



# COTTONWOOD INSTITUTE

→ The Explore Outside Program





## THE EXPLORE OUTSIDE PROGRAM

CI has supported thousands of young people to learn to love the outdoors and has helped transform them into environmental leaders and changemakers. Through our Explore Outside Program, middle school and high school students will build connections with the natural world and develop critical 21st century skills. Students will receive hands-on instruction from trained CI Instructors who will lead them through team building activities and games, teach them about plants and animals, cover topics like sustainability and zero waste, and help them build their outdoor skills like knot-tying and compass + navigation. Students can even have the chance to apply everything they learn during an overnight trip!

## PROGRAM GOALS

- **Relationship Building:** Build community and shared purpose by developing positive peer relationships
- **Nature Awareness:** Spend time observing, reflecting, and developing awareness during time outdoors
- **Environmental Literacy:** Create a sense of belonging and personal connection to the natural world
- **Outdoor Skills:** Develop skills and tools to safely explore the outdoors in both wilderness and urban areas

## GROUP DETAILS

- Group size: 20 students (Can vary)
- CI Instructors: 2 (Can vary)
- Chaperones: 3 (Can vary)
- Grades: Middle School or High School
- Length: Can vary, field day and overnight options available

program description

# THE EXPLORE OUTSIDE PROGRAM



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Example Scope and Sequence

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5/Field Day
<b>Theme</b>	<i>Connecting People &amp; Place</i>	<i>Nature Awareness</i>	<i>Survival Skills</i>	<i>Shelter Building</i>	<i>Outdoor Skills/Program Wrap Up</i>
<b>Overview</b>	Our first day will focus on activities that promote relationship building and positive group identity, while also orienting students to the land and environment.	On the second day, we'll explore the urban and natural environments by using our senses to pay attention to the world around us. We'll play games and continue building a sense of community.	After we've connected with the natural space around us, we'll begin learning skills to survive with and on the land! Today will serve as a primer for the rest of the week's outdoor skills. We'll learn how to use tools like landmarks and compasses to get found and stay found! Students will practice using a compass and design their own scavenger hunts.	On day four, we'll take our survival skills to the next level by learning about shelter– who needs it? How can we build it?	The field day is the culmination of our students' experience! Students will build team and community and practice outdoor skills while immersed in the outdoors. We'll close out by spending time immersed in our surroundings and reflecting on our experience together.
<b>Possible Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Opening circle</li> <li>-Name games</li> <li>-Setting group norms</li> <li>-Nature Sculptures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Teambuilding</li> <li>-Name games</li> <li>-Sit spot</li> <li>-Camouflage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Teambuilding</li> <li>-Survival rule of 3s</li> <li>-10 essentials relay</li> <li>-Compass basics</li> <li>-DIY compass course</li> <li>-Scavenger hunt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Teambuilding</li> <li>-Knot tying</li> <li>-The 5 Ws</li> <li>-Shelter building</li> <li>-Overnight prep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Leave No Trace charades</li> <li>-Outdoor skills stations</li> <li>-Camp cooking</li> <li>-Sit spot</li> <li>-Closing circle/closure activities</li> </ul>



# Example PROGRAM ACTIVITY



**ACTIVITY:**  
DIY Compass Course

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Students will apply key concepts for compass navigation, including counting paces and setting a bearing
- Students will develop skills to increase their comfort in the exploration of outdoor spaces

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:**

After learning compass navigation basics, students will put their new knowledge to the test to create their very own compass courses! Students will work in teams to set bearings, count paces, and design an orienteering scavenger hunt for their peers. Once each team has completed their course set up, students will switch and practice their navigation skills to discover a secret prize at the end!

# CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT



Cottonwood Institute strives to align our programming to support student learning through hands-on, interdisciplinary outdoor experiences. The Explore Outside program builds on the following Colorado State Standards:



## READING, WRITING, & COMMUNICATING

a. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully; pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others; and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective.



## SOCIAL STUDIES

GLE 2A. Identify, evaluate, and communicate strategies to respond to constraints placed on human systems by the physical environment.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

5. Exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.