1. Safety First

Sunny the Saguaro and his friends want to become Junior Rangers—help them out! Junior Rangers teach others about staying safe. Teach Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina about safety in the Sonoran Desert. Put an X on top of the unsafe choices and put a ✓ over the smart choices.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Complete these five safety rules using the words below:

1. “Drink plenty of ______________.”

2. “In the national park you should always hike with an ______________.”

3. “Don’t put your ______________ and ______________ under rocks or bushes.”

4. “Treat all ______________ and ______________ with respect.”

5. “Watch out for sharp ______________ and ______________.”

Word bank:

animals    adult    spines    feet
water      plants   hands    thorns
2. Scavenger Hunt

Before hitting the trails, Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina decide to take a look around the exhibits in the visitor center. As you explore the exhibits, try to find as many of these items as you can. Check off the items you find. Not all of these things are found at both of our visitor centers.

- Animal skull
- Arizona’s state bird
- Venomous lizard
- Cactus skeleton
- Picture on a rock
- Bird with a topknot
How many did you find? ______________

1–4: Your sight is as good as a javelina’s.

5–8: You’ve got a mountain lion’s vision.

9–12: You have eyes like a hawk!
3. Parts of the Saguaro

“Wow, what’s that?!” asks Thelma the Tortoise. That’s a saguaro! A saguaro cactus grows and changes just like a Junior Ranger and looks different throughout its lifetime. Observe a saguaro in the park and draw a picture of it in the space below.

Hint from Sunny:
Not sure what saguaro flowers or fruit look like? Look for flowers and fruit in the visitor center exhibit.

Saguaro first grow flowers at age 30. Draw flowers on your cactus. If pollinated by bats, bees, or birds, saguaro flowers turn into fruit! Draw fruit on your cactus. Saguaro get their first arms at about 60–75 years old. Draw an extra arm on your cactus. How old do you think your cactus is? ______________
4. How Many Seeds?

“Yum, my favorite!” cries Harry the Javelina. He’s found many fruits scattered on the ground. In every ripened fruit of the saguaro there are about 3,500 small, black seeds which provide moisture and nourishment for many animals. Only a few of these precious seeds will ever become a towering saguaro.

How many fruits are on the saguaro? _______________

How many seeds fell out of this fruit? _______________

How many ants are eating these seeds? _______________

Do the Math

If there are 3,500 seeds in one fruit, how many are in 10 fruits? ____________________

If a coyote eats half of the 10 fruits, how many seeds are left? ____________________

If Harry eats 3 of the remaining fruits, how many seeds are left? ____________________

If ants eat 5,000 of these seeds, how many are left? ____________________

Now if 1,999 seeds dry up, how many are left to grow? ____________________
5. Sonoran Desert Communities

“Oh, look, that bird is eating the plant,” says Thelma the Tortoise. “Now I’m hungry, too...”

Saguaro National Park is home to many plants and animals which depend on each other to live in this hot, dry place. Together they make up our Sonoran Desert Community. Within this community, the plants and animals can be connected by food chains. For example:

The grasshopper eats the grass. The spiny lizard eats the grasshopper. The roadrunner eats the spiny lizard. The Gila monster eats the roadrunner’s eggs.

Grass ➔ Grasshopper ➔ Spiny lizard ➔ Roadrunner ➔
Roadrunner eggs ➔ Gila monster

Draw a line connecting your own, different food chain! Circle the plants and animals in your food chain. When you are done, you will have created a Desert Community Food Web!
Draw a line on the picture to connect the animals and plants in each of these food chains.

**Flower nectar**  ➤  **Moth**  ➤  **Scorpion**  ➤  **Pallid bat**  ➤  **Harris’s hawk**

**Prickly pear cactus**  ➤  **Pack rat**  ➤  **Ringtail**  ➤  **Mountain lion**  ➤  **Vulture**

**Palo verde seeds**  ➤  **Quail**  ➤  **Quail eggs**  ➤  **Gila monster**

**Saguaro fruit**  ➤  **White-winged dove**  ➤  **Harris’s hawk**
“Let’s keep exploring,” says Sunny the Saguaro. “There’s so much to see here!” With a friend or family member, play the game to find your way to the visitor center! Use any small objects as markers. Find a coin. On their turn, the player will flip the coin one time. If it lands on “heads,” move 1 space; if it lands on “tails,” move 2 spaces. If you land on a brown space, follow the instructions to move along the path. The first player to reach the visitor center wins!

“I played the game with ______________

and ______________ won the game!”
A saguaro

You meet a ranger.

FLASH FLOOD! Lose 1 turn.

Rattlesnake ahead! Go back 1 space.

You have a picnic.

Too hot for hiking! Lose 1 turn.

You made it to the top of Hugh Norris Ridge! Move forward 2 spaces.

You ran out of water. Go back to start.

You photograph. Move 1 space.

You have a picnic.

You hike to Pink Hill.
7. A Walk in the Cactus Garden

“Let’s go outside now!” says Sunny the Saguaro. “I want to keep exploring.” As you walk through the cactus garden outside the visitor center, draw pictures of 3 of your favorite desert plants. Read the signs that identify and describe these beautiful desert dwellers and write the name of the plant by your picture.

Plant
Name: ________________

Plant
Name: ________________

Plant
Name: ________________

Share an interesting fact you know or read about each of your plants.

Facts: ________________

Facts: ________________

Facts: ________________
8. Listen!

“I think I just heard a car horn,” says Harry the Javelina. “Isn’t it amazing the big city of Tucson is so close by?” In the cactus garden, the natural sounds of the desert mix with the sounds of the city. This park is protecting the land and the plants and animals that live here from things in the city that could harm them.

“Have a friend or parent time you!”

Close your eyes and listen for 60 seconds. Draw or write 3 different sounds you heard and circle if it came from the city (C) or from nature (N).
9. Create Your Own Reptile

Suddenly, Harry the Javelina spots something out of the corner of his eye—a flash of bright orange! “What is that?” he asks. Can you guess what he saw?

Study the pictures and facts about these colorful reptiles who live in our desert.

- **Desert spiny lizard**
  - Eats insects, flowers, leaves; lives on the desert floor

- **Western whiptail**
  - Eats insects, scorpions, spiders; lives on the desert floor

- **Horned lizard**
  - Eats insects, especially ants; lives from the desert floor to mountain forests

- **Diamondback rattlesnake**
  - Eats rodents such as pack rats, kangaroo rats, cactus mice; lives on the desert floor

- **Zebra-tailed lizard**
  - Eats insects, especially ants; lives from the desert floor to mountain forests

- **Desert tortoise**
  - Eats plants, including cactus pads and fruit; lives on the desert floor in a deep hole in the ground.

- **Gila monster**
  - Eats eggs and small animals; lives on the desert floor but stays underground most of the year
Create your own reptile by putting together parts of at least 3 of the reptiles featured on the previous page. Draw your creation in the box below and give it a new name!

My reptile’s name is

How does your reptile live with heat and dryness?

Where in the desert does it live?

What does it eat?
10. Petroglyphs

“Is this graffiti?” asks Harry the Javelina, pointing at a design on a nearby rock. “No, Harry,” explains Sunny the Saguaro. “That’s a petroglyph.” In Greek, petroglyph means “rock carving.” The trail to Signal Hill at Saguaro West is the best place to see petroglyphs. Only the people who made the pictures long ago knew what they meant, but you can say what these shapes mean to you.

We use symbols too! Modern signs:

Draw your own petroglyph on the rock above. What does it mean to you? ________________________________
11. Wilderness

“It’s so beautiful out here,” says Thelma the Tortoise. “Don’t you wish you could live here?” “Yes,” replies Sunny the Saguaro. “But if people lived here, it wouldn’t be the wilderness anymore.” Wilderness is a place where people only visit, not live. It is a place where machines are not allowed, a place where animals and plants may live freely and on their own. Most of Saguaro National Park is a wilderness area, including desert grasslands and mountain forests. In this picture, put an X over things that don’t belong.
12. Poetry

“I want to remember this forever,” Sunny the Saguaro says. “It’s so beautiful here. I think I’m going to write a poem about it.”

Connect with the desert and the park by writing a poem. You can use some of the words listed below. Before you start, take a few minutes to reflect on your time in the park. Which views did you like best? What do you want to remember?

WORD BANK

juicy  twig  predator  rattle  ancient  red  scat  tracks  life
cactus  monster  steward  fruit  prickly  explore  visitor  protect
desert  wilderness  ranger  ocotillo  singing  blossom
majesty  seeds  arms  cycle  critters
Write a poem with 3 lines. Line 1 should have 3 words, line 2 should have 5 words, and line 3 should have 4 words. Try using some of the words in the word bank on the previous page.

Example:

*In the desert*
*I love all the plants*
*Even the spiky cactus*

Try a type of Japanese poem called a *haiku*. A haiku has 3 lines. Lines 1 and 3 each have 5 syllables and line 2 has 7 syllables. Or write your own rhyming poem!

Example (haiku):

*Here at Saguaro*
*Animals are all around*
*Which ones did you see?*
13. Trail **BINGO**

Harry the Javelina, always up for some fun, wants to play a game! “**Anybody want to play ‘I Spy’?**” he asks. “**Or how about bingo?**”

As you explore the park, try to get bingo by spotting things on the bingo card. You’ll need to get 4 boxes in a row going up, down, across, or diagonal. Try one of these trails: Desert Discovery, Signal Hill, and Valley View at Saguaro West, or Desert Ecology and Freeman Homestead at Saguaro East.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saguaro</th>
<th>Bird nest</th>
<th>Mistletoe</th>
<th>Cholla cactus</th>
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<th>Homestead</th>
<th>Cactus fruit</th>
</tr>
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Harry the Javelina sees something in a creosote bush. “Hey, what’s this?” he asks. “It’s trash,” sighs Sunny the Saguaro. “Somebody didn’t take it with them when they left like they should have.”

Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina are trying to protect the park. Help them out by looking at the action being performed in each box. If the action is OK in the park, draw a smile on the mascot’s face. If it hurts the park, draw a frown.

Did you know that our desert home is threatened by buffelgrass? This plant was brought to Arizona almost 100 years ago to feed cattle and control erosion. But buffelgrass has grown so much, it is threatening to take over our desert plants. It also fuels destructive wildfires. Look at the drawing of the buffelgrass to the right, then find the matching buffelgrass in the pictures above and draw an X through it.
15. Interview a Ranger

“I’ve learned so much today about Saguaro National Park!” Thelma the Tortoise says. “So we’re done now, right?”

“Almost,” Sunny the Saguaro tells her. “We just have one more activity to complete.”

You, Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina are almost Junior Rangers! Discover more about this important job by interviewing a ranger or volunteer at the park. Record your answers on the lines provided.

I interviewed Ranger or Volunteer

On this date

How many years have you worked in Saguaro National Park?

Why did you want to become a ranger (or volunteer)?

How many people do you meet each day?

What do you like best about your job?

Were you ever a Junior Ranger?

Which school subjects will help me become a ranger?

What inspires you as a ranger?