**Overview**

Flat Rangers introduces students to a variety of National Parks. Students create paper cutout Flat Rangers and choose Parks for Ranger to explore.  Ranger travels with a passport which is stamped by each park.  
Your students will receive brochures and other items from many National Parks. You will receive educational materials to further their learning. Their imagination is fueled as they explore beaches at Padre Island, wonder at Zion’s majesty, and study history at Appomattox Courthouse.

**Objective(s)**

Students will be able to...

* research facts about National Parks
* present information to the class
* participate in an individual or group project

**Background**

Before starting, review and print out the first two PDF files in the Materials section. Make a hamburger fold and cut down the middle of the passport pages to create a passport. You or the students can create the passport.

The program can be modified for Elementary, Middle, and High School students.

As "Flat Rangers" takes several months to complete, we recommend you start at the beginning of the school year. Parks take about a week to send you items. The initial lesson takes 30-45 minutes. You determine the amount of time to spend on your projects.

Due to the length of the program and to ensure you receive park information before the end of the school year, we recommend that your Ranger visit a total of seven parks.

Many parks have limited resources and are limited on the number of Rangers they can receive. Therefore, classes are limited to one Ranger per class. The only exception is groups of students studying various specific historic era, landform, culture, etc. They may send up to six Rangers and can select Parks that are specifically about that subject matter (e.g., if you are studying the American Revolution, choose parks that focus on the Revolution).

The National Park items received by your students can be used for an individual or group project. Choose or have your students choose an appropriate project. The Procedure section below contains project suggestions. The project can be used as a final assessment.

Not all National Parks participate in this project. Please refer to the last page of the PDF file Flat Ranger Passport in the Materials sections for a list of participating National Parks.

**Materials**

PDFs for this lesson plan include:

1. Flat Ranger boy template (PDF 286 KB)
2. Flat Ranger girl template (PDF 287 KB)
3. Flat Ranger Passport (PDF 363 KB)
4. List of Participating Parks (PDF 72.8 KB)
5. National Park System Map (PDF 1.18 MB)

**Step 1:**

On each passport page:

* Write the mailing address for the class.
* Write a park name

**Step 2:**

Tell students that the people who care for Parks are called Park Rangers. They will create a Flat Ranger (Ranger) to mail to Parks. Together you will track the Flat's journey. When Ranger visits a Park, the Park will send information about that Park to us. For example, if we send Ranger to Everglades National Park, Everglades will send our class information about Everglades.

**Step 3:**

Hand out the Ranger templates. Color one Ranger for the entire class (Note: Due to limited resources, parks are limited on the number of Rangers they can receive. Therefore, classes are limited to one Ranger per class. The only exception is groups of students studying various specific historic era, landform, culture, etc. See Background Information for more information.) Tell students to name their Ranger.

**Step 4:**

Hand out the passports or have students create the passport.

**Step 5:**

Tell students that Flat and the passport will be sent to different Parks. You or the students can choose the Parks. By default, the first park is Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park. Select Parks from the last page of the passport by circling the Parks you want Ranger to visit

**Step 6:**

On each passport page:

* Write the mailing address for the class.
* Write a park name

**Step 7:**

Mail Ranger and the passport to Palo Alto Battlefield (address on the first page of the Passport.)

**Step 8:**

As you receive Park information, track Ranger's journeys on a giant map of the United States. (Option: Use the National Park System map PDF with this lesson that shows all the Parks.)

**Extensions**

There are unlimited ways to use Flat to teach math, science, language arts, and social studies. Ideas include:

* Add the number of miles Flat travels
* Keep track of the directions (East, etc.) that Flat travels
* Learn more about each State Flat visits
* Draw pictures of the Park
* Create a brochure of the Park complete with information and images
* Make a display for your classroom or school
* Write an essay/keep a journal about Flats travels
* Learn about the history or nature of the Park
* Learn more about a specific historic era, landform, culture, etc. by circling up to eight Parks that focus on that subject matter (e.g., if you are studying the American Revolution, choose parks that focus on the Revolution)
* Look up the website for each park

**Additional Resources**

The National Park Service [website](http://www.nps.gov/index.htm) offers extensive information about the NPS and each unit in the National Park System.

The National Park Service Harper's Ferry Center has more National Park Service maps, including online-interactive map, [National Park Service Maps](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/cfm/carto-detail.cfm?Alpha=nps) page.

**Assessment**

Assess the student's performance in two key areas. Other assessment variables will vary based on the project selected.

* Participation
* Project

Above proficient

Participation:  Pro-actively participates and completes all tasks assigned beyond the basics of the assignment. Pro-actively participates in group and class discussions and offers extensive analysis.

All Projects:  Clear depiction and incorporation of many elements of the National Park(s) being studied. Effective organization and presentation with thoughtful information and strong supporting details. All graphics support text.

Language Arts:  Always uses effective and accurate use of writing conventions. Always has fluent and articulate writing.

Math:  Always uses effective and accuracy of all addition, measurement, etc.

Science:  Always uses accurate use of science terms.

Social Studies: Always uses effective and accurate use of social studies skills such as interpretation and analysis.

Proficient

Participation: Actively participates and completes all tasks assigned meeting the basics of the assignment. Actively participates in group and class discussions though without extensive analysis.

All Projects: Clear depiction and incorporation of some elements of the National Park(s) being studied. Project is organized and uses details well. Some graphics which mostly support the text.

Language Arts: Often uses effective and accurate use of writing conventions. Often uses fluent and articulate writing.

Math: Often uses effective and accuracy of addition, measurement, etc.

Science: Often uses accurate use of science terms.

Social Studies: Often uses effective and accurate use of social studies skills such as interpretation and analysis.

Below proficient

Participation: Does not or minimally participates and does not or minimally completes tasks assigned. Does not or minimally participates in group and class discussions and offers no analysis.

*Project (Note: Assessment variables will vary based on the project selected.)*

All Projects:  Presentation lacks organization. Writing conventions are not always followed. Presentation has little information with either no graphics or the graphics do not support the text.

Language Arts:  Does not use effective and accurate use of writing conventions. Often uses fluent and articulate writing.

Math:  Does not use effective and accuracy of addition, measurement, etc.

Science:  Does not use accurate use of science terms.

Social Studies:  Does not use effective and accurate use of social studies skills such as interpretation and analysis.