

Outdoor and Environmental Studies
Teach Yourself Series
Topic 2: Relationships with Outdoor Environments

SAMPLE

Contents

Relationships with Outdoor Environments	3
Ways of experiencing and responding to outdoor environments	3
As it appears in Unit 1	3
Review Questions	4
Relationships with outdoor environments	
As it appears in Unit 3	
Types of human interactions	
Review Questions	
Relationships with Outdoor environments	
As it appears in Unit 3	
Indigenous relationships with outdoor environments	
Before European Settlement	
Indigenous relationships with outdoor environments	
After European Settlement	
Review questions	
Relationships with Australian outdoor environments as expressed by the first non-Indigenous settlers' experiences	
Review questions	
Relationships and interactions as influenced by increasing population	
Review questions	
Relationships and interactions influenced by Industrialisation and Nation Building	
Review Questions	
Contemporary societal relationships with outdoor environments	
As it appears in Unit 3	
Patterns of interaction Summary	
Factors influencing societal relationships with outdoor environments	
Some other factors influencing societal relationships with outdoor environments	
Review Questions	
Solutions to Review Questions	6

Relationships with Outdoor Environments

The relationships that humans have with outdoor environments is the cornerstone of the Outdoor and Environmental Studies course. Perceptions of, interactions with, and impacts on outdoor environments are part of an interconnected understanding of these relationships. Every human being has some type of relationship with outdoor environments at different times of their life. To interact with something is to communicate with or be directly involved with that person or environment. In this way all people have some relationship with outdoor environments. In Unit One the key types of relationship humans have with the environment are introduced in using the concept of 'Experiencing Outdoor Environments'. In Units Three and Four the types of relationship are expanded and linked to different groups at different times in Australia's history. Relationships with outdoor environments in Australia have changed through time. These changes have been influenced by changing perceptions of, and interactions with the environment at different periods in time.

Ways of experiencing and responding to outdoor environments

As it appears in Unit 1

The ways in which humans experience and respond to outdoor environments can also be expressed as having a relationship with nature. This relationship reflects the interactions humans have with outdoor environments. Humans can be seen to experience or respond to outdoor environments in one of five ways. These are; as a resource for human use and benefit; for recreation; for adventure; for spiritual connection; as a study site.

RESOURCE

- Humans have always relied on outdoor environments to provide the resources for our survival. There always has been and always will be a role for valuing the environment as a resource.
- Early Indigenous Australian's hunted and gathered food and materials for shelter from the landscape.
- Food production and material gathering processes have changed to land/forest management, agriculture, mining to produce food and materials over and above an individual's needs.
- Key resources in early European settlement were, timber, gold, sheep and wool
- During the 20th century primary resources continued to dominate exports but industry in Australia became more mechanised through developments in technology and the scale of resource use increased.
- Late in the 20th century and early in 21st century valuing the land as a resource has included the understanding that resources must be used sustainably. Instead of exploitation of resources a method of ecologically sustainable development must be pursued.

RECREATION/ADVENTURE

- Many people have the money and opportunity to value nature in ways other than as a resource. Many Australians value nature for recreation and adventure. Indeed many of our first experiences with the outdoor environment will have come about through recreation.
- Recreational experiences are usually not competitive, however, there has been a rise in the number of competitive 'adventure' style races in recent years that can add another dimension to the experience that people have.

- Outdoor recreational activities can be active or passive, providing different levels of risk and challenge depending on the goals of participants.
- Outdoor recreational activities as described in this course are classified as non-motorised activities. For example, four wheel driving and waterskiing are not classified as outdoor recreation activities.

SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

- Many Australian's see outdoor environments only for personal gain, either as a resource or for physical or educational benefit. Indigenous Australians and people from a number of other cultures have a deep spiritual connection with the environment. It is valued as a place where they belong and is part of their being.
- It is possible to visit an environment for reasons other than just to do something. Many use recreational visits to outdoor environments to meditate or take time out from the routine of an increasingly technology controlled lifestyle. These people use the time to reestablish their spiritual connection with the environment. An example would be people visiting an isolated section of coastline just to sit and think or enjoy the peace and serenity.

STUDY SITE

- Outdoor environments are study sites that can be used by a large number of groups. These groups learn from the environment to benefit themselves and other users of the environment.
- Outdoor Environments themselves can be studied to help us understand the impacts of human interactions and to manage the environment as a resource or place for recreation. Outdoor environments can also be a place used by people to learn about themselves, teamwork, etc. but done outside a traditional classroom.

Review Questions

1. The following review questions require you to link practical experiences you have had to give examples of ways that people value the outdoor environment.

- a. Choose an outdoor environment you have visited or studied and describe how people have used it as a resource over time.

Name of environment: _____

- b. Choose three outdoor recreation activities and list the type of physical environment that is suitable for each activity. Give examples of one Victorian location that would be suitable for each activity.

c. List an environment you have studied and explain how one group of people may have a spiritual connection to this place.

d. Describe how you have used one place you have visited as a study site. Explain what type of study you did at this site and how you benefited from it.

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Solutions to Review Questions

1. For these responses a number of alternatives are possible. It is important when answering this type of question to have studied a number of different outdoor environments.
 - a. Name of Environment: Wilson’s Promontory. People have used this as resource in the following ways. Early settlers used it for timber milling and sealing. Tin mining also occurred in the early 1900’s. Hunting of seals was unsustainable and the seal population was completely wiped out. Since the area became a National Park in the late 1800’s commercial operations have been centred on tourism and recreation.
 - b. Sea kayaking – ocean environment – Anglesea. Cross country skiing – alpine environment – Mt Baw Baw. Rock climbing – mountain/rockface environment – Grampians/Mt Arapiles.
 - c. The Dhudhuroa people of NE Victoria used the Yeddonba site at Mt Pilot as a sanctuary and a place for painting. Their rock art shows examples of their totem animal (Thylacine) and other images that have significance to them. We visited this area on our first trip and gained a great understanding of the spiritual connection the people had with the hills.
 - d. On our trip to the Marine Discovery Centre at Queenscliff we went canoeing on Swan Bay. We collected samples of marine life from the seagrass beds and learned how important the beds are for fish to breed. I benefited by gaining a greater understanding of some factors that can affect the balance of the ecosystems in this area.

2. Try to include specific examples of each interaction over time from an area you have studied.

Interaction Type	Definition	Examples
Commerce	Use of the outdoor environment for profit or to gain an income.	Agriculture – farming crops or livestock. Abalone divers working in the ocean
Tourism	Commercial operators provide recreational activities at a cost.	Go Ride a Wave or other commercial operators. Wilderness Expeditions or trekking companies Caravan Parks or resorts.
Recreation	People use the outdoor environment for relaxation and recreational activities	Bushwalking at Mt Cobbler, cycling on the rail trail.
Conservation	Humans work in a positive manner to protect and restore outdoor environments.	Landcare groups working to revegetate areas along our local creek bed.