

Meet Your National Parks

Rangers in the Classroom — Pre-visit Lesson Plan



Grade Level: 4th

Setting: Classroom

Duration: 45 min -1 hour

Standards Addressed:

- ° Writing Strategies:
1.3
- ° Writing Applications:
2.1
- ° Visual and Performing Arts
Aesthetic Valuing:
4.1, 4.2

Introduction:

Welcome to Rangers in the Classroom! We are looking forward to visiting your class for our Meet Your National Parks program. To help prepare your class for the ranger visit, we have created a pre-visit activity to introduce your students to some of the concepts we will cover in our program. If you are interested in additional preparation, the program outline includes a vocabulary list and can easily be found on the website at:

<http://www.nps.gov/seki/forteachers/index.htm>.

By exploring a few concepts and vocabulary words with your students prior to our visit, you will help us hit the ground running. Have fun and we'll see you soon!

Materials:

- ° Worksheet
- ° Blank paper
- ° Pencil
- ° Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Instructions:

1. Explain to the students that Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are two beautiful national parks that are close to where they live. (In the mountains, __ minutes from their homes, etc.)
2. Have the students close their eyes and imagine what it is like to visit Sequoia or Kings Canyon National Parks. Read the narrative "A Visit to Sequoia National Park" (attached).
3. Have students fill out the worksheet, and draw on the back.
4. Students can then share their drawings with the class.
5. As a class, discuss the variety in the pictures and symbols and why some students may have different viewpoints and reasoning for drawing what they did.
6. Explain that a ranger from Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will be coming to the classroom to share with them what a national park is and why they are so important.

Meet Your National Parks

Rangers in the Classroom—Pre-visit Activity



A Visit to Sequoia National Park

Students, close your eyes and listen as I read a few paragraphs to you. We are going to exercise our imaginations as I describe a trip to Sequoia National Park. Listen to the words I use and try and create a picture in your mind. Once we have finished we will talk about our imaginary trip to the park, and do some writing and art about what we saw.

As we leave our school and head towards the mountains we can already see the jagged peaks of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The peaks look rough, like the jagged edge of a saw blade. ...What colors do you see in the mountains?

We pull up to the entrance station and are greeted by a Park Ranger in the booth:
“Good morning folks, welcome to Sequoia National Park! Have a safe and fun day today while you are visiting the park.”

To our right we can see down to the Kaweah River. The river bends and winds along the road cutting past large rocks and steep cliffs. ...What does the river sound like as it rushes down the wide canyon?

We stop briefly at Hospital Rock. A large grey rock hangs over us. The face of the rock is decorated with art made by Native Americans hundreds of years ago. Intricate designs in dark red paint tell stories of the people who lived here long ago.

After several miles of steep climbing and sharp turns the scenery begins to change. Dry grasses and large oak trees fade away and are replaced by tall pine trees and green ferns. We have entered the Giant Forest, home to the biggest trees in the world. Let's roll down the windows. ...What does the forest smell like?

We park alongside the road, get out of the car and go for a hike through the forest. As we pass through the trees, we spot several Giant Sequoia trees. The Giant Sequoia towers above the rest of the trees, we have to tilt our heads to the sky just to try to see the top. The trunk is massive! Our whole class holds hands and we still can't reach all the way around it! ...What does the bark feel like?

Finally we stop and sit on a fallen log near a large meadow. We sit very quietly and watch and listen to the forest around us.

What sounds do we hear in the forest? What does the forest floor look like? Are there any animals around? What do they look like?

(pause for a minute)

Everyone open your eyes. Who would like to share what they saw in their imagination?

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Rangers in the Classroom—Pre-visit Activity



Imagine that you are visiting Sequoia or Kings Canyon National Park for the first time. As you travel through the park, what kinds of things do you see? What kinds of activities do you do? Who are you with? Answer the following questions below. Turn what you imagined into a picture. Display all the things that you envisioned as you travelled through these amazing parks.

1. List four things that you “saw” as you travelled through the park.

2. What do you think you can do in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks? List three different types of activity.

3. Who would you want to go visit the parks with?

4. How do you think Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are different from the parks in your town?
