

TRAVELIN' TRUNK LESSON:

# Why National Parks?

**DURATION:** varies

**LOCATION:** classroom

**KEY VOCABULARY:** national park, mission, protection, preservation

**TRUNK MATERIALS:** Map of Arizona, *Views of National Parks* DVD, *National Treasures* CD, Create a National Park Activity

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT (NOT SUPPLIED):** U.S. map, DVD player, computer, LCD projector, screen

**ARIZONA SCIENCE STANDARDS:** S1: C1, C2, C3, C4

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Students will be able to:

1. Locate Grand Canyon National Park on a U.S. and/or Arizona map
2. Explain the reasons national parks exist

## **BACKGROUND:**

Grand Canyon was first given federal protection as a forest reserve in 1893. It later became a national monument. 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 the plateaus on both the North and South rims. Almost five million visitors come from all over the world to enjoy Grand Canyon each year. Prior to the creation of Grand Canyon National Park, many people came to the canyon with dreams and schemes for making their fortunes. One of the things tried was mining. Copper, asbestos, uranium, and even bat guano were mined through a variety of methods. Tourist camps and hotels were built both in the canyon and on the rim. Building a railroad through the canyon was also entertained but never accomplished.

**SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:** Ask students the following questions:

1. Who has been to a national park? Which park or parks?
2. What was the coolest thing you saw there?
3. How was the national park different from other parks or attractions that you have visited? Using a map of the United States, ask students to locate the Southwest, then Arizona. Explain that Grand Canyon National Park is located in the northern part of Arizona.

## Why National Parks?



4. Why do we have national parks? What is their mission? (clarify as needed)

Explain to students that the materials and activities in the trunk are for their enjoyment and learning. It is hoped that as they increase their knowledge and appreciation of Grand Canyon National Park, they will also focus on the beautiful and interesting places near their homes that are worth visiting and protecting.

### EVALUATIONS:

Ask students to imagine what Grand Canyon might be like if it were not protected as a national park. What might have been built there, and what might it be like to visit, if you even could visit?! Note for your students that if it were not a national park, it might end up as private land, closed to some or all of the public.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

1. Ask students to think of a feature or a nearby area that they feel would be worthy of preserving as a park. Have them explain (either verbally or in writing) why. What would be the benefits of this area becoming a park?
2. As time permits, or as a follow-up to trunk use, have students design a park for the feature or nearby area, and draw a map of it with a key to show the layout. Would this park preserve and protect the area or feature? Would it provide for the enjoyment of visitors without destroying what made it special in the first place?

### RESOURCES:

<http://www.nps.gov>