

# Meet Your National Parks

Rangers in the Classroom—Presentation  
Lesson Plan



**Grade Levels:** 2nd - 4th

**Setting:** Classroom

**Duration:** 45 min —1 hour

**Standards Addressed:**

2nd Grade

- ° Science—Life Sciences:  
2.d, 2.e
- ° Listening & Speaking:  
1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4

3rd Grade

- ° Science—Life Sciences:  
3.a, 3.b
- ° Listening & Speaking:  
1.1, 1.2, 1.3

4th Grade

- ° Science—Life Sciences:  
3.a, 3.b
- ° Listening & Speaking:  
1.1, 1.2

**Vocabulary:**

culture, cultural history,  
landscape, mission,  
obsidian, scenery, steward,  
tree rings, unique

**Introduction:**

Welcome to the Rangers in the Classroom—Meet Your National Parks presentation. This program introduces students to a uniquely American invention: the national park. It explores what national parks protect by examining the elements found on the National Park Service arrowhead emblem.

**Objectives:**

After completing this program, 2nd through 4th grade students will be able to:

1. Name the two national parks located in Tulare County.
2. Explain what visual elements are found on the National Park Service arrowhead emblem and what they represent.
3. Identify at least two different animals that can be found in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.
4. Identify a giant sequoia tree by its cone and by its bark.
5. Recognize the difference between natural and man-made landscapes and understand the importance of each.

**Materials:**

- ° Laptop
- ° Speakers
- ° Projector
- ° Extension cord
- ° Power point landscape presentation (laptop or thumb drive)
- ° Animal Materials:
  - ° Animal skulls for two different park animals (two each)
  - ° Animal pelts from the same two animals (one each)
- ° Plant Materials:
  - ° Sequoia bark
  - ° Sequoia cones
  - ° Sequoia seeds
  - ° Sequoia tree ring
  - ° Sugar Pine Cone
  - ° Sherman Tree diameter string
- ° NPS felt arrowhead
- ° Obsidian arrowheads
- ° Park maps and student fee waivers



# Meet Your National Parks

Rangers in the Classroom—Presentation  
Lesson Plan



## Presentation:

### A. Introduction (5–10 minutes)

1. What is the National Park Service? Why does the NPS exist? What does the NPS protect?
2. The NPS has a mission.
  - a. Our mission is to preserve natural and cultural resources unimpaired for you and for future generations.
  - b. What does it mean to leave something unimpaired?
    1. Have you ever loaned a toy to a sibling or friend and when they returned it to you it wasn't the same; it was dirty or broken? How did that make you feel?
3. Visiting a national park is like borrowing a book from the library. Every park and every book has a unique story to tell. The story is for everyone to enjoy but, just like the book, the park should be left as it was found.
  - a. What does it mean to be unique? It means special and different from all others.
4. Has anyone here ever been to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks? Or to a different national park? Have you seen rangers there wearing a patch on their uniform? Rangers of every national park wear the same patch.
5. The patch of the National Park Service tells our story as park rangers and our mission.
6. Each part of our patch tells one part of the story.

### B. Arrowhead (5–10 minutes) Add the arrowhead to the felt board.

1. It symbolizes people. Specifically, it represents cultural history and our story as Americans.
2. Each park has a story to tell; some parks tell the story of the people who lived there, others tell the story of an event that happened there.
3. Pass around obsidian arrowheads.
  - a. Ask the students what they think these pieces of obsidian were used for.
3. People of the past, present, and future are essential elements of the parks.

### C. Mountain (5–10 minutes) Add the mountain to the arrowhead emblem.

1. It symbolizes landscapes and scenery.
2. What is a landscape? A landscape is everything that you see when you turn in a circle. What is the landscape of the classroom? What would the landscape of the playground look like?
3. When someone says "national park" what landscapes come to mind? Are your images nature-made or man-made?
4. Play the power point presentation with images from a variety of National Park Service units.
5. Ask the students what they thought of the images they saw. Were any surprising? Inviting? Unique? What kinds of stories do these landscapes tell?
  - a. Show a power point image of a natural resource (e.g. a waterfall or seashore).
  - b. Protected landscapes can be nature-made.
  - c. Show a power point image of a man-made resource (e.g. Mt. Rushmore or the Statue of Liberty).
  - d. Protected landscapes can also be man-made.

# Meet Your National Parks

Rangers in the Classroom—Presentation  
Lesson Plan



1. These man-made landscapes often represent ideas or serve as a reminder of what happened there (e.g. the Statue of Liberty represents freedom while a battlefield represents sacrifice and bravery).

6. As rangers, part of our mission is to protect the landscapes and to be stewards for the ideas they represent: freedom, beauty, wonder.

D. Sequoia Tree (5–10 minutes) Add the sequoia to arrowhead emblem.

1. It symbolizes plant life. The giant sequoia tree was selected to represent both plant life and Sequoia National Park, the second National Park established by law.

2. The sequoia cone is also found on the NPS hat band and belt. Show belt and hat band.

3. All plant life is protected in the national parks.

4. Discuss some of the plant life found in Sequoia National Park.

a. Giant Sequoia—the most massive trees in the world.

1. Show bark, cones, and seeds. Discuss their unique features.

2. Pass items around for students to touch.

3. Use string to help student visualize size of the Sherman Tree.

b. Sugar Pine (if time permits)—the largest pine trees in the world.

1. Show cone. Discuss unique features.

2. Pass items around for student to touch.

E. Lake/River (5–10 minutes) Add the lake/river to the arrowhead emblem.

1. It symbolizes water resources. Water is the key to life.

2. What forms might water come in?

3. Water has many uses aside from sustaining life (e.g. hydroelectric power and recreation).

a. Ask students if they swim in local lakes or rivers in the summer time.

4. Play the rain game: Let's make some sound effects!

1) As the ranger makes eye contact with each child, he or she will start making the assigned sound effect with his or her hands.

2) First, they will rub their hands together.

3) Second, they will snap their fingers. (In the transition, some will still be hand rubbing.)

4) Third, they will clap their hands on their thighs. (In the transition, some will still be snapping fingers.)

5) Fourth, they will stomp their feet. (In the transition, some will still be clapping hands on their thighs.)

6) Slowly reverse this process.

7) Talk about how a storm rolls in and rolls out.

F. Bison (5–10 minutes) Add the bison to the arrowhead emblem.

1. It symbolizes wildlife. The bison was selected as it represents Yellowstone, the first national park.

2. Wildlife is protected in the national parks.

3. Each animal uses the landscape, plants, and water in different ways.

4. Have you ever been to Sequoia National Park? If yes, what animals have you seen?

5. Discuss two animals found in Sequoia National Park.

# Meet Your National Parks

Rangers in the Classroom—Presentation  
Lesson Plan



- a. Bobcat, black bear, coyote, mule deer, or mountain lion
  - 1. Show skull and pelt. Discuss unique features.
  - 2. Pass items around for students to touch.
- 6. Would you try to pet or to feed a wild animal in the park?
  - a. Discuss what it means to be wild and how human behavior can change an animal's wild behavior.

## G. Conclusion (5-10 minutes)

- 1. Review elements of the arrowhead emblem.
- 2. The National Park Service protects the highest peaks and the lowest valleys; it protects natural resources and man-made landscapes; it protects plants, animals, and the water they depend on; it protects the cultural history of the past, present and future.
- 3. Each of these parks has a unique story to tell. A park may be only one building or many millions of acres, but each is equally valuable in the eyes of the National Park Service.
- 4. We are all part of the story of our national parks, for they belong to us.
- 5. The very existence of national parks depends on people who value their natural and cultural heritage and want to enjoy, preserve, and share it.
- 6. Invite students to visit Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks with their families. Explain how the fee waiver works: one carload of people can visit the park for one day for free. If short on time, leave the park maps and fee waivers with the teacher to pass out later.
- 7. We hope you will share what you have learned here today and continue to learn about your national parks. Have fun!

# Meet Your National Parks

Rangers in the Classroom—Presentation  
Lesson Plan



## Vocabulary

**Culture**—noun—the customs, arts, social institutions and achievements of a particular society, nation or people

**Cultural History**—noun—the study of past or current cultures

**Landscape**—noun—all the visible features of an area or countryside

**Obsidian**—noun—a hard, dark colored, glasslike volcanic rock formed by rapidly cooled lava

**Mission**—noun—an important, long-term assignment

**Scenery**—noun—the natural features of a landscape

**Steward**—noun—a person who is responsible for taking care of something

**Tree rings**—noun—rings in a tree's trunk representing a single year's growth

**Unique**—adjective—being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else