

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

IN NATURE'S CLASSROOM

- I More computers! Longer school days! These are among the usual prescriptions for improving education. But proponents of forest schools recommend something different: get young people into nature's classroom!
- II The forest school idea originated in Sweden in the 1950s as a way to teach young children about nature. Primary-school teachers soon noticed that children who attended forest schools before beginning school had more self-confidence and social skills than their peers.
- III Expanding to include older children, the programme gradually caught on throughout Scandinavia and, beginning in the mid-1990s, in the UK. Now, thousands of children and teenagers throughout the UK spend about 10% of their school time outdoors – ideally, in a woodland area. But, successful programmes have been implemented in less-than-ideal conditions, including under a tree in the school playground. “The site isn't that important,” says Sally York, who is employed by Scotland's Forestry Commission and is helping to establish forest schools there, “because forest schools are really more a technique than a place.”
- IV The “technique” involves doing a variety of practical outdoor tasks and having a lot of fun while doing so. A typical forest-school day might include observing insects, planting saplings, collecting wood to make a fire for cooking food, or building a temporary wind shelter.
- V Educators involved with forest schools say that the activities improve important skills. Younger pupils expand their vocabulary and become less shy about speaking. Furthermore, the many group tasks that are done in all age groups encourage effective communication and cooperation among students. In addition, many of the tasks sharpen students' observational skills. Even maths skills improve. Simple calculations become more fun when they involve counting insects or flowers. And at higher maths levels, geometry, for instance, becomes more interesting and understandable when used to design and build a wind shelter.
- VI Of course, everyone benefits from the fresh air, open space and physical exercise – which many of today's urban kids lack. That alone may explain the increasing popularity of forest schools.

1 Choose the correct answer.

1. “Nature's classroom”
 - a. originated in Sweden.
 - b. means “the outdoors”.
 - c. is in the forest school in Sweden.
2. Forest schools
 - a. are only for young children.
 - b. are operated by 10% of schools in the UK.
 - c. don't have to be in forests.

2 Find words in the text that mean:

1. solutions (paragraph I)
2. people who support an idea (paragraph I)
3. small forest (paragraph III)
4. young trees (paragraph IV)
5. improve (paragraph V)

3 Are the following statements T (true) or F (false)? Find evidence in the text to support your answers.

- 1. Forest school activities don't influence young pupils' verbal skills.
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- 2. School subjects such as maths are utilised in forest-school activities.
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- 3. At forest schools, geometry is introduced to younger students.
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4 Write a composition of about 100-120 words. Choose one option.

1. Describe a place that you think would make a good site for a forest school.
2. Explain why you would / wouldn't want to participate in a forest school.