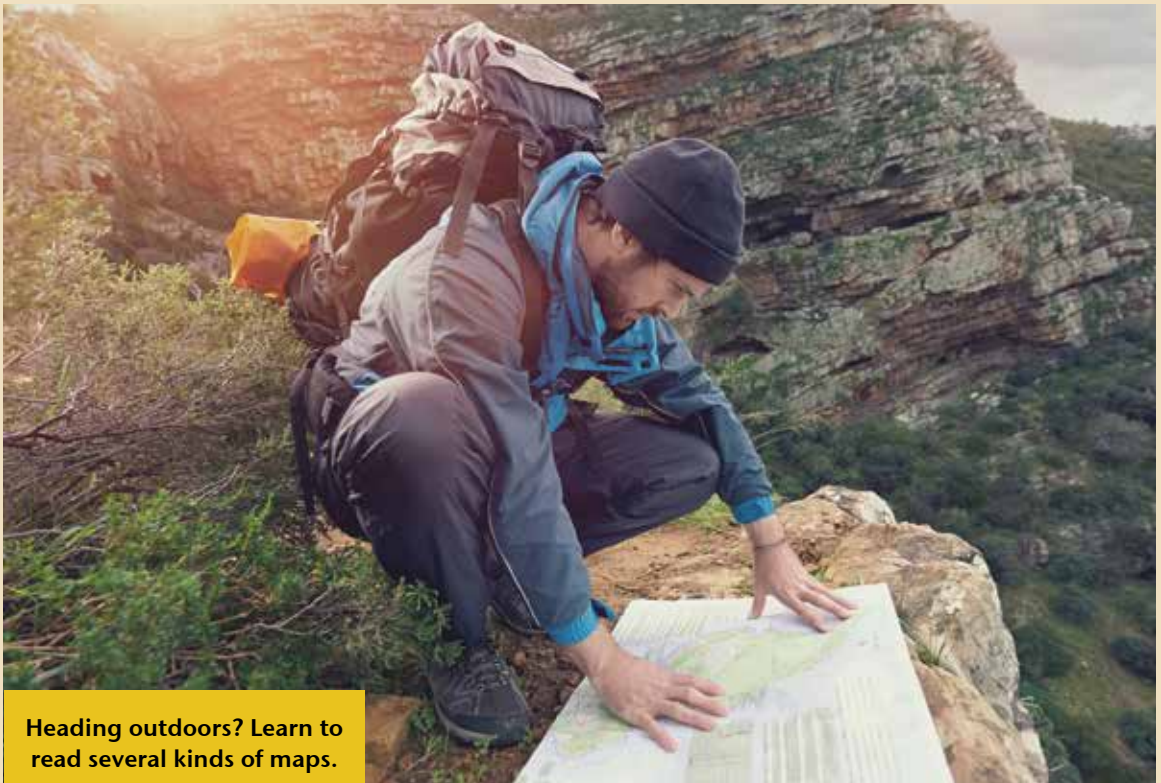
TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. What are two things people must protect themselves from if they are stranded in the wilderness?
2. Where are some places you can learn or practice survival skills?
3. Why do some people like human rewilding?



RESEARCH PROJECT

Find several places that teach wilderness or survival skills and compare their approaches. Which one would be the best fit for you?



Heading outdoors? Learn to read several kinds of maps.

