

Target Audience: Grades 5 - 6

Create a National Park

Subject: National Parks

Duration: 1-1.5 hours

Location: Outdoors

Vocabulary: National Park, natural resources, cultural resources, enabling legislation

Florida Sunshine State Standards: SC.H.3.2, SC.H.3.3, SC.G.2.3, SS.D.2.2, SS.C.2.2, SS.D.1.2, SS.B.2.3

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to cite three reasons why national parks are needed
2. Students will describe characteristics of a national park
3. Students will list three problems facing national parks
4. Students will be able to analyze the information learned and write a persuasive proposal for national park designation

Method:

Students create a mini-national park in a specified outdoor area, marking a nature trail and providing visitors with information about their park.

Materials:

Clipboard, large piece of paper, marker, pencil, hand lens, one fifteen-foot piece of string, six popsicle sticks, poker chips (at least one per student), worksheet

Background:

There are nearly 400 national park areas in the national park system. They have been set aside by Congress to preserve and protect the best of our natural and cultural resources for the use and enjoyment of all persons, including future generations.

For this lesson, we will be discussing parks set aside for their natural and cultural wonders. These parks are as diverse as the visitors who come to them. A park may offer any one or a combination of the following: camping (tent or motor home), wilderness hiking trails, scenic overlooks, motor tour routes, nature trails, campfire programs, boat/tram tours, bike trails, canoeing, fishing and hunting (recreational parks), boardwalks, rock climbing, and swimming.

A park may have several outstanding features for which it was set aside, or it may be preserved for a specific site. Park management is set up much like a school system, the rangers being the teachers. Each day brings new challenges to a park and its resources. Some parks, like Biscayne National Park, have numerous problems facing them. At Biscayne National Park there is a combination of problems: threats from development, water pollution, boat groundings, over-fishing, and the list goes on.

Biscayne National Park Lesson Plan

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



Upon arriving at many of the national parks, the visitor pays a small entrance fee and is handed a park map that outlines the major resources and sites to visit. Larger parks have a visitor center where rangers dispense information about the park. One part of a park ranger's job is to interpret the park resources and problems to the visitors so that they understand the concerns of the park. Why? Because parks belong to the people and they must learn about these valuable resources and how to protect and preserve them!

Suggested Procedures:

1. Discuss the concept of a national park with your students. Ask students if they have ever been to a national park. What makes it different from a state or county park?
2. Ask students what they would like in a national park, if they were to create a "perfect park." Why set up a national park? Who owns national parks?
3. Pair off students. Distribute the materials listed on the preceding page to each pair.
4. Assign, or let each pair choose, an outdoor spot for their national park. Using their string, they should rope off their area.
5. Students must move about their national park on hands and knees. Using the hand lens, the students should choose the scenic values of their park; a hole might be the Grand Canyon, a rock might be a mountain, for instance. The popsicle sticks can be used to mark trails or scenic spots.
6. Give the class about 20-25 minutes to set up trails in their park. After the students have marked their parks, they must make a brochure (including a map) publicizing their park.
7. Once the parks are ready for business, the "rangers" (paired students) must advertise their park. They should advertise their park by writing its attributes down on a large piece of paper with markers so one can clearly read them from a short distance away. Ask the pairs to split up. One student in the pair should remain in the park to interpret it, while the second visits other national parks. The students may then switch. The poker chips are used for entrance fees needed to visit another national park, if the students desire to charge. Every student must visit at least one national park.
8. After they have visited the national parks, ask students the following questions: Did they have problems getting visitors to come to their park? Were visitors always careful with the parks' resources? Did they have too many visitors? What would they change? What problems occurred? How would they raise money to improve the park's facilities?

Evaluation:

Discuss why we should have national parks. What can you do to help protect the resources in a national park? Who has the responsibility of preserving and protecting the park for future generations?

Extensions:

Biscayne National Park Lesson Plan



1. Write a proposal to get funding to buy a national park. Presentation should be made to the "President" (teacher or principal).
2. Lead the students in singing the song "This Park is Your Park"
3. Lead students in related activities such as the Commons Game

Florida Sunshine State Standards:

SC.H.3.2 & SC.H.3.3 The student understands that science, technology, and society are interwoven and interdependent.

SC.G.2.3 The student understands the consequences of using limited natural resources.

SS.D.2.2 The student understands the characteristics of different economic systems and institutions. Knows that the government provides some of the goods and services that we use and that the government pays for the goods and services it provides through taxing and borrowing.

SS.C.2.2 The student understands the role of the citizen in American democracy.

SS.D.1.2 The student understands how scarcity requires individuals and institutions to make choices about how to use resources.

SS.B.2.3 The student understands the interactions of people and the physical environment.



Create-a-National Park

Instructions:

Use this sheet as a guide to create a miniature national park site using the provided materials and found objects. Remember a National Park site can be a park, memorial, seashore, historic site or a preserve...just to name a few.

Biscayne National Park's enabling legislation:

In order to preserve and protect for the education, inspiration, recreation, and enjoyment of present and future generations a rare combination of terrestrial, marine, and amphibious life in a tropical setting of great natural beauty, there is hereby established the Biscayne National Park.

What is the name of your National Park?

Enabling legislation (What does your park protect and why?)

What types of ecosystems or habitats are found within your park?

Does your park have any species of concern?

What kind of recreational opportunities does your park provide?

Are there any special rules or regulations that pertain to your park?

Additional comments about your park...

