Virtual Field Trip - National Parks
Ideal for All Grade Levels

Since March 1, 1872, the U.S has reserved its most beautiful and integral lands to maintain their natural beauty and support the ecosystem. With rising environmental peril, the national parks play an increasingly important role in the conservation of the ecosystem and wildlife across the country. This virtual field trip guide will help you explore the National Parks from home. By completing this curriculum, you will learn more about America’s National Parks and experience their true beauty.

Discover

1) Learn about how the National Parks got their start with this short video.

2) All grades: There are 62 National Parks in the U.S, and two in Texas. Locate both Texas parks and find an interesting fact about each. Then take a virtual field trip to a National Park of your choice. Find out what makes that park special and create a travel brochure or commercial. Be sure to include the environment, climate, wildlife, and other features of the park.
   a. Middle and High School: Research an endangered animal (if possible) that lives within the park you toured in step 1. Why is it endangered or threatened? What role does the National Park play in conservation of this species?

3) Complete the crossword puzzle about National Parks. You may need to do some research to find all of the answers. Check your work on the answer key.

4) All grades: National Parks are beautiful locations to visit and each have unique destinations within. Choose a National Park that you would like to visit and find fun places within. Add some of the attractions to your travel brochure or commercial.
   a. Middle School: Plan a trip to a National Park. Explain how you would get there and what you would need to pack. Some parks are very remote and have diverse climates. Make sure to take this into account when planning. Remember to include places you would like to see while there.
   b. High School: Plan a service trip to a National Park of your choice. Make sure to research what service project would be most beneficial to the park. Detail how
you would get to the park and the materials you would need, including your wardrobe. The weather in national parks can also depend on where you are in the park. For example, Olympic National Park in Washington has snowy mountains, temperate rainforest and rocky beaches. Make sure to plan accordingly. Remember to find any points of interest you would like to see while there.

**Connect**

1) Many National Parks offer virtual tours so you can explore the comfort of your home, you may even be able to have a chat with a park ranger!

   a. **Grades K-5**: Come up with 2-3 questions to ask a [Bryce Canyon](https://www.nps.gov/bryc/index.htm) (Utah) Park Ranger or become a [Junior Park Ranger](https://www.nps.gov/learn/programs/junior-park-ranger.htm) yourself!

   b. **Middle and High School**: Try any of the virtual tours listed below. Write down some interesting things you see and share with your family.

      i. [Wind Cave, SD](https://www.nps.gov/wica/index.htm)
      ii. [Channel Islands National Park, CA](https://www.nps.gov/chis/index.htm)
      iii. [Crater Lake, OR](https://www.nps.gov/crca/index.htm)

2) What does it take for a piece of land to be declared a National Park? A State Park? Find out the criteria.

3) Studies show that being outdoors can greatly improve your mental wellbeing. Even if you can't go to a National Park right now, get a dose of nature by going for a walk in your neighborhood or a local park. Appreciate the beauty around you while breathing in some fresh air.

**Take Action**

1) The National Parks and their unique animals are in peril. Global warming and increasing pollution have taken a toll on our National Parks, but how can you help?

   a. **Grades K-5**: Recreate a national park at your house by drawing, crafting and setting up different materials to symbolize the park. Take your family on a tour and tell them why parks are important.

   b. **Middle and High School**: Create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) video, essay, or poster about a specific issue in one, or all national parks. Present possible solutions in your PSA and the resources you would need to find a solution.