

Lesson Plan – Voyagers (Grades 9 – 12)

Activities are intended for independent student work resulting in a written report, an oral report, or debate. Use the 3-part worksheet to guide the student in taking notes, or as an extra credit assignment. The first part defines the park geographically; the second details the importance of this national park, and the third part relates the park to society.

1. Set the stage

Read and discuss *National Parks Background Information*. Distribute copies of the *Worksheet*. Demonstrate how to find information in a national park brochure if needed. Use the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area brochure as an example. Place copies of the *National Park System Map and Guide* or *AAA U.S. map* where all can refer to them. Provide a box of stickers to mark maps.

2. Gather information

Distribute copies of brochures for the national parks you have selected. Distribute worksheets for taking notes, as an outline, or for extra credit. Students can work independently/in groups to gather and pool information. *Additional information is available at libraries, from the NPS visitor center in Thousand Oaks and on the Internet at www.nps.gov*

3. Reports, (Oral or Written / Individual or Group), Debates, or Extra Credit

Student reports might focus on location, history and importance of individual parks, trips, when to visit, or what to see at this national park. Reports may include visual aids, models, graphs, drawings, and charts. The *Worksheet* may be filled out and used as part of a one or two page written extra credit report, depending on grade level. Debates focusing on national parks might include these topics: *Parks as Playgrounds for People or Havens for Plants/Animals?; Endangered Species: Protect or Abandon?; Wildland Fire: Friend or Foe in National Parks?*

4. Wrap up

Pass out copies of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area brochure and invite students to visit this national park with their families.

5. Evaluate

Consider length and detail of answers on the worksheet; length of report and group member participation; number, variety and detail of visual aids, or additional information.



Going farther:

Get involved! Contact your nearest national park for a community service project. At the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a *Volunteer Coordinator* arranges short/long-term community service projects, and the *Internship Coordinator* recruits student interns to work at the park. Contact them at 805-370-2301.



National Parks Background Information

National parks belong to you – and to me, to all of us. Each national park protects something special. It may be a wondrous natural feature, like the deep lake at Crater Lake National Park, the tall Redwood trees at Redwood National Park, or the hot springs and geysers at Yellowstone National Park.



In 1872, Yellowstone was the first area to be officially set aside as a national park for the enjoyment of the people of the United States and to protect the plants and animals living there. No provisions were made for caretakers of the area. The only available government agency in the area was the U.S. Army. For many years, the Cavalry was assigned to protect Yellowstone and the other national parks that were created, such as Yosemite, Sequoia and Grand Canyon.

The National Park Service, a part of the US Department of the Interior, was created in 1916 to take care of these parks for all of us. The new National Park Service grew and expanded over the years and now cares for more than 378 different national parks. These include many places that you might not think of as national parks. Many of you already know that Yellowstone, Yosemite and Grand Canyon are all national parks. Do you know that the Statue of Liberty, Independence Hall, Gettysburg Battlefield and the White House are also part of the National Park system? These are historic sites, not natural areas like Yellowstone, but the National Park Service protects them all.

All of these very different places have one thing in common. Each represents an important example of America's natural and cultural heritage. They are a *legacy*, an inheritance, which preserves special things about our country for you and for your children, and all the future generations of Americans. Come and visit your national parks. They are your inheritance. They belong to you.

Worksheet

Part 1

1. Look in the black band of the *Map and Guide* to find the name of your national park. What is it? _____

2. What type of national park is it? Circle the correct answer:
National Battlefield National Historic Site National Memorial
National Monument National Park National Seashore
If the answer is not one of the above, write it in:

3. What state(s) is your national park in? _____
Find your national park on the *National Park System Map and Guide* or *AAA Highway Map*. Place a sticker where your national park is located.



4. What major highway is near your national park? Highway _____
What direction would you need to travel from your school to get to this national park? _____ How long would it take? _____

5. Create a budget for a trip to your national park. Plan on \$20/day for food, \$50/night for motels, \$15/night for campgrounds, \$20/day for gas. What would this trip cost? \$ _____.

Food _____
Lodging _____
Gas _____

6. Look at your *National Park Map and Guide*. What kinds of activities are there to do at this park? Would the weather influence those activities or your trip to this national park? What do you think would be the best time of the year to go to your national park?

Part 2

7. What natural forces have influenced the creation of your national park? Circle the answer. If your national park is a historic site, go to Question 9.

Erosion from wind, weather, rain Glaciers
Climate change Plate tectonics
Other _____

8. Think about Question 7 above. If a natural process has gradually changed the living conditions at the park do you think that the plants and animals in your national park have also changed over time? Circle: Yes No

Explain your answer. _____



9. Was your park the home or birthplace of a famous person or a group of people? If No, proceed to next question. If Yes, who was it and what did he/she/they do? _____

10. Did an important historic event or idea start at this park? If No, proceed to next question. If Yes, what was it? _____

11. Why do you think it is important to remember famous people, places and historic events? _____

Part 3

12. Your national park belongs to all of us. Circle: True False

13. The federal government is divided into many departments. Each department may have a number of different agencies within it. The U.S. Forest Service is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The National Park Service is part of the U.S. Department of the _____.

14. A national park is like a small town. It has a superintendent (the mayor), park rangers, and maintenance people. Can you think of any other jobs that would need to be done there? _____

15. Do you think that climate changes, pollution, littering and habitat loss are threats to national parks? Circle your answer: Yes No
Can you think of any other threats? _____

16. What should be done to help protect national parks? Circle answer:

- a. Visit national parks and encourage others to do so too.
- b. Put your litter in trash containers when you visit national parks.
- c. All of the above.

Can you think of any other ways? _____

