



Human Activity – Teacher Notes

A fictional fun extension

In Douglas Adams' famous science fiction book "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe"; he describes the fabulously beautiful planet Bethselamin. "It is now so worried about the cumulative erosion by ten billion visiting tourists a year that any imbalance between the amount you eat and the amount you excrete whilst on the planet is surgically removed from your bodyweight when you leave; so every time you go to the lavatory there it is vitally important to get a receipt".

Should this technique be used for visitors into our National Parks? Write a reasoned scientific response below.



Suggest three arguments for and against Douglas Adams' simplistic idea.

Argument for	Argument against
The threat of surgery would be an incentive towards maintaining constant mass of the planet	Expensive in goods and in trained specialists to maintain
Threatening people with surgery would dissuade casual visitors	We excrete water and ions through sweating which is not measured by this method
Tourists might prefer a virtual tour which would be pain free and less expensive	We excrete water when we breathe
An incentive for those who diet during the visit. They can take away souvenirs	People have differing digestive rates and breakdown food at different rates
	Young people need more food to build their bodies and produce energy than older people
	The tourists would breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide increasing its percentage in the atmosphere