

## Science

### Genre

#### Nonfiction Articles

give an account of actual people, living things, or events.

### Text Feature

An **Interview** is a dialogue between two people. It takes the form of questions and answers in which information is exchanged.

### Content Vocabulary

**formations**

**geysers**

**archaeologists**

# Our National Parks

by Tanya Sumanga

**A**mong the greatest treasures of the United States are its national parks. These parks contain an amazing variety of natural wonders, including plants, wildlife, rock **formations**, **geysers**, and waterfalls. More than 50 national parks attract visitors every year. Some parks are quite large. Big Bend National Park in west Texas encompasses more than 800,000 acres of the Chihuahuan Desert along the United States–Mexico border. Famous for its many different environments, the park offers sharp contrasts in wilderness scenery. The Rio Grande curves through the park in a big bend, creating deep canyons. Rugged mountains, a desert plain, and unusual rock formations make up the park's landscape. Big Bend is noted for its rare forms of animal and plant life, such as roadrunners and prickly pears.

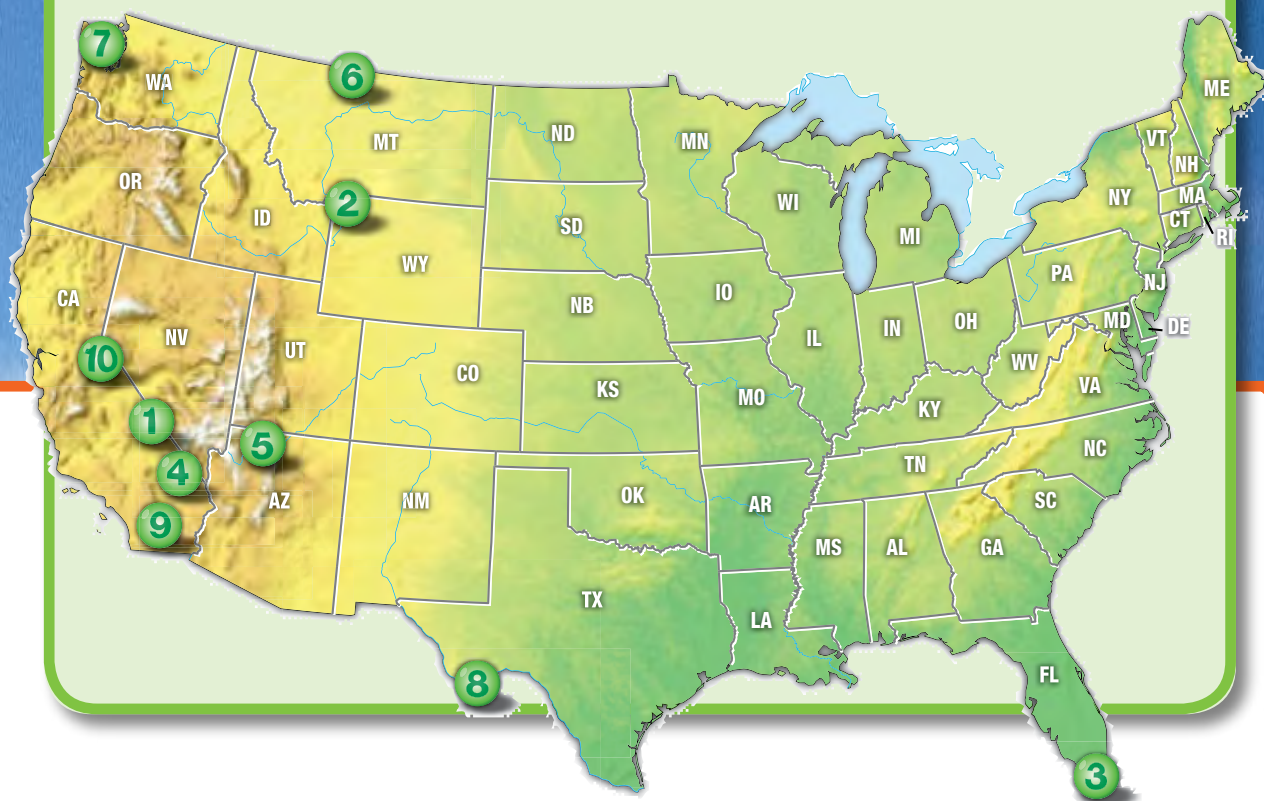


## 10 Largest National Parks in the lower 48 States (as of 1997)

- 1 Death Valley National Park  
California
- 2 Yellowstone National Park  
Wyoming
- 3 Everglades National Park  
Florida

- 4 Mojave National Preserve  
California
- 5 Grand Canyon National Park  
Arizona
- 6 Glacier National Park  
Montana

- 7 Olympic National Park  
Washington
- 8 Big Bend National Park  
Texas
- 9 Joshua Tree National Park  
California
- 10 Yosemite National Park  
California



**Archaeologists** have found and studied pictographs (painted art) and petroglyphs (carved art) on rock walls and artifacts here that are nearly 10,000 years old. They reveal information about early Native American cultures and what life may have been like long ago.

The people who take care of national parks and who guide

visitors through the parks are known as park rangers. Park rangers at Big Bend tell visitors how the area has changed over thousands of years.

People who like working outdoors and respect nature often become park rangers. Many park rangers enjoy reading about nature and studying the sciences.



## Our reporter interviewed Dan Levitt, a park ranger who works at Big Bend National Park.

**Reporter:** What are the kinds of things you have to do when you are a park ranger? Do you give talks about the park? What is the typical day for a park ranger like?

**Dan:** There really is no typical day. We do a lot of different things. We do campfire presentations where we show photos and read a narrative. I'm doing one on the Rio Grande and its water quality. We talk about water, the earth, and plants and animals found here in the park. We also tend to the park trails and operate visitor centers.

**Reporter:** What did you study to become a park ranger?

**Dan:** I have a bachelor's degree in geography, but you can study anything from geology to paleontology to biology. I got my start by volunteering at various parks. Here I find that I use all the science courses I've taken.

**Reporter:** What would be the most important qualities for a ranger to have?

**Dan:** I would say dedication, understanding your duties, being loyal to the park, and wanting to help visitors.



Park Ranger Dan Levitt



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Created exclusively for park rangers, this is the first time it is being offered to the public at the low, low price of \$19.95.

"Chase Away Bug Spray' is the only bug spray I trust!" says Junior Park Ranger Charles "Chipper" Cruz.



### Connect and Compare



1. Reread the interview on page 694. What do you think made Dan Levitt want to become a park ranger? What qualities does he think a park ranger should have? **Reading an Interview**
2. Do you think it is important to preserve national parks? Why or why not? **Analyze**
3. Think about "Our National Parks" and *Skunk Scout*. Do you think either of the boys or Uncle Curtis would make a good park ranger? Use examples from the texts to explain your answer.

#### **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



### Science Activity

Choose a national park, and research some interesting facts about its geography, and its plant and animal life. Write a two paragraph summary of your research.



Find out more about national parks at [www.macmillanmh.com](http://www.macmillanmh.com)



# Write How-To Instructions

## Writer's Craft

### Time-Order Words

In giving directions, writers use **time-order words** such as *first*, *next*, *then*, and *finally*. These sequence words help the reader follow the steps in the correct order.

I started the directions for making my favorite recipe with a list of required items.

I used a sequence word for each step in the process.

## How to Make a Veggie Delight

by Michelle Z.

Plan to make this delicious dish when the campfire coals are hot. First, gather a 12-inch piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil, pre-cut vegetables, water, butter, salt, and pepper.

Next, fold each piece of foil in half horizontally. Press flat and fold the sides shut. Rub the inside of the pocket with butter. Then, fill it with the vegetables until it is about two-thirds full. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and dot with more butter. Next, pour in about a tablespoon of water.

Close the top shut, and get an adult to place the pocket on the hot coals. Let it cook for 15 minutes on each side. Finally, enjoy your Veggie Delight!

## Your Turn

Write a how-to paragraph telling the reader how to complete a process. You might explain how to make a healthful snack, play a game, or complete a task. Remember that sequence words help the reader complete the steps in the proper order. Use the writer's checklist to check your writing.



## Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Did I write about something that I know how to do?
- Organization:** Did I present the steps in the right order?
- Voice:** Did I use an instructional tone rather than a conversational tone?
- Word Choice:** Did I use **time-order words** to help the reader understand when each step should be done?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I use simple, easy-to-read sentences?
- Conventions:** Did I use adverbs like “more” and “most” correctly? Did I check my spelling?