

What is Grand about Grand Canyon?

Duration

45-60 minute lesson although elements may be appropriately skipped to shorten the length of the lesson

Location

Classroom

Key Vocabulary

Historic, grand, chasm, abyss, yucca, gully, petroglyph, pictograph

Trunk Materials

Poster of Grand Canyon, map of Grand Canyon, *I See Something Grand, Rim to River: The Grand Canyon* DVD, Grand Canyon National Park Flash Cards, *The Grand Canyon National Park Coloring Book*, example Venn diagram, What is Grand about Grand Canyon review handout (to be copied)

Additional Materials and Equipment Not Supplied

Butcher paper (for the extension activity), DVD player, LCD projector, computer

Enduring Understanding (Big Idea)

Upon first seeing Grand Canyon most people stand in awe. Once more is known about the many unique features of the canyon, their awe grows to deep respect for this wondrous natural creation.

Essential Questions

1. What important characteristics help define the canyon as grand?

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Name at least 5 things found at Grand Canyon (other than rock layers).
2. Describe different reasons why people are attracted to Grand Canyon.

Instructor Background

Scientists measure the canyon along the course of the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon. By that standard, Grand Canyon is 277 river-miles long. Width and depth vary from place to place, but at Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim the Canyon is about ten air miles wide and one vertical mile deep. Early visitors assigned names to interesting rock formations. Although the canyon is best known for the beauty of the rock layers exposed there, many other aspects contribute to making it a unique and special place. These features include plants, animals, historic buildings, trails, and of course, the famous Colorado River. Many people have tried to describe Grand Canyon and their reactions to it through photography, paintings, drawings, stories, and music. Standing at the rim, one often hears the reactions of visitors. The canyon has been called many things, including 'The Big Ditch'.

Grand Canyon was first given federal protection as a forest reserve in 1893. President Theodore Roosevelt declared it a national monument in 1908. In 1919 it was made a national park, only three years after the creation of the National Park Service. The National Park Service is an agency of the Department of the Interior and oversees more than 80 million acres of public land in the United States. The mission of all national parks and monuments is the same:

"To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." National Park Service, Organic Act, 1916

Grand Canyon National Park protects 1,904 square miles, (1.2 million acres) including the canyon and plateaus on both the North and South Rims. Almost five million visitors come from all over the world to enjoy the Grand Canyon every year.

Suggested Procedures

1. Ask students to define the word "grand." What makes something grand? What are some things students describe as "grand?"
2. Create a list of questions students have about Grand Canyon. Read *I See Something Grand*. Discuss which of their questions were answered in the book.
3. Introduce the idea that the canyon is more than rocks and a hole in the ground. As *I See Something Grand* suggests, the canyon is home to a variety of plants, animals and people.
4. Depending upon the time available, pass out some or all of *The Grand Canyon National Park Flash Cards*. Each card has either a letter of the alphabet or a number on it as well as pictures and words about things found at Grand Canyon. Allow students time to look at the cards and read the back of the cards. Proceed by calling out alphabet letters and numbers and having students share something found on their card with their classmates. Or, have students line up in alphabetical/numerical order and share something from

their card. If you wish, keep a master list of things named. If possible and desired, display the cards in the classroom.

5. Time permitting, view the video (or a portion thereof) *Rim to River: The Grand Canyon*. (The video is 49 minutes long in its entirety.) See if any more student questions have been answered by the video.
6. Have students complete the “What is Grand about Grand Canyon” review handout. If students made a Grand Canyon folder in the lesson “Student Created Grand Canyon Folders” have them place the handout in their folder.

Evaluations (Assessments)

If desired, use the “What is Grand about Grand Canyon” review handout as a means to evaluate students.

Extension Activities

1. Create a Venn diagram comparing a park in your area and Grand Canyon (see example sheet).
2. Using butcher paper, create a backdrop canyon mural. Students will add things that are a part of Grand Canyon. Students might color or paint directly on the mural or color, cut, and glue pieces to it. If you wish, copy pages from *The Grand Canyon National Park Coloring Book* found in the trunk and use them for this project.
3. Begin a Grand Canyon word wall. Add vocabulary words, names of plants and animals that live in the canyon and adjectives describing the canyon on your word wall.

Tech Notes

If you do not have the capability of watching a DVD in your classroom, the PowerPoint presentation “The Grandeur of Grand Canyon” included on the CD includes a number of pictures of the canyon and river. Laminated copies of pictures of the canyon are included in the trunk materials with the Student Created Grand Canyon Folders lesson.

Standards

Arizona Social Studies Standards

S1:C1 Grade 4--P03; Grade 5--P04; Grade 6--P04

Arizona Reading Standards

S3: C1 Grade 4-- P08; Grade 5-- P08; Grade 6-- P09

Arizona Writing Standards

S2: C4 Grade 4—P01, Grade 5—P01; Grade 6—P01