

National Parks Project Kit

Congratulations! You're getting a National Parks Pass! Use these project ideas to enrich your educational experience. Read through them before you go to make sure you understand the terms and concepts, and to help you determine if you want to expand upon any of them. **You'll find fun facts and printable worksheets at the end of this packet.**

a- elementary level activity b- middle school level activity c- high school level activity

Language Arts

Being outdoors inspires the imagination. What would it have been like to have discovered your location for the first time? Would it be like to live there? What are some of the challenges faced by those who take care of that area? Use your surroundings and your imagination to create a piece of fictional writing.

- a. Draw a storybook or write a short story with illustrations inspired by your trip.
- b. Write a short story inspired by your visit, including a main character and the main elements of a story (setting, plot, conflict, and resolution).
- c. Choose between writing a fictional first-person narrative or a screenplay inspired by your visit.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil

Submission: A copy of your writings/drawing, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

Applied Math

Recording trips is an important skill. Researchers use it to catalog events and trips, businessmen use it to record trips for tax record, and others use trip recording to keep track of how much gas they're spending so they can create a budget. Keep a record of your travels.

- a. Keep a journal just for trips that includes where you went, how long it took to get there, and how far away it is. Calculate distances and time for both one-way and round trip.
- b. Keep a journal just for trips that includes where you went, how long it took to get there, and how far away it is. Calculate distances and time for both one-way and round trip. Also include a brief description of your trip in your log. Calculate average miles per hour for your trip.
- c. Keep a journal just for trips that includes where you went, how long it took to get there, and how far away it is. Calculate distances and time for both one-way and round trip. Also include a brief description of your trip in your log. Calculate average miles per hour for your trip. If possible, figure out how much gas was needed, either by using your vehicle's average miles per gallon, or actually calculating it based on how many gallons the vehicle used on the trip (fill up before and after the trip for accuracy).

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil, calculator or smartphone (optional)

Submission: Your calculations, estimations, and conclusions, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

Science

Each of your trips have a very unique ecology. This can present unique challenges to the animals there, and to conservation efforts.

- a. Choose an animal that lives in the area you took your trip to learn more about. Draw or write about your findings. Include at least one detail about how it survives in its habitat.
- b. Discuss and diagram the unique life history (the story of its life from birth to death) of one of the animals you see. Write a paragraph about your findings.
- c. Do some research about conservation in your trip location. Make observations on your trip about the ecology of the area and write a plan for conserving biomass and geological features.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil

Submission: A copy of your drawings, diagrams, maps, or designs, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

Social Studies

National Parks are an important part of conservation in America. Learn more about why we have parks, how we provide for them, and their importance.

- a. Draw a map of the United States and list/label as many parks as you can find. You can get help to look them up online, or map them as you visit them. Write about or draw one reason why it would be important to have protected areas.
- b. Find out how many parks there are. How many are protected wild areas and how many are historical places? Write a brief essay about your findings and why you think it is important to have these places.
- c. Do some research on the beginnings of national parks and why we have them. Is the government the only organization that could protect and provide for these areas? What would it be like if some of these locations were held privately? What improvements could be made or which features would be lost if the lands were private lands? Assume proper land management in one scenario, and poor land management in another. What incentives and natural pressures would a private owner have to keep the land responsibly? Write a short essay about your findings including your analysis of the different ways to provide for park areas and which you think is best.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil, smartphone (optional)

Submission: A copy of your writings/drawings, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

FUN FACTS

- Sequoia National Park, California is home to the largest living single-stem tree in the world - the wonderfully named General Sherman. The tree is approximately 275ft tall!
- The highest point in North America is Mount McKinley (aka Denali) standing at 20,320ft. It is in Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska.
- The parks are also home to the lowest point in the western hemisphere - Badwater Basin in Death Valley, California, which is 282 ft below sea level.
- The longest cave system in the world is at Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky. Currently, there is more than 3454 miles of cave mapped, with more to come.
- The largest park is Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska. According to the NPS, the park spans 13.2 million acres, an area bigger than Switzerland. It also covers three climate zones.
- The oldest national park is Yellowstone, Wyoming which was founded in 1872. The most recent addition to the 59 national parks list is Pinnacles, California, which was added in 2013.
- The Florida Everglades is the only true tropical forest in the northern hemisphere. Because of this it is home to plants and animals you can't find anywhere else, including the Florida Panther and twenty species of orchid.
- California and Alaska are the states with the most national parks – both have eight each.

National Parks

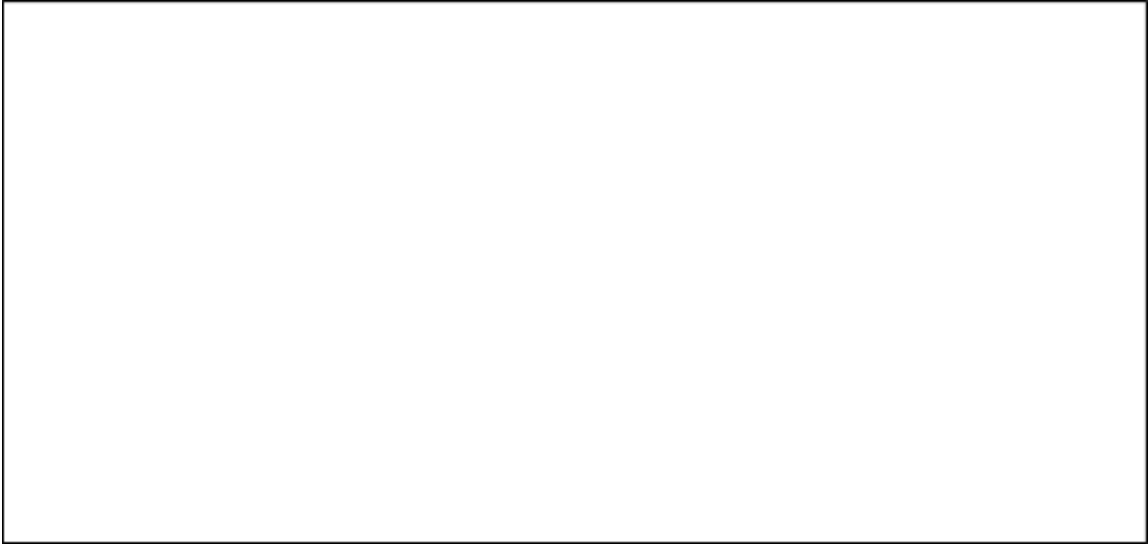
1. Draw a picture of your favorite place you've visited.



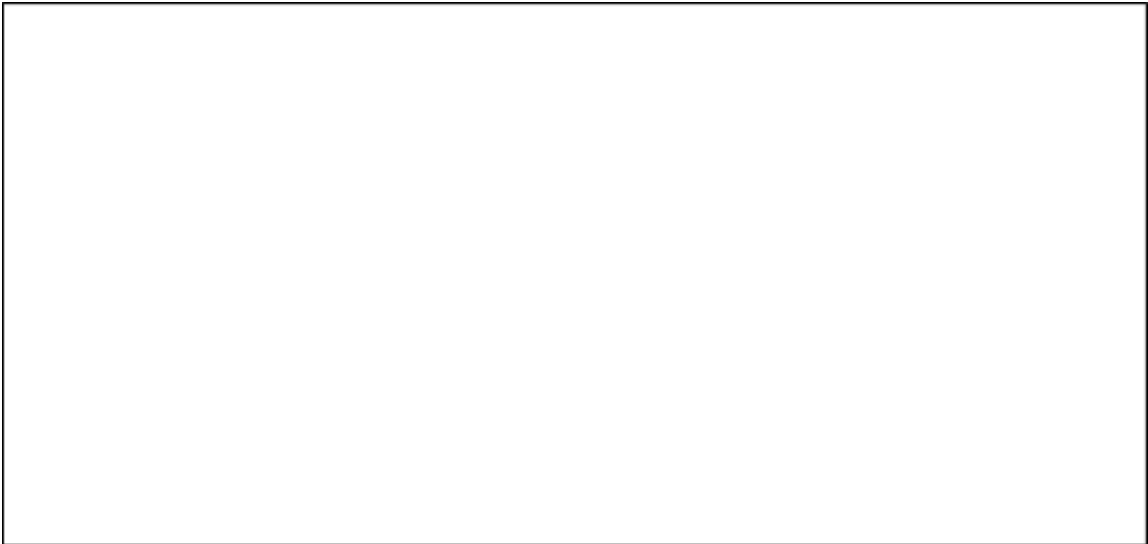
2. Describe your favorite place and why you love it.

3. Name three different types of trees you saw.

4. Draw or describe one of the birds you saw.



5. Draw a simple map of one of the locations you visited.



6. Describe three mammals you saw on your trip.
