

TAKE A WALK

Aside from being good exercise and guaranteed fun, these mini-walks are a great way to really look at and appreciate parts of the environment around you.



MATERIALS: Optional -- paper and pencils.

DOING IT:

1. Shape Walk: Look for *natural* shapes. Find two of each of the following: circle, square, rectangle, triangle, ellipse, diamond.

2. Colour Walk: List as many colours as you can spot. Or, choose one colour and find objects of that colour. Distinguish between lighter and darker shades.

3. Change Walk: Make a list of all the changing things around you (e.g. bird landing, plant bending in breeze, twig breaking as you pass). Which changes aren't reversible?

4. Question Walk: Ask questions and don't worry about answers. The only "answer" allowed is another question. Questions must be about things on the walk. How many questions can people pose? What's the longest question chain (i.e. a question that leads to a related question) you can make? Example of a question chain: Do you see any living things on that stump? Does rotten wood hold water like a sponge? How many colours can you see on the stump? What animal does the stump look like? (If you want, you can talk about answers after the walk!)

5. Stop, Look, and Listen Walk: Walk for a certain number of steps. Stop for 30 seconds. Record all objects heard and seen. Repeat.

6. Coin-Flip Walk: To start the walk, flip a coin: heads go right, tails go left. Look for unusual or interesting objects. Stop to look at them closely. At each stopping point, flip the coin to determine a new direction.

7. Tree Walk: Pick up a leaf and show it to everyone. People must search for trees that have the same type of leaf.

8. Centimetre Walk: Identify things that are one centimetre long, wide, high, or around.

9. Silent Walk: Walk quietly, without speaking. Listen carefully. Make as little noise as possible to discover how many sounds you can hear.

10. Up, Down, Around Walk: While walking, look for objects from one field of view -- looking up or down, for example. On the next walk, change your view.

11. ABC Walk: Find living and nonliving things that begin with each letter of the alphabet. If certain letters are posing serious problems, people can use an adjective beginning with the required letter to describe an object.

12. Backward Walk: Turn around and walk while facing where you've been.

Do you know the ABCs of the environment? The environment has "abiotic" (A), "biotic" (B), and "cultural" (C) parts. Parts of the environment that are alive or were once alive are called biotic (from the Greek word for "life"). Some parts of the environment are not alive and have never been alive (e.g. sunlight, water, minerals). They are abiotic (the prefix "a" comes from the Greek word meaning "not"). Parts of the environment that are made by human beings or which have been changed from their original forms are cultural (a word that refers to everything humans think, do, say, or make).

Topics: Environmental Awareness; Senses.

