

## First Grade Science Lesson

### Common Core Essential Standard:

#### **1.L.1 Understand characteristics of various environments and behaviors of humans that enable plants and animals to survive.**

Teacher reads information to class:

Today in our science lesson I want you to learn about national parks and park rangers. I want you to see how humans can help plants and animals to survive.

Cowpens National Battlefield is part of the National Park Service. Did you know that even though the government sets up national parks, they belong to YOU? National parks belong to every citizen of the United States. The United States set up the National Park System so that families can enjoy the natural and cultural treasures of our country. Natural resources are things like mountains, rivers, forests, and deserts. Plants and animals and their homes are part of the natural resources. Cultural resources are things like monuments, statues, historical buildings, and battlefields. These things are usually things that people built or made. Look around you right now: Who can see a natural resource? (woods, nature trail, animals) Did we see any cultural resources here? (monument, Visitor Center, battlefield)

Let's talk about park rangers, and in a few minutes I am going to tell you about how you can be a Junior Park Ranger! There are three words a Junior Ranger needs to remember: Protect, Learn, and Explore. Let's say them together: Protect, Learn, and Explore. (repeat together) When you hear one of these words, I want you to give me a thumbs-up. Let's practice: Protect (show thumbs-up), Learn (thumbs), Explore (thumbs). Great! Can you be a good listener so you can see how you can be a Junior Ranger? OK!

One job park rangers have is to PROTECT. We learn in science lessons about things that plants have to have to live and grow. Who can tell me what they need? (sunlight, soil, water) So park rangers have to make sure that nothing stops the plants and trees from getting what they need, and PROTECT them from people who may do things to harm them. People are not allowed to pick flowers in parks because that would stop them from making seeds and eventually more flowers. Park rangers do not want people to cut down trees. They PROTECT plants from water pollution. Animals also need things to survive. What are some things animals need? (food, shelter, water, space to live, air, etc.) So rangers look out for the needs of animals, too. They PROTECT animals from hunters. Rangers ask people not to feed the animals. Why do you think this is important to PROTECT animals? (The food might not be good for them, they will depend on humans for food and stop looking for their own food, animal could accidentally hurt a human) Everyone, tell me, what is the first job of a park ranger? "PROTECT!" Good.

Park rangers also help people LEARN. The National Park Service is interested in educating people about how to respect and enjoy plants, animals, forests: our natural resources. Rangers

help us LEARN about science by taking us on nature hikes, showing us exhibits about plants and animals, and even having information on the internet for us to read and view. We can LEARN from park rangers about history when we listen to them talk, when they show us videos, when they show us monuments, cannons, historical clothes, and other “old” things. Park rangers want us to LEARN about nature and culture so that we can pass it along to our children. Everyone, what else do rangers help us do? LEARN!

What was the third important word we were supposed to remember? EXPLORE! Wow, you are really good listeners. Rangers EXPLORE the national parks with visitors by hiking, canoeing, rafting, and other activities. Rangers also EXPLORE new ways to make parks better and easier for people to enjoy by adding handicapped accessible trails, and other helps for people with special needs. They even EXPLORE new land for parks and recreation facilities. If you wanted to work for the National Park Service, there are many careers besides being a park ranger. Maybe you could EXPLORE one of the other ways people work at a national park:

**Our more than 20,000 employees include:**

Archeologists – 201  
Automotive mechanics – 84  
Botanists – 42  
Carpenters – 145  
Ecologists – 218  
Electricians – 87  
Facility managers – 313  
Fish biologists – 31  
Forestry technicians – 320  
Gardeners – 132  
Geologists – 46  
Historians – 183  
Human resources specialists – 383  
Hydrologists – 55  
Information management specialists – 383  
Landscape architects – 173  
Maintenance mechanics – 2,080  
Masons – 112  
Museum professionals – 330  
Park police – 580  
Park rangers – 3,861  
Small craft operators – 48

OK – Who can tell me all three words we learned about Park Rangers? (Protect, Learn, Explore)

Right! These are ways humans can help plants and animals survive.

Now do you want to know how you can become a Junior Park Ranger?

The goal of the Junior Ranger program is to introduce children to the natural wonders of the park and their own role in preserving these wonders for the future. Would you like to **learn** more about national parks that belong to you? Did you know you can help **protect** these special places, even if you never get to visit them all? Are you interested in **exploring**?

To become a Junior Ranger, families may request a free activity booklet like this at a national park visitor center. (Teacher can hold up the activity booklet and show some of the activities.) After completing the activity book, take it to a ranger at the visitor center. The ranger checks your work and then he/she will give you an official Junior Ranger badge, modeled after the ones that real park rangers wear!

You can also have a National Park Passport. Each time you visit a different park, you can stamp your passport with the cancellation stamp of the park you visit.

I hope you learned a lot about how humans can make a difference to plants and animals, and that you will want to visit some other great national parks. Remember, you can visit parks online, too! Go to [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) and click on "kids." You can participate in the WebRanger program, play games, and learn about science, history, and culture.