National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

JUNIOR RANGER PARK EXPLORER

Ready, Set, Go!

Hello Junior Rangers!

Let's plan an awesome adventure!

With this booklet in your hand, you are on your way to becoming a Park Explorer! Use this booklet to plan every trip to a park. Each time you will learn something new and become a better Park Explorer.

We encourage you to complete the activities in this booklet with family and friends.

1.

Complete this booklet

Do your best. Finish as much as you can.

2.

Check your work

Show your booklet to a Park Ranger and impress them with your skills.

3.

Print your badge

Contact the park you will visit to see if badges are available. If not, cut out the one on the last page of this booklet and make your own!

1. Find a Park

With so many cool places to explore, where will your adventure take you this time? The easiest way to find a park is to visit **nps.gov/findapark**.

Search for parks by:

State
You might be surprised to find a national park very close to home.

Topic
Learn about aviation, forts, volcanos, and so much more!

Activity
Each park offers unique activities like camping, swimming, and biking.

Write the name of the park you will visit:

Activity

1. Mark where you currently live with an X on the map. If you live outside the United States, write the name of your country in the box below
2. Find the park you will visit on the map and mark it with another X
3. Connect the two Xs with a line

Name of your home country:

2. Get to Know the Park

You can find national parks in a big urban city, rural countryside, and faraway backcountry.

Take a few moments to browse the park's website.

Start with the "Learn About the Park" page.

- What kind of animals and plants will you see at the park?
- What does the land look like?
- Are there mountains, rivers, sand dunes?
- Are there cool buildings like forts, museums, and monuments?

Activity

Read the description of each type of park location. Color in the name of the location that best describes the park you will visit.

URBAN

- Inside of a big city
- Many places to buy food and drinks
- Paved trails for walking and biking
- Animals like squirrels, birds, or rabbits
- Good cell phone service

RURAL

- Outside of a big city
- Few places to buy food and drinks
- Dirt trails for walking and biking
- Animals like deer, eagles, or otters
- Poor or no cell phone service

BACKCOUNTRY

- Far away from a big city
- No place to buy food and drinks
- Very few dirt trails or no trails at all
- Animals like wolves, moose, and bears
- No cell phone service

Activity

Look at pictures on the park's website. Become familiar with the places you will see. Now look at the images below and circle the places you can find at the park. Choose as many places as you like!

Monument

Fort

Historic building

River

Lake

Canyon

Museum

Bridge

Ocean

Road

Mountain

Glacier

Desert

Volcano

Battlefield

Activity

Find one park attraction that you cannot find where you live. For example, the park might have a museum, a volcano, or a river that your town does not have. Draw or write the name of the attraction in the box below.

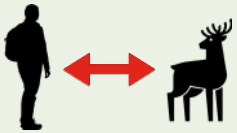
3. Protect Wildlife

National parks are home to majestic wildlife. All animals in parks are wild.

Yes, even the cute squirrel. You have the rare opportunity to view animals as they live and interact with each other in their natural homes. With this privilege comes responsibility.

We are all responsible for respecting and protecting wild animals and their home.

Wildlife
Animals that live in their natural habitat, depend on themselves, and should not interact with people.

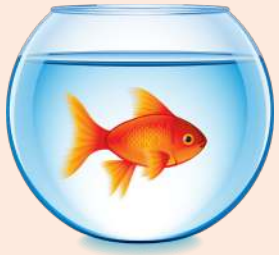


Keep Your Distance
Use binoculars or zoom on a camera lens to get a good view

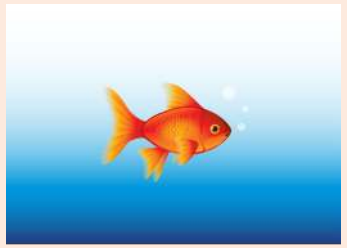
No Touching
Touching animals can hurt both you and the animal

No Feeding
Animals stay healthier when they do not eat human food

Some animals can live in parks and with people. Many people have a pet fish, pet bird, pet snake, and so on.

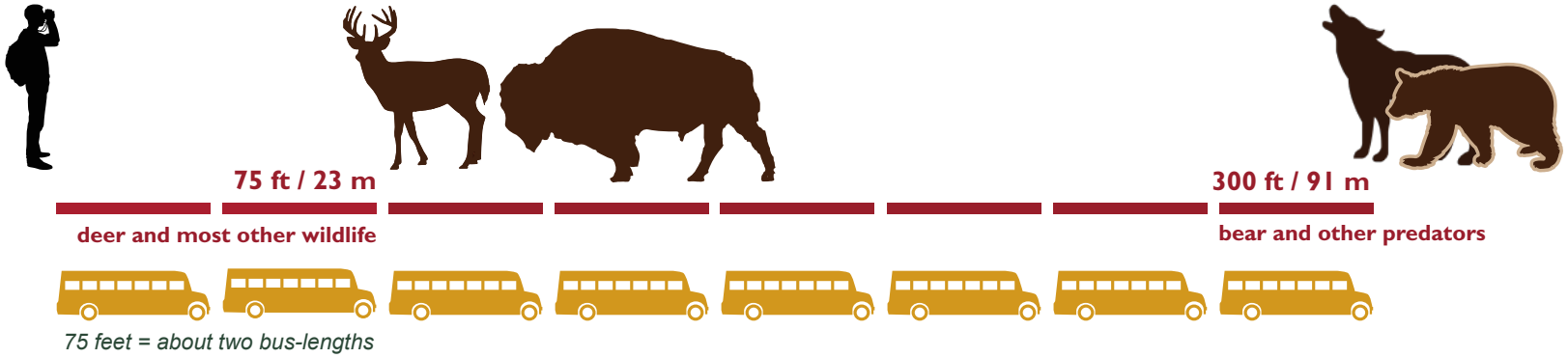


A fish in your home is a pet.



A fish in the park is a wild animal.

Safe Distance from Wildlife

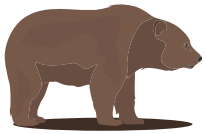


Activity

Which of these park animals are wildlife and which are pets? Circle or name your answer.

Wildlife

Pet



Wildlife

Pet

Wildlife

Pet

Wildlife

Pet

Wildlife

Pet

Wildlife

Pet

Wildlife

Pet

Activity

Go to the park's website and click on "Learn About the Park". Read about the animals that live in the park. Name or draw one park animal that you don't usually see where you live.

4. Check the Weather

Always check the weather before you visit the park. A hot summer day can quickly turn into a rainstorm. Gentle snowfall can turn into a blizzard. A Park Explorer is always weather ready!

Activity

Visit **weather.gov** and check the weather forecast for the days you will visit the park. Circle the image that best describes the weather at the park.

Sunny

Partly Sunny

Cloudy

Rainy

Lightning

Snowing

Activity

How will you prepare for the weather at the park? Look at the items below. Discuss with your family and friends which items you will bring with you. Circle your answers below.

Umbrella

Raincoat

Gloves

Hat

Sunglasses

Winter Hat

Jacket

Sturdy Shoes

5. Check Park Conditions

Nature is unpredictable. The weather can cause trails, campgrounds, and roads to close. Wildfires can affect air quality. Cellphone coverage may disappear from one spot to the other.

You can find the latest information on park conditions on the "Alerts" page on the park's website.

Types of Alerts

Danger

Immediate hazard

Caution

Possible hazard

Closure

Area in the park is closed

Information

Facts that may affect your visit

Activity

Review the park's alerts with your family and friends. List them below:

Discuss how the alerts may affect your plans to visit the park. Think about:

- What day and time you will visit the park
- Which areas of the park you can visit
- Which activities you can do

6. Pick Your Activity

There are many ways to have fun in the park. From outdoor activities to indoor exhibits, there is something for everyone!

Activity

Visit the "Plan your visit" → "Things to do" page on the park's website or ask a Ranger at the park. Review the list of activities available at the park with your family and friends.

Write down the activities that you would like to do:

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

Activity

Park Explorers respect and protect the special places they visit.

Read the Leave No Trace 7 Principles with your family and friends. Pick one principle and discuss how you will honor it during your visit.

Leave No Trace 7 Principles

1. Know Before You Go
2. Choose the Right Path
3. Trash Your Trash
4. Leave What You Find
5. Be Careful with Fire
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Kind to Other Visitors

© Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: www.LNT.org

Some outdoor activities need special gear.

Sturdy shoes for hiking.
Helmet for biking.
Life jacket for swimming.
Ropes for rock climbing.

Activity

Together with your family and friends:

- List each activity you plan to do in the park
- Discuss what gear you need to pack
- Write or draw the gear

	Activity Name	Gear for the Activity
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

7. Know Your Limits

The best adventure is an adventure ***everyone*** can enjoy.

Some people are new to the outdoors. Other people are very experienced in the outdoors. It is important to pick activities that can be successfully completed by everyone who is visiting the park with you.

Activity

Together with your family and friends:

- Pick one activity you will do at the park
- Read each question below
- Circle the answer that best describes your group
- Repeat this for each activity you plan to do at the park

Activity

Discuss the following questions with your family and friends:

- Is there an activity where you answered for all of the questions?
- Is everyone ready for the activities you have picked?
- If not, what will you do to prepare before your visit?

How many of you…	None of Us	Some of Us	All of Us
…have done this activity before?			
…have done this activity at this park before?			
…have done this activity during this time of year?			
…have done this activity at this level of difficulty?			
…have the gear for this activity (e.g. life jacket, helmet)			

8. Pack the 10 Essentials

Part of planning for your adventure is planning for an emergency. A small injury, sudden weather changes, or unexpected delays can happen to anyone.

Pack the 10 Essentials! They are a collection of items that can help you during an emergency.

Activity

Read the definition for each of the 10 Essentials systems. Match the definition with the essential items.

Navigation
Tools to find your way in the park

Sun Protection
Items to protect your skin and eyes from the sun

Extra Clothing
Layers of clothing to keep you warm

Light
Light to help you see in the dark

First Aid
Supplies to treat small injuries

Fire
Heat source to cook and keep you warm

Repair Tool
Tools to repair damaged equipment

Extra Food
Food to give you energy

Extra Water
Water to keep you hydrated

Shelter
cover to protect you from the elements

RANGER TIP

Everyone should pack a whistle with them. If you become lost, you can blow the whistle to help people find you.

What's in your bag?

Each person should carry their own 10 Essentials with them. This way if you become separated from your family and friends you have the items with you.

What if you don't have 10 Essentials for everyone to carry? At a minimum, each person in your group should have the following items in their packs:

- Extra water
- Extra food
- Extra layers of clothing
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Whistle

9. Share Your Trip Plan

You've done a great job planning your trip! It's time to fill out a Trip Plan.

A Trip Plan has information about where you are going and what you are doing. It can help Park Rangers help you during an emergency.

Share your completed Trip Plan with a Trusted Contact. This can be a parent, guardian, or adult family member who is not going to the park with you. They can alert authorities if you do not return from your trip.

RANGER TIP
Remember to check in with your contact when you return home.

Activity

1. Fill out the Trip Plan below or use your own piece of paper to write down the information
2. Together with you family and friends, decide with whom you will leave your Trip Plan
3. Share your Trip Plan

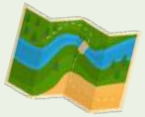
Who is going to the park with you?

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____



Where are you going?

Name of park: _____

Day and time you arrive at the park: _____

Day and time you return home: _____

What activities will you do?

Activities: _____

Location of activities (trail name, building name, etc.)

_____

What equipment are you taking?

Equipment: _____ Equipment: _____

Make: _____ Make: _____

Model: _____ Model: _____

Color: _____ Color: _____

License #: _____ License #: _____

How can you be reached?

Cell phone number: _____

Emergency alert device type: _____

10. Hug-A-Tree

Anyone can become lost in the outdoors, child or adult.

Something can catch your eye and you unintentionally leave your family and friends to explore it. Before you know it, you cannot find your group.

Here is what you can do to prevent becoming lost:

Know Your Route
Find the places you will visit on the park map and pay attention to any landmarks along the way

Wear Bright Clothes
It can help people see you in a crowd

Pack a Whistle
Blowing a whistle can help people find you

Stay with Your Group
The best way to not lose your family and friends is to always stay with them

Tell an Adult
If you must leave your family and friends, tell an adult where you are going

Take a Buddy
Take someone with you if you must leave your family and friends

What happens if you do become lost?

It's ok. Your family and friends are not mad at you. They are worried.

Many people are worried about you. They are all looking to find you. This is what you can do to help them find you.

A. HUG-A-TREE

Find a tree, hug it, and stay put. If you do not see a tree around you, your "tree" can be a park bench or a big rock. The important thing is to stay in one place.

What if your "tree" has thorns, bugs, or sticky sap? You can just stand next to it.

Activity

Circle the "tree" being hugged in each picture.

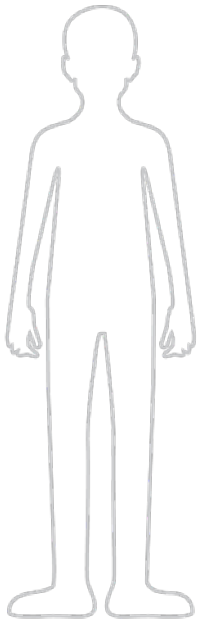
B. KEEP WARM AND DRY

The temperature outside can change throughout the day. If you begin to feel cold:

- Put on any extra layers of clothing you have with you
- Button or zip up all layers
- Put on a hat or pull up the hood of your jacket
- Tuck your pants into your socks

Activity

Draw the extra layers of clothes you will bring with you.



C. MAKE YOURSELF BIG

You may hear voices calling your name. Or a helicopter fly overhead. These are the people who are looking for you. Help them find you by making yourself big.

- Big is blowing your whistle
- Big is waving your arms
- Big is flashing your flashlight

Activity

Match each picture to the right "big."

Big is blowing your whistle

Big is waving your arms

Big is flashing your flashlight

CONGRATULATIONS!

Print and cut to make your badge.

As a Junior Ranger Park Explorer

I promise to

Explore

The unique landscape, wildlife, and fun activities of each national park

Learn

How to choose and prepare for activities that can be enjoyed by all my family and friends

Protect

The special places that are national parks

Special thanks to:

LEAVE NO TRACE

The Leave No Trace organization. To learn more about Leave No Trace please visit **www.LNT.org**

The National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR). For more information on the Hug-A-Tree and Survive program visit **https://nasar.org/education/hug-a-tree**