



Jane
Goodall
Institute

Learning Resource



Nature to the rescue!

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DP WORLD

Nature to the rescue!



SCAN ME

Get the links

All links in this activity can be found on our website. Scan the QR code or use this link: tinyurl.com/4j2y7wnd

In this resource your group will look into the benefits nature can have on your physical and mental health. We'll also bust some myths along the way.

Objectives

Discover how nature benefits us and improves our lives.

In this activity your group will:

- ▶ Research what are known benefits of getting out into nature.
- ▶ Learn about mindfulness and how we can use it to enjoy nature more.
- ▶ *Optional:* Run an experiment on the effects of nature on your group.

What do I need to make it work?

- ▶ Access to the internet
- ▶ Access to an 'unbuilt' area (school garden, local park, woodland, beach, etc.)

What things will my students create?

- ▶ A bigger love of nature and the natural world around us!
- ▶ A scientific poster

What do we know about nature and our health?

Scientists have been looking into this topic even more during and since the Covid-19 pandemic. So what do we know?

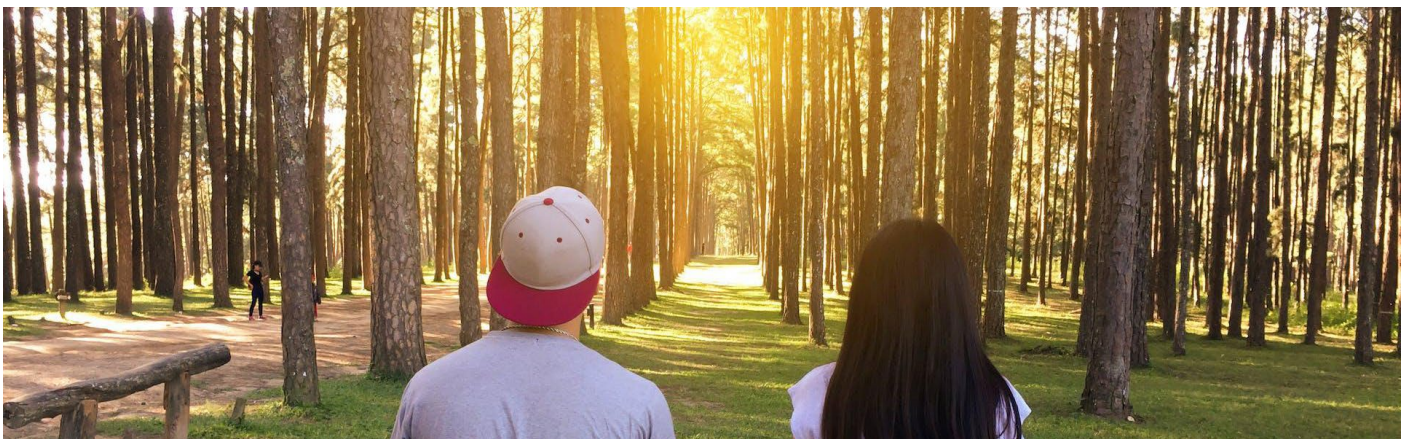


Photo by Tirachard Kumtanom on Pexels

Split up these resources among your group and see what information you can find, you may wish to see what other resources you can find as well:

- ▶ **Science Daily:** Research shows that a walk in the park is more than just a nice way to spend an afternoon. It's an essential component for good health – tinyurl.com/4x3294e8
- ▶ **Net Doctor:** Natural light vs artificial light: what are the effects on our health? – tinyurl.com/yc6e46pz
- ▶ **National Libraries of Medicine:**
 - ▶ This research examined the impact of daylight exposure on the health of office workers – tinyurl.com/5ahbfpdd
 - ▶ Research into mindfulness in nature: tinyurl.com/4k2mkf9k
- ▶ **Nature:** How vegetation barriers can reduce air pollution – tinyurl.com/434n39y7

Here are some questions to help your thinking:

- ▶ What aspects of nature and health have been studied?
- ▶ What experiments have been done and what did they discover?
- ▶ Are there any unanswered questions?
- ▶ What facts about nature's link to human health can you find?

Discuss your findings

Bring your group back together and ask each team to report on what they found out. Use these questions to get the conversation going:

- ▶ What did you already know?
- ▶ What surprised you?
- ▶ Would anything you found out cause you to change your daily routine?

Myth busting: Houseplants improve air quality – tinyurl.com/mv9zswew

Sadly not, "to achieve the same pollutant removal rate reached in the NASA chamber study (tinyurl.com/bdd8sr7r) would require having 680 plants in a typical house". What's more, the soil may have bacteria, pesticides or other contaminants that release toxins into the air as well, so it's still best to get out into nature.

Mindfulness

One thing we can do in nature that has links to better mental health is being mindful.



Photo by Vanessa Garcia on Pexels:

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness might make you think of people sitting cross legged for hours humming, trying to find their inner-self, but mindfulness is simply about being more aware of our surroundings and how we are feeling. It can be pretty normal and it's often prescribed by doctors for good mental health¹. You can do it sitting, walking or even gardening!

How do we do it?

With mindfulness, you are actively aware of what is going on in your mind, body, and surroundings (sensations, thoughts, feelings, etc.) without labelling anything as good or bad.

Here is an example of going on a mindful walk (taken from naturewise.com - link below):

- ▶ Find a time and place (ideally in a park, school field, beach or similar outdoor location) to go for a short peaceful walk.
- ▶ Taking a few deep breaths before you set off. This will help slow you down.
- ▶ As you walk your route slowly, focus on all the sensations you can notice. Is the air warm or cold? Is there a breeze or is it still? What sounds do you hear around you? Birds? Cars? Voices? What

are the colours and textures that you see? How do things move and flow around you?

- ▶ If you get distracted try returning to one of your senses, like hearing, and focus your attention on that one sense.

Create a mindfulness map

You can be mindful in nature in lots of different places. Each person might have their own favourite place to enjoy nature. As a group you can make a mindfulness map.

- ▶ Get your group to think about all the natural outdoor spaces they find peaceful.
- ▶ Find your local area on google maps and print off a screenshot to use as a base map (A3 might be good if possible, depending on the size of your group)
- ▶ Get each member to say where they would go to be mindful and write a sentence describing why it's a good place to go.
- ▶ Add their photo and description to the map.

You could visit a few of the different places on your map and try different mindfulness plans, like just sitting and listening to what is around you, or perhaps planting a flower or tree (if allowed). There are other examples you can try on this website: tinyurl.com/mvwykbzf

Run an experiment

We have read up on what scientists have discovered and had a go at being mindful. Why not put them together and see if we can measure some of the effects of nature ourselves?

For this you can devise your own tests based on what you found in your earlier research, or try this suggestion:

Experiment question: Does a mindful walk in nature make me calmer in stressful situations?

Method:

Plan a mindful walk and prepare two 20 question maths tests that would stretch a member of your group (this would be different for each learning stage). Make sure the tests are similar in difficulty and style, but have different questions to answer.

To carry out the experiment, your group needs to:

- ▶ Complete as much of maths test 1 in 30 seconds as they can. Score their correct answers and also note down how they felt during the test.
- ▶ Go on a mindful walk in a peaceful place
- ▶ Complete as much of maths test 2 in 30 seconds as they can. Score their correct answers and also note down how they felt during the test.

Results:

Compare the results of the two maths tests before and after the mindful walk. What happened? Did you do better or worse after the walk? Were there any differences on how you felt during each test?

Present:

- ▶ Whatever you found out, put together a scientific poster to show others what you did.
- ▶ Give a brief outline of your experiment
- ▶ Display any results using graphs and charts or short statements.

Want to help improve this activity?

This activity is a living document! Help us by editing this activity to make it as good as possible, just use this short link (just type it into your web browser's address bar): bit.ly/45jVGQI – full instructions are provided. Any edits that can make this resource easier to use in the classroom are very welcome, so please follow the link and make your contribution!



JGI & DP World

The Jane Goodall Institute has partnered with DP World to support the growth of the Roots & Shoots programme. DP World are a leading provider of worldwide smart end-to-end supply chain logistics with a presence in 55 countries, enabling the flow of trade across the globe. This exciting partnership supports the creation of resources on the wider marine ecosystem as well as supporting the expansion of Roots & Shoots groups around the world. **Find out more:** bit.ly/jgi-dpw



Tell us how you got on

When your project is finished we'd love to see what you did! If you already have an account you can upload a story with images to the Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots UAE website (find us at www.rootsnshoots.ae) to show off pictures and videos of your ships to a wider audience. If your school or youth group does not already have an account then just fill in the form on the website and we can set you up.

UAE Year of Sustainability

2023 is the Year of Sustainability in the UAE where we ask the question how can we be sustainable as a **community**, with our **nature**, and our **resources**? Through knowledge-sharing and storytelling, together we can spread essential information about sustainability and its importance, so share your work as wide as you can and tag/mention the campaign on Instagram, Facebook, X, YouTube and TikTok with the account @UAEYearOf and the hashtags #UAE52 and #TodayForTomorrow. Learn more at UAEYearOf.ae.

Keep up to date with Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots UAE

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