

FACTivity



Time Needed

15 minutes outside of class for 7 days for recording, 1 class period to discuss and report results

Materials

- Observation log
- Watch or timer
- Graphic organizer



In this FACTivity, you will test whether being in nature affects your mood.

FACTivity Methods

Many scientists, like the ones in the study you just read, are trying to find out the impacts that green spaces and time in nature can have on our mental health. You will test whether time outdoors can improve your own mood and sense of well-being.

To complete this FACTivity, for the next 7 days, you will spend at least 15 minutes outdoors each day. During this time outdoors, you can read, nature-watch, play a game, do your homework, etc. You can choose any activity that is not on a screen—no phones, tablets, computers, etc.

Before you begin your 15 minutes outdoors each day, write down some words to describe how you are feeling: happy, sad, tired, excited, anxious, bored, etc. Use as many descriptors as you need.

FACTivity **Methods**

After your 15 minutes (or more) outdoors, record how long you were outside and how you are feeling now. Again, use as many descriptors as you need. You will also record where you were outside and what you did. For example, “My yard, read a book” or “Sat under a tree in front of my school, did homework.”

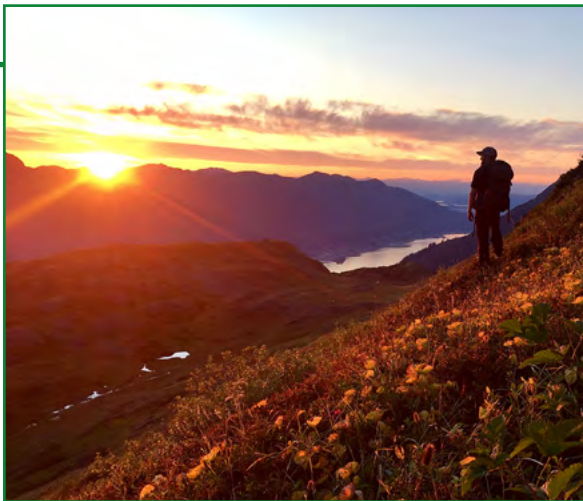
My Observation Log Name: _____							
Day/Date	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Time spent							
Location							
Activity							
How do I feel before?							
How do I feel after?							

After collecting data for 7 days, share your results with a small group or your class. Discuss and record the answers to the following questions:

1. Did you feel a difference in your feelings or your mood before and after spending time outdoors?
2. Did your feelings/mood change as you repeated the experiment during the week?
3. Were there places outdoors that were associated with bigger changes in your feelings/mood?
4. Were there certain activities associated with bigger changes in your feelings/mood?
5. What conclusions can you draw, if any, about spending time outdoors based on your observations?

Extension

Working with your group, choose a way to display the data you collected. Possible methods might include a graph of your moods/feelings before and after the 15 minutes and for each day of the 7-day experiment, a chart of your observations, a scoring method you devise to score your feelings/moods before and after the 15-minute periods, etc. Display your data in your classroom.



If you don't have a safe or accessible place outdoors to conduct this experiment, try this alternate method! Some studies have shown that even looking at a photo of a nature scene can impact your mental health. Find a photo of an outdoor scene you think is beautiful in a magazine, book, or

online. Print, cut out, or simply keep the book open to this photo. Look at this photo during your 15-minute period each day. You can do your homework, write, draw, or simply daydream in front of your picture. Continue recording your observations as the directions indicate.