

It's a Jungle Gym Out There!

An Introduction to Outdoor Recreation



VOCABULARY

Vocabulary in article marked in italics

Outdoor recreation

An activity done outdoors for enjoyment

Questionnaire

Printed or written form of questions used to gather information

Random Draw

To pick someone or something without showing preference

Sample

A small subset group, representative of the entire group

Trend

A behavior pattern occurring and developing over a period of time

Adapted from:

Cordell, H. K., B. L. McDonald, B. Lewis, M. Miles, J. Martin, and J. Bason. 1996. "United States of America". In Cushman, G., Veal, A. J., and J. Zuzanek, Eds. *World Leisure Participation in the Global Village*, Wallingford, Oxon, UK: CAB International.

The scientists in this study used the *random draw* approach to select a *sample* of people for the study. Because scientists cannot study everyone or everything in the United States or even everyone or everything in a particular group, they pick a *sample*. A *sample* is a number of people or things carefully selected because they are similar to the larger population. They are picked randomly, which means that everyone or everything in the whole population has an equal chance of being picked without showing preference. For this study, scientists used a computer-generated random list of household phone numbers from across the entire United States. Once a household was contacted by phone, a person in that household was asked a series of questions about their *outdoor recreation* activities.

Discovery

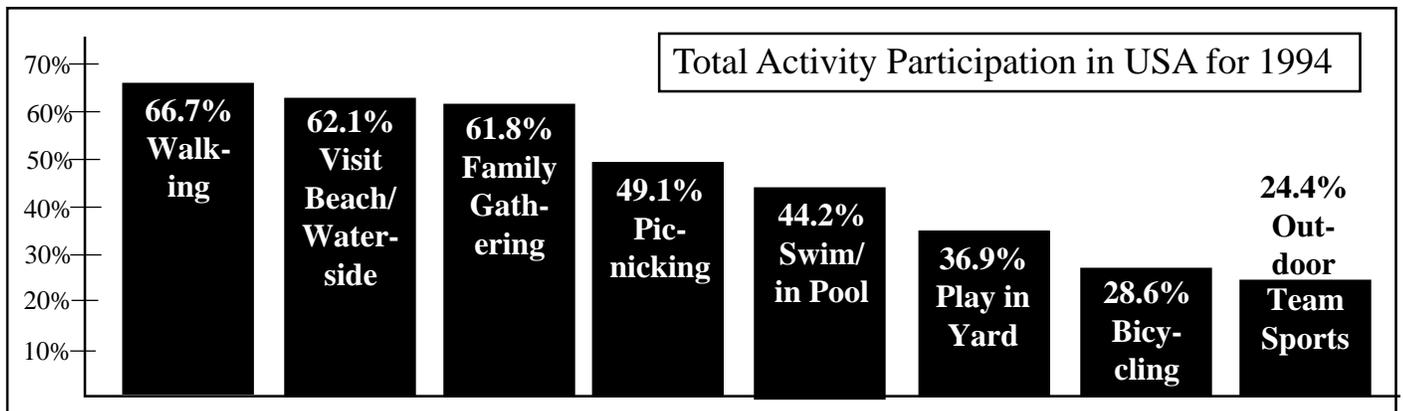
Brainstorm: Make a list of ten of your favorite things to do outside, such as bicycle riding, nature activities, and sports. A student volunteer can be picked to list these activities on the board. Each activity should be listed once, even if more than one person chose it. Then, go through the list and count the number of students who said they have done each of the activities in the past year. Calculate the percent of students who said they did each. (See page 20 for help with calculating percentages.) Save this list. You will be creating your own chart to show how you and your classmates participate in outdoor recreation

Introduction

Do you like to play outside? If you are like most Americans, you answered yes! Almost everyone in the United States enjoys *outdoor recreation*, which is an activity that is done outside for fun and enjoyment. But what if you couldn't go swimming, because there were no pools to swim in? Unless we understand what kinds of *outdoor recreation* activities people like, we cannot provide facilities and places for them to do the things they like to do. So that government and private businesses can provide the kinds of places and things that people want to do for *outdoor recreation*, scientist H. Ken Cordell and his colleagues studied what people across the

Results

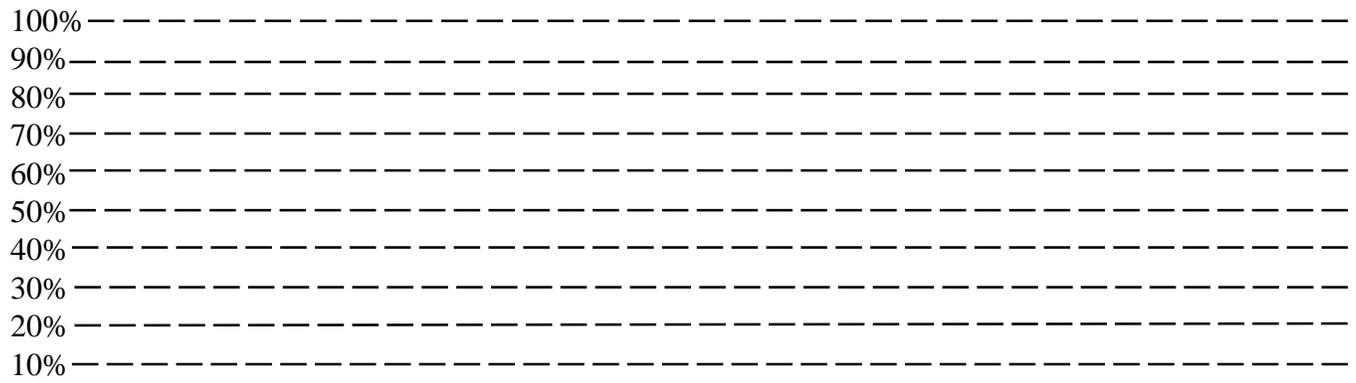
Dr. Cordell and his colleagues found that 94.5% of Americans said they participated in some form of *outdoor recreation*. Then the participants told them exactly which activities they took part in. Most activities are enjoyed by both males and females, but for some activities, males participate more than females. The scientists also found some differences in participation between younger and older people. What do you think they found? What they found was that for activities that take a lot of energy, younger people participate more often. For activities that don't require as much energy, older people participate as much as younger people. For example, older people don't do outdoor team sports very much, but they like to watch birds and wildlife, visit historic areas, go sightseeing, and visit nature centers. Another factor that influences what people do and where they go includes income. How and why do you think income influences participation?



Dr. Cordell and his colleagues found that *outdoor recreation* activities are becoming more diverse and more popular. Activities like snowboarding, roller-blading, and bungee jumping were unknown 20 years ago. They found that Americans continue to participate in *outdoor recreation*, and Dr. Cordell predicts that participation will continue to increase in the future.

Further Discovery

Using the bar chart at above as a guide, draw bars on the empty chart below that match five of the activities you listed at the beginning of this article. On the left side of the chart, you see percentages marked from 10% to 100%. Your teacher will help you construct the bar chart using those percentages. Use colored pencils to color each bar a different color. Compare your bar chart with your classmates'. Do they look the same? Why or why not? What does your chart tell you about your classmates' outdoor recreation activities?



Activities _____

Reflection

- 1 What are the advantages of using the telephone to ask people questions?

- 2 What are the disadvantages of using the telephone to ask quesitons?

- 3 What other ways could scientists find out what people like as outdoor recreation?

- 4 Do you agree with Dr. Cordell's prediction that participation in outdoor recreation will increase in the future?
Why or why not?

