



School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism

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Definitions of Leisure and Recreation

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Introduction

The following definitions of *leisure* and *recreation* have been culled from the literature and are presented, without commentary, as a resource which readers may wish to draw on from time to time.

1. Leisure

1.1. Dictionary Definitions

The condition of having one's time free from the demands of work or duty.

Macquarie Dictionary

- Freedom or spare time provided by the cessation of activities;
- free time as a result of temporary exemption from work or duties;
- a time at one's own command that is free of engagements or responsibilities;
- a period of unemployed time;
- opportunity provided by free time.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary

Free time that can be used for rest, recreation, etc.

Collins Australian Pocket English Dictionary

1.2. Definitions from the Literature

Leisure is a state of mind which ordinarily is characterised by un-obligated time and willing optimism. It can involve extensive activity or no activity. The key ingredient is an attitude which fosters a peaceful and productive co-existence with the elements in one's environment.

Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation/Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation (1980) *Recreation Working Paper*, Adelaide: ACHPER Publications, p 3.

Leisure, then, is a block of unoccupied time, spare time, or free time when we are free to rest or do what we choose. Leisure is time beyond that which is required for existence, the things which we must do, biologically, to stay, alive (that is, eat, sleep, eliminate, medicate, and so on): and subsistence, the things we must do to make a living as in work, or prepare to make a living as in school, or pay for what we want done if we do not do it ourselves. Leisure is time in which our feelings of compulsion should be minimal It is discretionary time, the time to be used according to our own judgement or choice.

Charles K. Brightbill (1960) *The Challenge of Leisure*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, p. 4.

Leisure is largely discretionary time, to be used as one chooses. It excludes existence and subsistence time, time spent in socially or group determined activities in which the individual would prefer not to participate.

Marion Clawson & Jack L. Knetsch (1974) Leisure in modern America. In J. F. Murphy (ed.) *Concepts of Leisure*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 78-90 (p. 78).

.. the time available to the individual when the disciplines of work, sleep and basic needs have been met.

Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group (1970) *Countryside Recreation Glossary*. Cheltenham, UK, Countryside Commission, p. 5.

*Leisure is considered primarily as a condition, sometimes referred to as a state of being, an attitude of mind or a quality of experience. .. It is distinguished **by** the individual's perceived freedom to act and distinguished **from** conditions imposed by necessity. .. It is assumed to be pleasurable and, although it may appeal because of certain anticipated benefits, it is intrinsically motivated: it is an end in itself and valuable for its own sake.*

Grant Cushman and Allan Laidler (1990) *Recreation, Leisure and Social Policy*. Occasional Paper No. 4, Canterbury, NZ, Dept of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, Lincoln University, p.1.

Leisure consists of a number of occupations in which the individual may indulge of his own free will - either to rest, to amuse himself, to add to his knowledge or improve his skills disinterestedly or to increase his voluntary participation in the life of the community after discharging his professional, family and social duties.

Joffre Dumazedier (1960) Current problems of the sociology of leisure. *International Social Science Journal*, 4(4), 522-531.

Leisure is activity - apart from the obligations of work, family, and society - to which the individual turns at will, for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his creative capacity.

Joffre Dumazedier (1974) Leisure and the social system. In J. F. Murphy (ed.) *Concepts of Leisure*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, p 133.

Free time after the practical necessities of life have been attended to.

H. Fairchild (ed.) (1970) *Dictionary of Sociology*. Westport, CN, Greenwood Press, p. 251.

... that sphere of life not occupied in working, travelling to work or sleeping.

Anthony Giddens (1964) Notes on the concept of play and leisure. *Sociological Review*, March, 73-89.

Leisure is the time which an individual has free from work or other duties and which may be utilised for the purposes of relaxation, diversion, social achievement, or personal development.

N.P Gist & S. F. Fava (1964) *Urban Society*. New York, Crowell, p. 411.

*Leisure is living in relative freedom from the external compulsive forces of one's **culture and** physical environment so as to be able to act from internally compelling love in ways which are personally pleasing, intuitively worthwhile, and provide a basis for faith.*

Geoffrey Godbey (1985) *Leisure in Your Life*. State College, PA, Venture, p. 9.

.. an activity which involves pursuit of truth and self-understanding. It is an act of aesthetic, psychological, religious and philosophical contemplation.

David E. Gray (1971) This alien thing called leisure. Paper presented at Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, 8 July, quoted in J. F. Murphy (ed.) *Concepts of Leisure*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, p. 42.

.. leisure refers to free time, free, that is, from the need to be concerned about maintenance.

Edward Gross (1963) A functional approach to leisure analysis. In E. O. Smigel (ed.) *Work and Leisure*. New Haven, CN, College & University Press, 41-52. (p. 41).

.. when I use the term 'leisure', I am talking about human experience, characterised by intrinsic motivation and/or satisfaction; by a subjective sense of freedom to choose and of freedom from constraint; and by the understanding that it is accepted by our own reference group as being leisure.

Elery Hamilton-Smith (1985) Can the arts be leisure? *World Leisure and Recreation*, 27(3), 15-19.

Leisure consists of relatively self-determined activity-experience that falls into one's economically free-time roles, that is seen as leisure by participants, that is psychologically pleasant in anticipation and recollection, that potentially covers the whole range of commitment and intensity, that contains characteristic norms and constraints, and that provides opportunities for recreation, personal growth and service to others.

Max Kaplan (1975) *Leisure: Theory and Practice*. New York, John Wiley, p. 26.

Leisure is 'nonwork'. That is, leisure is not remunerative, not required by social expectations, and not necessary for status or survival. However, all nonwork is not considered leisure. Theorists have not agreed about how much nonwork should be defined as leisure.

John R. Kelly (1972) Work and leisure: a simplified paradigm. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 4(1), 50-62.

Leisure, then ... is experience with a variety of components that can be identified and analysed. However, every leisure experience is also a new creation with the following elements:

- *Leisure is decision, an act as well as a state. Decision is not external to the phenomenon but integral to its nature.*
- *Leisure is creation, a product of decision and action.*
- *Leisure is a process, not fixed but developing and created in its time and place.*
- *Leisure is situated, constructed in an ever-new context.*
- *Leisure is production in the sense that its meaning is always reproduced in its situation rather than appropriated from some external source.*
- *Leisure is an act, whole and complex with its history, emotion, interpretation, episodic development, and telos'.*

John R. Kelly (1987) *Freedom to Be: A New Sociology of Leisure*. New York, Macmillan, p. 49.

.. the time we are free from the more obvious and formal duties which a paid job or other obligatory occupation imposes upon us.

George Lundberg, Mirra Komarovsky and Mary Alice McInnery (1934) *Leisure - A Suburban Study*. New York, Columbia University Press, p. 2.

The most common conceptualisation views leisure as that portion of time which remains when time for work and the basic requirements for existence have been satisfied. ..Leisure can be viewed as nonwork behaviour in which people engage during free time. .. If we accept the notion of prepotency and the idea of different levels of need, then we can re-state the Aristotelean definition of leisure. Leisure is the state or condition of being free from the urgent demands of lower level needs.

James F. Murphy (1974) *Concepts of Leisure: Philosophical Implications*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, pp. 72, 109, 153.

.. an opportunity to engage in some kind of activity, whether vigorous or relatively passive, which is not required by daily necessities.

Martin H. Neumeyer and Esther S. Neumeyer (1958) *Leisure and Recreation*. New York, Ronald Press, p. 17.

Leisure is time free from work and other obligations, it also encompasses activities which are characterised by a feeling of comparative freedom.

Stanley R. Parker (1976) *The Sociology of Leisure*. London, Allen & Unwin, p. 48.

Leisure is: free time, ie:

- *Non-work*
- *Non-obligated*
- *Non-constrained.*

Jim Parrv and Jonathan Long (1988) *Immaculate concepts? Paper to the 2nd International Conference of the Leisure Studies Association*, University of Sussex, Brighton, England, 29 June - 3 July (Authors: Leeds Univ. & Leeds Polytechnic).

.. Leisure is related to time, and the whole of nonwork time in particular, and .. recreation is related to the specific activities pursued in that leisure time. But the distinction is a convention, and its rigid application can occasionally stifle a full exploration of the values and satisfactions of the leisure experience.

Allan J. Patmore (1983) *Recreation and Resources*. Oxford, Blackwell, p. 6.

Leisure, it must be clearly understood, is a mental and spiritual attitude - it is not simply the result of external factors, it is not the inevitable result of spare time, a holiday, a weekend or a vacation. It is, in the first place, an attitude of mind, a condition of the soul, and is utterly contrary to the ideal of 'worker' in each and every one of the three aspects ... work as activity, as toil, as a social function. .. Compared with the exclusive ideal of work as activity, leisure implies (in the first place) an attitude of non-activity, of inward calm, of silence; it means not being 'busy', but letting things happen. .. Leisure is a form of silence, of that silence which is the prerequisite of the apprehension of reality: only the silent hear and those who do not remain silent do not hear. Silence, as it is used in this context, recreation: does not mean 'dumbness' or 'noiselessness'; it means more nearly that the soul's power to 'answer' to the reality of the world is left undisturbed. For leisure is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude, and it is not only the occasion but also the capacity for steeping oneself in the whole of creation.

Josef Pieper (1965) *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. London, Fontana, p. 43.

... regarding leisure as relatively freely undertaken nonwork activity is broadly consistent with everyday use of the term, and can also be a penetrating sociological formula.

Kenneth Roberts (1978) *Contemporary Society and the Growth of Leisure*. London, Longman, p. 3.

... the real dividing line between the things we call work and the things we call leisure is that in leisure, however active we may be, we make our own choices and our own decisions; we feel for the time being that our life is our own.

Raymond Williams (1961) Work and leisure. *The Listener*, May 25, 926-927.

Leisure is discretionary time, or time when a person is free to do as he chooses. Leisure is unobligated time - free from prior commitments to physiological or social needs'.

T. S. Yukic (1970) *Fundamentals of Recreation*. 2nd edn, New York, Harper & Row, p. 5.

2. Recreation

2.1. Dictionary Definitions

Refreshment by means of some pastime, agreeable exercise, or the like.

Macquarie Dictionary

Re-create: to renew or enliven through the influence of pleasurable surroundings; to refresh after wearying toil or anxiety, usually by change or diversion; the act of recreating or the state of being recreated: refreshment of the strength and spirits after toil; diversion, play; a means of getting diversion or entertainment.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary

Any form of play, amusement, etc. used for refreshment of body or mind.

Collins Australian Pocket English Dictionary

2.2. Definitions from the Literature

Simply defined, recreation refers to experiences and activities chosen and pursued by the individual in his/her free time; the basis being that the experience sought and activities pursued, in the real sense of the word, 're-creates' the individual so that he/she may be refreshed to enable him/her to resume daily obligations, whatever those may be.

John Ap (1986) Recreation trends and implications for government. In R. Castle, D. Lewis & J. Mangan (eds) *Work, Leisure and Technology*. Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 167-83 (p. 167).

Recreation is any pursuit engaged upon during leisure time, other than pursuits to which people are normally 'highly committed' ([the latter includes] such things as optional shopping, overtime, secondary work, house repairs, car maintenance, further education, homework, child care, religion and politics').

Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group (1970) *Countryside Recreation Glossary*, Cheltenham, UK, Countryside Commission, p. 7.

Recreation is considered as activity through which leisure may be experienced and enjoyed but it is also seen as a social institution, socially organised for social purposes.

Grant Cushman and Allan Laidler (1990) *Recreation, Leisure and Social Policy*. Occasional Paper No. 4, Canterbury, NZ, Dept of Parks, Recreation & Tourism. Lincoln University, p. 2.

Any activity pursued during leisure, either individual or collective, that is free and pleasurable, having its own immediate appeal, not impelled by a delayed reward beyond itself, or by any immediate necessity.

Fairchild, H. (ed.) (1970) *Dictionary of Sociology*. Westport, CN, Greenwood Press, p. 251 (orig. pub. 1944).

Recreation is an emotional condition within an individual human being that flows from a feeling of well-being and satisfaction. It is characterised by feelings of mastery, achievement, exhilaration, acceptance, success, personal worth and pleasure. .. It reinforces a positive self-image. Recreation is a response to aesthetic experience, achievement of a person's goals, or positive feedback from others. It is independent of activity, leisure or social acceptance.

David Gray and D. Pelegrino (1973) *Reflections on the Park and Recreation Movement*. Dubuque, Iowa, William C. Brown, p. 7.

Recreation consists of an activity or experience, usually chosen voluntarily by the participant, either because of the immediate satisfaction to be derived from it, or because he perceives some personal or social values to be achieved by it. It is carried on in leisure time, and has no work connotations, such as study for promotion in a job. It is usually enjoyable and when it is carried on as part of organised or community services, it is designed to meet constructive and socially worthwhile goals of the individual participant, the group and society at large.

Richard Kraus (1966) *Recreation Today: Program Planning and Leadership*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, p. 7.

Recreation consists of activities or experiences carried on within leisure, usually chosen voluntarily by the participant - either because of satisfaction, pleasure or creative enrichment derived, or because he perceives certain personal or social values to be gained from them. It may, also be perceived as the process of participation, or as the emotional state derived from involvement.

Richard Kraus (1978) *Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society*. Santa Monica, CA, Good Year, p. 37.

The word 'recreation' means having fun or enjoying a pastime or diversion. It also means the various pastimes or diversions - the forms of recreation - themselves.

P. Madow (ed.) (1965) *Recreation in America*, New York, H.W Wilson, p. 3.

Recreation is considered to be activity voluntarily undertaken, primarily for pleasure and satisfaction, during leisure time.

John Pigram (1983) *Outdoor Recreation and Resource Management*. London, Croom Helm, p. 3.

.. recreation can be viewed as personal experience (what it does to a person), as activities (the forms it takes) or as an institution (the structure in which it is made available to the community). Taken yet another way recreation can be viewed as a process (what happens to an individual) and as a structure (the framework in which recreation is practised).

George Torkildsen (1986) *Leisure and Recreation Management*. 2nd edn, London, E. & F. N. Spon, p. 164.

Recreation is an act or experience, selected by the individual during his leisure time, to meet a personal want or desire, primarily for his own satisfaction.

T.S. Yukic (1970) *Fundamentals of Recreation*. 2nd edn, New York, Harper & Row, p. 5.