

National Park Fair

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
West Branch, Iowa



Kids Teaching Kids about our National Parks

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“National Park Fair: Kids Teaching Kids about our National Parks” written by Kristen Bergren. Booklet layout by Adam Prato. National Park Service, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, October 26, 2009.

Introduction

National Park Fair: Fun, Educational, and Inspiring

My husband and I traveled to many of our western national parks when our sons were young. They scrambled up trails in the Badlands, swam in the frigid mountain lakes in Grand Teton and listened to the Yellowstone ranger share stories around a campfire. I wanted my third graders to know the adventures, natural wonders, and history that our sons had discovered in our national parks so, the National Park Fair was created! On the day of the National Park Fair, student rangers arrive at school excited to share their knowledge of “their park” with the student visitors who come with passports and souvenir bags in hand. This guide will help lead you through a fun educational event that will inspire your students and their families to discover and support America’s best idea...our national parks.

Kristen Bergren
Teacher-Ranger, Herbert Hoover NHS

Teacher to Ranger to Teacher

Teacher-Ranger Kristen Bergren created this booklet as part of the National Park Service’s Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) program. Mrs. Bergren teaches third grade at Butterworth Elementary School in Moline, Illinois. She has over thirty years of classroom experience.

TRT provides professional development opportunities for teachers in National Parks. Through an agreement with a public school district, a teacher may be detailed to work as a park ranger for up to eight weeks in the summer. The Teacher-Ranger performs the duties of a park ranger-interpreter, reviews educational programming, and develops lesson plans and activities for use in the park and in the classroom. The Teacher-Ranger makes presentations or teaches lessons as a park ranger during National Park Week of the following school year.



For more information about TRT at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site or other National Parks, visit www.nps.gov/learn/trt.

National Park Fair Teacher Guide

The activities in this guide are based on third graders being the student rangers and family members and second graders as the visitors, but the National Park Fair can be adapted for all grade levels.

After your National Park Fair, you may be surprised how many parents tell you that they plan on visiting their child's park for their next vacation or how much they enjoyed learning and working with their son or daughter on this project. The National Park Fair can be small or big, but no matter the size of your event, it will be a time of learning, discovering and having fun while sharing one of our country's great gifts... our national parks. Enjoy!

If you have questions, comments, or ideas to share, please contact Kristen Bergren at ishibook@hotmail.com.

Introduce National Parks and National Park Rangers

National Parks

1. Why do people like to go to parks?
2. Have you been to a national park?
3. Why are parks important?
4. Who owns national parks?
5. Show a video about our national parks
 - a. What did you learn from the video that you didn't know before about the national parks?
 - b. Which national park from the video would like to visit?



National Park Rangers

1. What is a national park ranger's job?
2. How do you know who is a national park ranger?
3. What is a Junior Ranger?
4. Have you been a Junior Ranger before and for what park?
5. Read Rangers Activity and Sticker Book about national park rangers
 - a. Do national park rangers have just one job?
 - b. What job would like to have as a national park ranger?
 - c. Visit WebRangers (<http://www.nps.gov/webrangers>) for interactive Junior Park Ranger activities.

Selecting and writing to the national parks

Expose students to national parks through different media

Resources for learning about national parks are on page 8. They include:

1. Videos
2. Books (fiction and nonfiction)
3. Posters
4. Websites
5. Games

First letter to the parents



**Example on
page 10**

1. The letter explains the project.
2. Student and parents are asked to choose 5 parks.
3. Teacher selects one of the 5 choices so that each student has a different park. A list of parks is on page 11.

Student letter to the park ranger



**Example on
page 12**

1. For the initial draft, have the students fill in the blanks.
2. Teacher corrects spelling and content when needed.
3. Students address envelope.
 - a. Draw lines if necessary
 - b. Cut and copy addresses off of park's website
 - c. Use school stamp address or labels for return address
 - d. Include a label with school address in the envelope for the park's materials that will be sent
 - e. Students draw a picture of their park or school on back of envelope (to distinguish it from all the other mail the park receives!)
4. Students receive material from their national park in the mail (usually in 2 to 6 weeks)
 - a. Students should wait to open it at home.
 - a. Tape a note on the envelope that asks parents to look at the materials sent
 - b. And to store in a safe place until it is time to work on the project.

Student Ranger Responsibilities and Family Homework

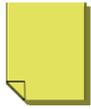
Second letter to the parents



**Example on
page 14**

A letter to the parents that has all the information they need to complete this project should be sent home 4 to 6 weeks before the National Park Fair date. A third letter reminding parents 2 to 3 weeks before the fair may be necessary.

National Park Report



Examples on pages 16-18

1. Using information student rangers received in the park, they fill in the blanks on the national park report form. There is a different form for national historic sites.
2. Student rangers should practice reading their report with a parent.

National Park Visitor Center

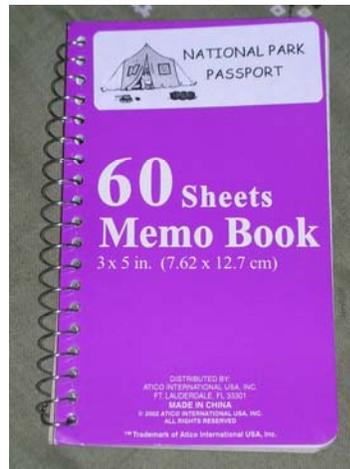
1. Using a tri-fold, student rangers will create an informative and attractive display of pictures, maps and brochures that they received from their national park.
2. Park name should be prominent on the display.

National Park Souvenirs

1. Souvenirs to give to visitors should be park related.
2. Suggestions: bookmarks and nature items
 - a. Yellowstone NP – paint rocks yellow
 - b. Biscayne NP – shells
 - c. Lincoln NHS – pennies

Passports and Souvenir Sacks

1. Each visitor and student ranger will have a passport to record his or her visit.
 - a. Visitors need to write one fact that they learned from the ranger.
 - b. Have student rangers be ready to give a simple fact for their visitors to write.
 - c. Have visitors bring a pencil.
 - d. Student rangers will then give a label with their parks' name on it to the visitor to put in their passport.
 - e. Visitors will receive a souvenir
2. Each visitor and student ranger will receive a souvenir sack for his or her souvenirs.
 - a. Before the fair, the visitors can decorate a lunch sack to collect their souvenirs.
 - b. Punch a small hole to make a handle with a piece of yarn.



Student Ranger Uniform Suggestions

1. Student rangers wear a white shirt, white blouse, or t-shirt with their park's name on it.
2. Student rangers wear tan or khaki pants, shorts or capri pants.

3. Student rangers wear a bandana (any color) around their neck.

National Park Fair Day

1. Reserve the gym or lunchroom to hold the National Park Fair.
 - a. Student rangers should set up their visitor centers before school begins.
 - b. Parent volunteers can help students set up.
2. When student visitors arrive, have them sit down so you can welcome them and give directions.
 - a. Parents should be encouraged to travel to all visitor centers because bored student rangers are not happy campers!
 - b. Sixth graders can be a great help for helping visitors.
3. Set a time limit for the visitors.
4. After visitors have left, student rangers can travel to visitor centers.
 - a. Divide student rangers in 2 groups.
 - b. Give each group 15 to 20 minutes to visit.

Suggested Materials for Teachers and Students

1. Teacher's list
 - a. Small notebooks or student-made passports (stapled booklets)
 - b. Lunch sacks for souvenir bags.
 - c. National Park puzzles
(Cut up pictures of national parks or nature pictures from calendars. Put name of park on the front of envelope, along with the small sample picture that are usually shown on the back of calendars.)
 - d. National Park books (My school librarian donated many to my classroom, because they weren't being circulated enough!)
 - e. National Park/nature magazines (Public libraries usually have used magazines for sale which may include *National Park* magazines and other nature publications.)
 - f. Bookmarks (I cut up card stock into bookmark-size strips. These are for students whose parents request them to use for souvenirs. The students and parents are responsible for putting their parks' name on them.)
2. Student's list
 - a. Trifold display board (They can be found at office supply stores and other retailers that carry school supplies.)
 - b. A bandana
 - c. Souvenirs created by student and parent... remember this is family homework!
 - d. Report
 - e. Labels with the park's name



Other Hints and Suggestions

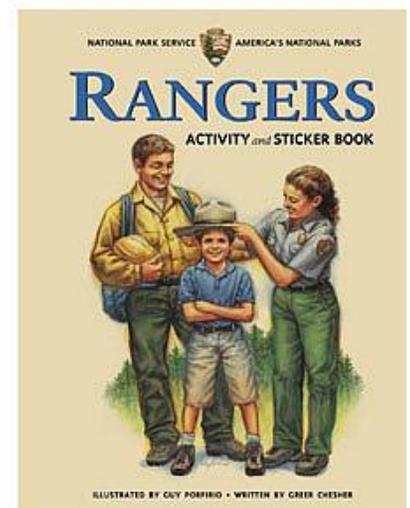
1. Send a third parent letter as a reminder 2 to 3 weeks before the fair (example on page 15).
 - a. Repeat the same information as the first letter.
 - b. Ask if they need help with any part of the project.
2. Students may need information from the Internet.
 - a. Some students will not receive information from their national park.
 - b. Some students do not have internet access at home so will need it printed at school.
3. Have a national park ranger speak at your fair.
 - a. Even if the closest park is an hour away, someone still may be able to come.
 - b. If a national park ranger isn't available, a ranger from another federal or state public land may be.
4. Help create a national park atmosphere.
 - a. Add a little ambiance with a campfire using a real log and tissue paper flames.
 - b. Serve "s'more" trail mix using teddy grahams, M&Ms, small marshmallows put in snack size bags.
5. Collect national park and nature calendars.
 - a. The pictures can be used to give to students for their visitor centers.
 - b. Cut a picture up in several large pieces to make a puzzle.
6. Have extra activities for those visitors in case the visitor centers are too busy or they need a break from their "travels".
 - a. coloring pages of national parks
 - b. puzzles made from national park calendars
 - c. looking at national park books
7. Keep a class library on national park books for kids to be checked out for this project.
8. Start a national park file.
 - a. Have a pocket folder for each state and some of the larger parks.
 - b. Collect brochures, maps, magazine articles and pictures.
 - c. Spread the word to parents and friends about your file.

Resources

The National Park Service official website, <http://www.nps.gov>, connects you to national parks. A web page linking you to teacher resources is at <http://www.nps.gov/learn>.

Lesson Plans and Activities for Children

1. *WebRangers*, <http://www.nps.gov/webrangers> is the National Park Service's on-line Junior Ranger program for kids of all ages.
2. *National Park Legacy Program*, <http://www.nps.gov/samo/forteachers/legacy.htm> combines a supplied worksheet with official park brochures which require the students to discover the unique geographic and cultural features protected in our national parks.
3. *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, <http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/for-educators/> includes lesson plans and activities from the PBS documentary.



Books, Video, and Games

Books and videos come and go, so check your libraries. Many National Parks sell educational materials through bookstores run by cooperating associations. Below are links to a few of the many national park cooperating associations. Many books, videos, and games are also available from commercial retailers.

1. Eastern National, <http://www.eparks.com>
2. Western National Parks Association, <http://www.wnpa.org>
3. Yellowstone Association, <http://www.yellowstoneassociation.org>
4. Great Smoky Mountains Association, <http://smokiesstore.org>

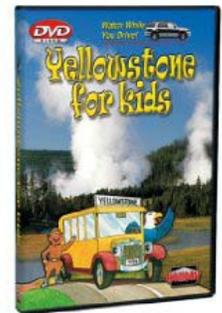
The Association of Partners for Public Lands has a complete list of national park cooperating associations at <http://www.appl.org/>.

Activity books for children:

1. National Parks Coloring Book, by Peter Copeland. Dover Publications, 1993.
2. Rangers Activity and Sticker Book, by Greer Chesher and Guy Porfirio. Eastern National, 2005.

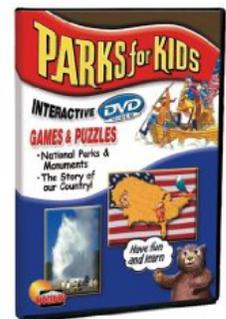
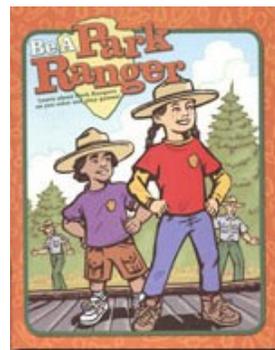
Some videos include:

1. "Walkin' Jim Stoltz: Come Walk With Me", Wild Wind Records, 1993.
2. "Kids Explore America's National Parks", Children's International Network, Inc., 1991.
3. "Lost! But Found, Safe and Sound", Association of Park Rangers, 1999. <http://anpr.org/lost.htm>
4. "Yellowstone National Park for Kids", Finley-Holiday Film Corp., 2006.
5. "National Parks for Kids", Finley-Holiday Film Corp., 2004.



National Park-themed games:

1. Discover America's National Parks 1,000-piece Puzzle, by White Mountain Puzzles.
2. National Parks Yahtzee, by Hasbro.
3. America's National Parks Monopoly, by USAopoly.
4. View Master National Park reels, by View Master.



Letter from Teacher to Parents #1

Dear Parents,

We are learning about national parks and national park rangers in preparation for our National Park Fair. Third graders will become student rangers and create a mini visitor center for the park they have chosen. We will write to the parks to receive information to help with this project. I've sent home a list of many of our national parks, national monuments and national historic sites. Each student will have a different park. Please look at this list with your child and choose 5 parks - one of which your child will be assigned to write a report on and make a poster or trifold of for our national park fair which will be held on _____. *I will send home more information later.* I will try to make sure your child gets one of the parks you chose. If there is a national park not listed that you are interested in, please include it in your selection. We are writing letters on _____ to the parks so this note needs to be returned by _____.

Thanks for your help,

Please return by: _____

Student's name: _____

Parent signature: _____

List the 5 national parks you have chosen:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List of National Parks, Monuments, and Historic Sites

More can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/>.

National Parks

Acadia, ME
Arches, UT
Badlands, SD
Big Bend, TX
Biscayne, FL
Bryce Canyon, UT
Canyonlands, UT
Carlsbad Caverns, NM
Channel Islands, CA
Crater Lake, OR
Death Valley, CA and NV
Denali, AK
Everglades, FL
Gates of the Arctic, AK
Glacier, MT
Glacier Bay, AK

Grand Canyon, AZ
Grand Teton, WY
Great Sand Dunes, CO
Great Smoky Mountains, TN and NC
Haleakala, HI
Hawaii Volcanoes, HI
Isle Royale, MI
Joshua Tree, CA
Katmai, AK
Kenai Fjords, AK
Kings Canyon, CA
Kobuk Valley, AK
Lake Clark, AK
Lassen Volcanic, CA
Mammoth Cave, KY
Mesa Verde, CO

Mount Rainier, WA
North Cascades, WA
Olympic, WA
Petrified Forest, AZ
Redwood, CA
Rocky Mountain, CO
Saguaro, AZ
Sequoia, CA
Theodore Roosevelt, ND
Voyageurs, MN
Wind Cave, SD
Yellowstone, WY, MT, and ID
Yosemite, CA
Zion, UT

National Historic Sites

Abraham Lincoln Birthplace, KY
Allegheny Portage Railroad, PA
Eleanor Roosevelt, NY
Eugene O'Neill, CA
First Ladies, OH
Ford's Theatre, DC
Fort Bowie, AZ
Fort Davis, TX
Fort Laramie, WY

Frederick Douglass, DC
Golden Spike, UT
Harry S Truman, MO
Herbert Hoover, IA
Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt, NY
Jimmy Carter, GA
John Fitzgerald Kennedy, MA
John Muir, CA
Knife River Indian Villages, ND

Lincoln Home, IL
Martin Luther King, Jr., GA
Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace, NY
Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural, NY
Thomas Stone, MD
Tuskegee Airmen, AL
Tuskegee Institute, AL
Ulysses S. Grant, MO

National Monuments

Agate Fossil Beds, NE
Booker T. Washington, VA
Cabrillo, CA
Canyon De Chelly, AZ
Capulin Volcano, NM
Casa Grande Ruins, AZ
Castillo de San Marcos, FL
Craters of the Moon, ID
Devils Tower, WY
Dinosaur, CO and UT
Effigy Mounds, IA
Fossil Butte, WY

George Washington Birthplace, VA
George Washington Carver, MO
Gila Cliff Dwellings, NM
Hohokam Pima, AZ
Jewel Cave, SD
John Day Fossil Beds, OR
Lava Beds, CA
Little Bighorn Battlefield, MT
Mount Rushmore, SD
Muir Woods, CA
Natural Bridges, UT
Navajo, AZ

Organ Pipe Cactus, AZ
Petroglyph, NM
Pinnacles, CA
Pipe Spring, AZ
Pipestone, MN
Statue of Liberty, NY and NJ
Sunset Crater Volcano, AZ
Walnut Canyon, AZ
White Sands, NM
Yucca House, CO

National Memorials

Jefferson National Expansion (St. Louis Arch), MO

President's Park (White House), DC

Letter from Student to Park Ranger

Date _____

Dear National Park Ranger,

I am a *(grade level)* student at *(school name)* in *(city and state)*. We are learning about our national parks. We are going to have a national park fair. I would like to be a student ranger for *(park name)*! I picked your park because *(state why you think it might be interesting)*. We have to make a visitor center, so I need information, brochures and maps. I think it would be *(positive exclamation!)* if you could send those things to me! I promise *(describe what kind of effort you will put into this project)*.

Also, could you tell me the favorite part of your job?

Thanks for all your help.

Your friend,

Letter from Teacher to Parents #2

Dear Parents,

The _____ grade National Park Fair will be held on _____. Your child's report, display and souvenirs are due the day of the fair. Please keep them at home until that time so that they don't get lost or damaged.

Your child will need your help with:

- Report: Fill in the information on the national park report form. Information may be obtained through the materials your child may have received in the mail, library books and magazines from the library and printing material from the internet (nps.gov/parks.html). If you do not have access to the internet, I can have your child use the computer at school. **Reports need to be in the child's handwriting; not copied by a parent or typed on a computer.**
- Display: Make a display about his/her park using a tri-fold (free standing) poster. Tri-folds can be purchased at _____. Tri-folds may have pictures, maps from the park, and postcards. Drawing and coloring pictures are also acceptable! **Please make sure that the name of the park is evident.**
- Souvenirs: Your child will need at least 30 souvenirs to hand out. They can be bookmarks with the park's name on it, picture of an animal from the park, a nature item that could be found at the park...or anything else that you and your child think of that **pertains to their park**. Our "tourists" will be _____.

When working with your child, extra help will be needed for:

- Rewording information for the report so they can understand and read it,
- Proofreading the report for errors,
- Practice reading out loud,
- Making a poster (make sure the name is prominent) and souvenirs.

The day of the fair, student rangers will need to wear a white or almost white t-shirt or a t-shirt with the park's name on it (sometimes parents and kids have designed their own shirt), or a white blouse and tan shorts, tan capri pants or tan pants and a bandana. Any questions, please call me!

Thanks for your support!

Letter from Teacher to Parents #3

Dear Parents,

Reminder: The _____ grade National Park Fair will be held on _____. Your child's report, display and souvenirs are due the day of the fair. Please keep them at home until that time so that they don't get lost or damaged.

Your child will need your help with:

- **Report:** Fill in the information on the national park report form. Information may be obtained through the materials your child may have received in the mail, library books and magazines from the library and printing material from the internet (nps.gov/parks.html). If you do not have access to the internet, I can have your child use the computer at school. **Reports need to be in the child's handwriting; not copied by a parent or typed on a computer.**
- **Display:** Make a display about his/her park using a tri-fold (free standing) poster. Tri-folds can be purchased at _____. Tri-folds may have pictures, maps from the park, and postcards. Drawing and coloring pictures are also acceptable! **Please make sure that the name of the park is evident.**
- **Souvenirs:** Your child will need at least 30 souvenirs to hand out. They can be bookmarks with the parks name on it, picture of an animal from the park, a nature item that could be found at the park...or anything else that you and your child think of that **pertains to their park**. Our "tourists" will be _____.

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The day of the fair, student rangers will need to wear a white or almost white t-shirt or a t-shirt with the park's name on it (sometimes parents and kids have designed their own shirt), or a white blouse and tan shorts, tan capri pants or tan pants and a bandana. Any questions, please call me!

Thanks for your support!

Help Needed!

- _____ *I would like to borrow a bandana.*
- _____ *I need another copy of the report form.*
- _____ *I would like paper sent home to make bookmarks.*
- _____ *I need information printed from a computer at school.*

Anything else? Please specify:

Child's name: _____

Parent signature and phone #: _____

Student Report Form #1, Parks and Monuments

My National Park Report, by _____

I am reporting on _____.

It is located in the state of _____.

This park is famous for:

Interesting fact(s) about this park are:

You can see many different plants and trees such as:

The wildlife in the park includes:

Visitors to the park like to see and do many things (name specific sites, activities and statistics):

I would like to visit (or I have visited) this park because:

Student Report Form #2, Historic Sites

My National Park Report, by _____

I am reporting on _____.

It is located in the state of _____.

This park is famous for:

Interesting fact(s) about this park are:

Visitors to the park like to see and do many things (name specific sites, activities and statistics):

I would like to visit (or I have visited) this park because:

CONGRATULATIONS

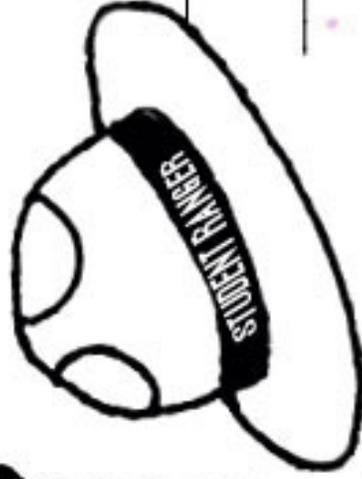
qualifies as an official STUDENT RANGER for

National Park

The National Park Fair

(date)

(teacher)



A. W. BUSTO