



PARK PUZZLE

SUBJECTS: Science and Math

GRADES: K-3

KERA GOALS: Meets KERA goals 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS: visualizing, space and dimensionality, becoming a productive group member, decision making, and expanding existing knowledge.

DURATION: One 20-30 minute period

GROUP SIZE: One classroom of students (approximately 24-32 students)

SETTING: Indoors or Outdoors

KEY VOCABULARY: National park, plants, animals, people, rocks

ANTICIPATORY SET: "Has anyone ever been to a National Park before? What parks have you visited?"

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to: 1) visualize symbols of the National Park Service; 2) become a productive group member while identifying the components of a national park.

MATERIALS:

- ◆ Two jigsaw puzzles- one Stetson hat and one Arrowhead
- ◆ Four signs saying- plants, animals, people, and rocks
- ◆ Two pictures, one of a Stetson hat and one arrowhead (to be acquired from the Environmental Education Coordinator at Mammoth Cave National Park)

BACKGROUND: The first national park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872. This was the first national park in the world. Today there are over 380 different national parks in the United States. This idea, that was born in America, has since spread throughout the world. National parks were developed to protect and preserve both natural and cultural aspects for future generations. They were also established to provide enjoyment to the visiting public. In 1916 the National Park Service was established as a federal agency. For over eighty-five years the American public has fallen in love with its ideals and traditions.



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PROCEDURE:

1. The teacher asks, "When you think of a national park, what things do you think about?" The students may respond with things like: animals, trees, plants, rangers, etc. The teacher may need to encourage them to think about the hat rangers wear and the patch. The teacher shows the students pictures of the ranger's hat and patch. These are symbols that stand for the National Park Service. The teacher should write the students' responses on the blackboard.
2. The teacher asks, "Why are national parks special?" The students should be able to answer, "To take care of animals and plants." The instructor may need to help with the concept that parks take care of the rocks or land found within their boundaries. Rangers help to take care of people that visit the park. Rangers also talk about the people that are important to that park, such as Abraham Lincoln at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site.
3. The teacher reinforces the idea that parks take care of people, plants, animals, and rocks. The teacher explains that these four things are all pieces of what makes up our national parks.
4. The teacher now passes out pieces of wood (parts of the puzzle) to each student. The teacher has the students look at their pieces to see which category (people, plants, animals, and rocks) is on their piece. The teacher places signs in four areas of the room (plants, animals, people, and rocks). The instructor tells the students to go stand next to the sign that matches their picture.
5. The teacher now tells the students that they are holding a piece to one of the symbols. They may have a piece that belongs to the hat or a piece that belongs to the patch (arrowhead). They need to find other people that have pieces like them (similar color) and then put their pieces together with their pictures (of rocks, plants, animals and people) showing.
6. The teacher then talks about how all these things go together to form a symbol of the National Park Service. The students now take apart their puzzle and flip their pieces over. This time put the puzzle together again to see their symbol more clearly.
7. The students return to their seats with their puzzle piece. The class reviews what is protected in a national park and that it is important to take care of them. The teacher collects their puzzle pieces.

CLOSURE: Today we talked about the four reasons that we protect national parks. It is because of these special things that parks are popular throughout the country.

EVALUATION: The teacher is able to evaluate the students as they move to their category and then interact with their group.

EXTENSIONS:

1. Take a look at a U.S. map and talk about parks found in other states. (Ask the Environmental Education Coordinator for a U.S. Map with national parks highlighted.)
2. Write to the national parks in your state and make a classroom display with the information you get in the mail.
3. Find symbols for other jobs within your community and make a chart of them.