

Outdoor Education Syllabus

Grades: 7–8

Course Type: Classroom & Outdoor/Experiential Learning

Instructor: Kenneth Sharpe

School Year: January–May

Course Description

Outdoor Education equips students with the skills, knowledge, and responsibility needed to safely explore and understand the natural world. Through hands-on activities, simulations, outdoor labs, and discussions, students will learn survival basics, plant identification, weather and storm safety, and wildlife awareness. Emphasis is placed on safety, teamwork, environmental stewardship, and critical thinking.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic outdoor survival and safety skills
 - Identify common local plants and distinguish poisonous vs. non-poisonous species
 - Understand weather patterns and respond safely to storms
 - Practice wildlife awareness and respectful outdoor behavior
 - Apply Leave No Trace principles
 - Work cooperatively in outdoor scenarios
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Units of Study & Schedule

Unit 1: Survival Skills

January 7 – February 13

Focus Topics:

- Outdoor safety and risk assessment
- Shelter types and construction (theory & models)
- Fire safety and fire triangle (theory only)
- Water sources and purification concepts
- Signaling for help and emergency preparedness
- Survival priorities and decision-making

Key Skills:

- Problem-solving in survival scenarios
- Teamwork and communication
- Understanding basic survival needs

Assessments:

- Survival scenario activity
 - Quiz on survival priorities and safety
 - Reflection or journal entry
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Unit 2: Plant Identification & Plant Safety

February 17 – March 31

Focus Topics:

- Plant parts and functions
- Introduction to plant identification
- Poisonous vs. non-poisonous plants
- Edible plant safety rules (introductory)
- Local plant species awareness
- Respectful and safe plant interaction

Key Skills:

- Observation and classification
- Using simple field guides or visuals
- Making safe decisions around plants

Assessments:

- Plant ID worksheets or labs
- Poisonous vs. non-poisonous plant quiz
- Plant identification project or exit tickets

Unit 3: Weather & Storm Safety

April 1 – April 30

Focus Topics:

- Weather basics and forecasting signs
- Types of storms (thunderstorms, tornadoes, winter storms, heat-related hazards)
- Lightning, wind, heat, and cold safety
- Proper responses to severe weather outdoors
- Emergency procedures

Key Skills:

- Interpreting weather signs
- Making safe choices during storms
- Emergency awareness

Assessments:

- Weather safety quiz
 - Storm response scenarios
 - Video-based reflections or exit tickets
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Unit 4: Wildlife Awareness & Safety

May 1 – May 25

Focus Topics:

- Local wildlife identification
- Animal habitats and behavior
- Wildlife safety and awareness
- Human impact on wildlife
- Respectful observation and coexistence

Key Skills:

- Situational awareness outdoors
- Respectful interaction with wildlife
- Understanding ecosystems

Assessments:

- Wildlife awareness project or presentation
 - Safety scenario discussion
 - End-of-unit reflection
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Instructional Methods

- Hands-on activities and outdoor labs
 - Classroom discussions and videos
 - Group challenges and simulations
 - Journaling and reflection
 - Cooperative learning activities
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Grading Breakdown

- Participation & Preparedness – 25%
 - Assignments & Journals – 25%
 - Quizzes & Knowledge Checks – 20%
 - Projects & Skill Demonstrations – 20%
 - Final Reflection – 10%
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Expectations & Safety

- Follow all safety instructions at all times
 - Stay with the group during outdoor activities
 - Show respect for classmates, staff, and nature
 - Practice Leave No Trace principles
 - Use equipment responsibly
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Required Materials

- Closed-toe shoes
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Outdoor journal or notebook

- Pencil or pen
 - Reusable water bottle (recommended)
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Safety Notice

Outdoor activities involve inherent risks. All activities are designed to be age-appropriate and safety-focused. Students are expected to follow instructions and report concerns immediately.

Course Flexibility

This syllabus may be adjusted due to weather, school schedules, or safety considerations. Student safety and learning remain the top priorities.