



Hiking: Safety, Fitness, and Nature

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Hiking is one of the most accessible forms of outdoor recreation, integrating physical exercise with direct engagement in natural environments. Unlike competitive sports requiring specialized facilities, it accommodates a wide range of ages and fitness levels — from gentle forest trails to demanding multi-day mountain ascents. This adaptability, combined with low financial barriers, makes hiking an especially **sustainable** activity for building long-term cardiovascular health, muscular endurance, and psychological resilience.

Thorough preparation is essential before any hike, particularly in remote or mountainous terrain where conditions shift without warning. Experienced hikers study trail maps, assess weather forecasts, and assemble carefully chosen **supplies**: adequate water, calorie-dense food, reliable navigation tools, layered clothing, and basic first-aid equipment. In isolated environments, even minor oversights quickly prove **hazardous** — unexpected weather shifts or mounting physical fatigue can escalate into serious emergencies within hours of departure.

The health benefits of consistent hiking extend well beyond calorie expenditure, producing meaningful gains across physical and psychological dimensions. Activity on varied natural terrain builds strength, balance, and cardiovascular **endurance** in ways that mechanized exercise cannot replicate. Research consistently links regular nature exposure to reduced physiological stress markers, improved mood, and sharper cognitive function. Many hikers describe the experience of **solitude** in forests or mountain settings as uniquely restorative — offering mental clarity that modern, urban life rarely provides.

Trail safety depends on sound judgment more than expensive equipment. Hikers must follow marked paths, heed warning signs, and make conservative decisions when conditions are uncertain. Among the most serious **risks** are crossing swollen streams, continuing in deteriorating weather, and underestimating the compounding effects of altitude and fatigue. In remote areas where emergency response takes hours, these dangers multiply rapidly. Informing a trusted contact of one's intended route and return time is a fundamental safety **precaution**.

Hiking's growing popularity has heightened awareness of the environmental responsibilities accompanying access to natural landscapes. The internationally recognized Leave No Trace framework provides ethical hikers with evidence-based principles for minimizing human impact: proper waste disposal, use of durable trail surfaces, and respectful treatment of wildlife and vegetation. In practice, this means carrying out all litter, staying on established trails to prevent erosion, and limiting noise near sensitive habitats — practices that collectively constitute active environmental **stewardship**.

A. Vocabulary

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. sustainable _____ | a. the state of being alone in a peaceful way |
| 2. supplies _____ | b. the physical features of an area of land |
| 3. hazardous _____ | c. an action taken to prevent danger |
| 4. endurance _____ | d. the process of finding the correct way to go |
| 5. solitude _____ | e. able to continue for a long time without causing harm |
| 6. risks _____ | f. necessary items taken for a task or trip |
| 7. precaution _____ | g. dangerous or likely to cause harm |
| 8. stewardship _____ | h. the ability to continue through difficulty or effort |
| 9. terrain _____ | i. possibilities of danger or loss |
| 10. navigation _____ | j. the careful and responsible management of something |

B. True or False

- _____ 1. Hiking can be adapted to many ages and fitness levels.
- _____ 2. All hiking trails are dangerous and steep.
- _____ 3. Hikers should check weather reports before leaving.
- _____ 4. Preparation matters less on remote trails.
- _____ 5. Hiking can improve endurance and balance.
- _____ 6. Natural settings may improve mood and reduce anxiety.
- _____ 7. Hikers should ignore warning signs if they feel confident.
- _____ 8. Telling someone your planned route is a useful precaution.
- _____ 9. Leave No Trace means leaving food for animals.
- _____ 10. Hiking can teach environmental responsibility.

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: sustainable, supplies, hazardous, endurance, solitude, risks, precaution, stewardship, terrain, navigation

- 1. Good hiking _____ include water, food, and proper clothing.
- 2. Sudden bad weather can make a trail very _____.
- 3. Regular hiking can improve strength, balance, and _____.
- 4. Telling someone your route is an important safety _____.
- 5. Leave No Trace is a form of environmental _____.



D. Comprehension Questions

- 1. Why is preparation especially important in remote terrain?

- 2. How can hiking benefit mental health as well as physical health?

- 3. What does the Leave No Trace principle ask hikers to do?

E. Discussion Questions

- 1. Why do you think hiking feels different from exercise done indoors?

- 2. What responsibilities do people have when they enter natural environments?

Answer Key

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Source: Educational Materials

A. Vocabulary: 1-e, 2-f, 3-g, 4-h, 5-a, 6-i, 7-c, 8-j, 9-b, 10-d

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-T, 7-F, 8-T, 9-F, 10-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-supplies, 2-hazardous, 3-endurance, 4-precaution, 5-stewardship

D. Comprehension:

1. Because help may be far away and weather or darkness can create danger quickly.
2. It reduces anxiety, improves mood, and provides mental clarity.
3. To minimize human impact by taking trash out and protecting wildlife and plants.

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