

Activity Descriptions

Activities are grouped by theme: Challenge/Adventure, Outdoor Pursuits, History, Science, and All Camp

Each description lists the time an activity **may** fill, along with any age or group size requirements. Actual activity time will be determined by number and type of activities selected and total time available in your camp schedule.

CR denotes activities which require all participants and chaperones complete a **Challenge Activities Release and Assumption of Risk form**.

CHALLENGE/ADVENTURE THEME

Individual and/or group challenge characterizes this theme. Students solve problems through communication, cooperation, and sheer determination. Debriefings focus on life applications.

Classes larger than 16 students will usually be split into two patrols. Some activities have age minimums due to height or maturity requirements. Most activities in this theme require the *Challenge Activities Release and Assumption of Risk* form for all participants and chaperones.

Activities are listed in order from low perceived risk to high perceived risk and from group challenge to individual challenge.

COMMUNICATION (*Half Block, low perceived risk, group challenge, 3rd grade and up, best for 4th grade and up*)

These activities stress communication and listening skills. The cornerstone activity is **The Beast**; students are divided into small teams where one member of each team will describe the "Beast" to the rest of the team. Team members must then obtain the parts and assemble an exact copy of the "Beast", following the directions given by this observer. Other complementary communication activities may precede and follow. May be combined with **Group Building Activities** or **Teams Course** for a full block.

GROUP BUILDING ACTIVITIES, GBAs (*Half Block, low perceived risk, group challenge, 3rd grade and up, best for 4th grade and up*)

A variety of no or low-prop challenges develop effective group skills such as communication and cooperation. May take place indoors or outside. Some common activities include group juggle, hula hoop pass, minefield, and more. May be paired with **Teams Course** to create a full block.

TEAMS COURSE; non-spotted group initiatives/low ropes (*CR, Full or Half Block, medium perceived risk, group challenge, 3rd grade and up, best for 5th grade and up*)

A series of outdoor challenge stations test students' abilities to solve problems through communication and cooperation. The course includes some classic teambuilding

elements such as whale watch, trolleys, stump to stump, all aboard, squeeze box, and the muses. Instructors tailor activities to the group's needs. May be paired with **Group Building Activities**.

The following challenge/adventure activities focus on individual challenge with the support of a group rather than whole group challenge. Groups of more than 16 to 18 students/participants will be split into two patrols which may each need a teacher or adult chaperone, depending on scheduling.

SHERWOOD FOREST; *low ropes (CR, Half or Full Block, medium perceived risk, group and individual challenge, Spring 5th grade and up)*

This teambuilding area consists of several challenge activities constructed of wire or rope and wood. Students are spotters for each other as they cheer on, support, or lift the individuals or pairs who are completing the challenge. Activities may involve balancing, lifting teammates, or swinging on a rope. This activity requires safety instruction in spotting and may require a lead-in warm up activity.

THE WALL *(CR, Half or Full Block - medium to high perceived risk, group and individual challenge, Spring 5th grade and up)*

Students must work all together to lift each student, one at a time, safely over a ten foot high wall and onto the platform at the top. The wall requires planning, communication, teamwork, trust, and individual challenge. This activity requires safety instruction in spotting and may require a lead-in warm up activity.

CLIMBING TOWER *(CR, Full Block – high perceived risk, individual challenge, 3rd grade and up for staff belay, spring 5th grade and up for team belay)*

Students push their personal limits on the thirty foot outdoor tower climb. Trained staff fit climbing harnesses and helmets on students. Each student will challenge themselves to climb as high as they can. Students in spring 5th grade and up learn a “team belay” system where the students hold the rope while a teammate climbs. Students in 3rd grade through fall of 5th grade are belayed by OEC staff. Requires classroom teacher's assistance on the ground. Advance scheduling required.

HIGH ROPES COURSE *(CR, Full Block – high perceived risk, individual challenge, Spring 5th grade and up)*

Test what you can do thirty feet in the air! Trained staff will gear up participants with harnesses, sling lines, and helmets and encourage them to challenge themselves on our 15 element course. The high ropes course presents an individual physical and emotional challenge. Course is accessed via a spiral staircase leading to a solid platform. Participants must be wearing all safety gear in order to go up the stairs. Requires chaperone's participation and assistance up on the platform. For spring 5th grade and up. Advance scheduling required.

OUTDOOR PURSUITS THEME – Students will learn an outdoor skill or participate in an outdoor activity.

ACTIVE GAMES (*Half Block*)

Students enjoy learning games and running off energy. Whether they learn some old games such as “kick the can” or a camp favorite “camouflage”, students will enjoy playing hard and having fun with their class.

ARCHERY (*CR, Half Block*)

Students develop skills in using a simple bow and arrow. They will learn safe techniques and practice shooting at our archery range in our Recreation Room. Classes with more than 16 students will be split into two patrols. While one patrol is at archery class, the other patrol will have a different half block activity. Requires classroom teacher’s participation for coaching and supervising at the archery range.

BOULDERING (*CR, Half Block*)

This activity challenges individuals to horizontally traverse the lowest portion of our climbing wall for approximately 40 feet, using hand holds to keep them on the wall. Requires safety instruction in spotting and may require a lead-in warm up activity. Classes larger than 18 students will be split into 2 patrols.

CANOEING (*CR, Full Block*)

Students will enjoy paddling around on Clear Lake! They receive instructions, life jackets, and paddles. The instructor demonstrates some basic strokes and students try their new skills in the marked practice area. Time and weather permitting, the group will then go for a paddle along the lakeshore. Lifeguard or watercraft safety person on duty. 1:10 adult to student ratio, including lifeguard, classroom teacher, and OEC staff. Requires classroom teacher’s participation on the water, including having students in the teacher’s canoe. Advance scheduling required.

COOKOUT (*Full Block + Lunch*)

Students first work in groups to prepare their meal at the lodge. Next, they hike to a cookout site and learn the basics of fire building and fire safety. Finally, students work in small groups to build fires and cook lunch outside. This activity takes a full block and replaces lunch in the dining hall. If an overnight school group attends camp for only 3 days, it may not be possible to schedule cookout. In that case, fire building will be scheduled instead.

FIND YOUR WAY; maps and shelters (*Full Block*)

Students are introduced to essential survival principles, types of maps, and the basics of map reading. As a group, they navigate to a location on camp and perform a survival related task such as building lean-to shelters. Great hands-on experience!

FIRE BUILDING (*Half Block*)

In this class students learn the basics of fire safety and fire building techniques. They will build small fires and possibly roast a marshmallow. This activity does not replace a meal in the dining hall. For a full block of outdoor fire and cooking experience, please choose **Cookout**. If selecting cookout, please do not also select fire building.

ORIENTEERING; compass use (*Half Block*)

Students will be introduced to the parts of a compass and how to follow a bearing. They will have an opportunity to practice this new skill on our short orienteering course.

SURVIVAL; essential items, shelters, and fire (*Full Block*)

Students learn about the “Rule of 3’s” and elements of trip planning for survival. Then students practice shelter building out in the woods and attempt to make a fire. Great hands-on experience!

The following activities may be scheduled in the evenings along with All-Camp and other activities from all themes.

CAMPFIRE, single class sized (*Evening Half-Block*)

Create memories at a small evening campfire. Learn songs and tell stories with a fire in the background. This is usually combined with another activity to fill the evening.

NIGHT EXPLORATION / EVENING HIKE (*Evening*)

Head outside after dark on a “hike” with stops for sensory awareness activities to experience the night and its sounds. Discover that you really can see at night! During Daylight Savings Time or when sunset is later, the emphasis will be on senses and the hike will not take place in the dark. Can be a full block or paired with **Campfire**.

HISTORY THEME – Go back in time to when Michigan was just being settled. Try a pioneer craft. Discover firsthand what it was like to travel and settle in the frontier.

OLSON’S MERCANTILE (*Half Block*)

Pioneer struggles come alive! Students form pioneer “families” and go to Olson’s Mercantile to purchase all of the things that they will need for their trip across the frontier to settle in the “west”. After making their purchases, the students will walk a trail with typical encounters of the 1830’s trail west. The value of their purchases will be tested. This activity is often paired with **Pioneer Cabin** for a complete history experience.

PIONEER CABIN (*Half Block*)

Travel back in time to the 1830’s by visiting our Pioneer Cabin. Students will experience pioneer life through different activities including a tour of the homestead, candle making, or trying common hand tools. This activity is often paired with **Olson’s Mercantile** for a complete history experience.

SCIENCE THEME Explore and discover scientific concepts with hands-on activities in the outdoors.

ADAPTATIONS (*Full Block, with animals*)

Students are introduced to the basics of adaptations through visits to some of our live animals such as reptiles, birds, or amphibians, or by viewing our mammal study skins and skulls. Option 1: Students visit all 5 classes of animals for a unique comparison opportunity. Option 2: Students visit 1 or 2 classes of animals and are then challenged

to “Build a Better Beast”. They must design/draw their “beast” with several adaptations to survive within its habitat. Please specify whether you prefer to visit all 5 animal classes (amphibians, birds, mammals, reptiles, fish) or visit 1 or 2 animal classes.

ANIMALS (*Half Block for one or two animals, Full Block for all animals*)

- **Amphibians** Students learn about the natural history of amphibians and have the opportunity to see and touch some of our resident live animals. A live feeding may be a possibility.
- **Birds** Students will go to our bird watching cabin to observe wild birds in their natural habitat from the comfort of an enclosed cabin. Students will stop by the aviary to view our Great Horned Owl and Red Tailed Hawk. They will also get to meet our Eastern Screech Owl up close and learn about how he came to be at camp.
- **Mammals** Utilizing a set of study skins and skulls, students are encouraged to touch and observe various mammals and their characteristics.
- **Reptiles** Students will learn about reptiles and their characteristics and may have an opportunity to meet and touch our live reptiles.

ANIMALS IN THE WOODS (*Half Block*)

This very active survival simulation provides experience with some interconnections in the ecosystem. Students play the roles of predator and prey. They need to get food and stay alive until the whistle blows. Interconnections such as predator-prey, competition, and parasitism will be discussed.

CARSON'S CORNER (*Half Block*)

Rachel Carson was a pioneer of the environmental movement and a proponent of encouraging children to explore and wonder. Carson's Corner, named after Rachel Carson, is a hands-on activity cabin. Learn about recycling, senses, tree rings, the water cycle, and much more. This is a great evening activity as well.

COMMUNITY MEETING (*Full Block, often evening or Friday morning*)

This is a simulation activity in which campers are told that the school district is considering selling Clear Lake Camp. The students are assigned roles and are asked to actively take on that role when a developer comes to present plans for the site development. How will the plants, animals, and other community members react to the proposal? This activity is done with all camp classrooms together in the style of a real community meeting, complete with mayor and developer. 2 classroom minimum.

EARTHWALK / SENSES HIKE (*Half Block*)

Take a walk in the woods full of affective activities and see what you may discover! Instructors will include stops along the way for activities to increase sensory awareness and help students acclimatize to being outdoors. This is a great first day activity to get students outside, exploring the camp, and getting in touch with nature in a non-lecture environment. Favorite activities include **Hug a Tree, Magic Spots, Sky Eyes, Underworld, Rainbow Chips, Leaf Slides, Micro Parks, Sound Off, and more!**

ECOSYSTEMS *(Half Block)*

Explore the different ecosystems that make up camp; hardwood forest, pine forest, prairie, lake, and several others by hiking through them and learning about the components that make up that area. Students will also learn about food chains and food webs of local ecosystems.

POND *(Full or Half Block)*

Students get their hands dirty collecting and identifying critters and using microscopes.

- **Pond Exploration** Our 270-foot boardwalk allows students to get out into the middle of our 4-acre pond. Students will use nets and hand lenses to collect and study macro-invertebrates. Their collection data will be recorded and used to determine the health of the pond.
- **Pond Lab** In our indoor lab, students use microscopes to view the tiny plants and animals of the pond.

RECYCLING *(Half Block)*

This class uses various activities to review recycling both in nature and by humans.

- **Recycle Relay** Students model how long it takes materials to breakdown in a landfill or in nature vs if it is recycled.
- **Landfill** In a visit to the “Clear Lake Camp Landfill” students discover that many items we throw away could have been recycled.
- **Camp Compost** Students visit the camp’s compost bins to see first-hand how nature recycles to create soil from our food scraps.

ROV- REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLES *(Full Block)*

Become an engineer, our most popular STEM offering. Students are introduced to the history of remotely operated vehicles and given a mission to complete. Working in small groups, they receive a bucket of vehicle parts including propellers, control box and motors. They are challenged to create a submersible vehicle, test its design, and drive it in the lake. If the weather is poor, students will drive their vehicles in an indoor test tank.

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE *(Half Block)*

With water becoming more of a global concern, this class will explore the water cycle as well as how much fresh water is actually available. There will be discussions about water concerns and how students can take action. The other component of this activity will be learning about watersheds and modeling how water interacts with the earth and how people interact with water sources. They will model a watershed and dams and other man-made impacts on water.

ALL CAMP Offered one, two or three evenings a week for the entire group in camp. They are active, fun, social opportunities. Traditionally we schedule **Battle of the Game Shows** or **Six Socks** on the first or second evening and **Rapid Foot Movement** on the final evening.

BATTLE OF THE GAME SHOWS *(Evening)*

Students are broken up into random groups to cycle through a series of camp style game show games such as “Win, Lose or Draw”, “Outburst”, “Liars’ Club”, “Jeopardy”,

and “Wheel of Fortune”. Traditional first or second night activity when it is dark after dinner or as an evening rainy day option.

CAMPFIRE with stories and songs (*Evening Half Block*)

Gather the whole camp together either outside or in the Rec Room for camp songs, stories, and staff skits. Location will be determined by weather and group size. Outdoor area seats 80 maximum, including seating on the ground. If held indoors there will not be a fire. Will be combined with another short activity to fill the evening.

RAPID FOOT MOVEMENT a.k.a. RFM (*Evening*)

Everyone enjoys some lively music and foot stomping. Students are taught a variety of dances, including some classics (Hokey Pokey), some new (Cupid Shuffle, Cotton Eye Joe), and the ever popular Virginia Reel. Since we don’t want students to worry about “partner” dancing we call this activity Rapid Foot Movement and downplay the “couple” aspect of dancing. Traditional final evening activity. Get ready for a night of fun and send us your dance requests!

SIX SOCKS (*Evening*)

Part “capture the flag” and part “steal the bacon” Students work together to protect their own three socks (a tube sock stuffed with other socks) from being stolen out of the sock corral but are trying to capture the opponent’s three socks to win the game. A great outdoor evening energy burner! Traditional first or second evening activity when it is still light after dinner. Not available when sunset is before 8pm.