

The Muir Image

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Overview

Topic: Our National Park system, a famous American environmentalist, stewardship of the land, and geography. Introduce your class to John Muir, a 19th century American environmentalist and learn how his actions helped encourage the development of our National Park system. Each student will discover how s/he can play an integral part in continuing to protect our wilderness areas by making appropriate, informed choices. A culminating activity will allow your students to design a project that has a positive impact on the environment.

Length of Lesson

2-3 two hour blocks

Instructional Video/Technology

Portraits: The Americans #9, John Muir 
American Heritage Dictionary on CD-ROM
 overhead projector
 (Extensions) World Wide Web access

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- define environmentalist and wilderness
- explain the importance of the National Park system
- understand the relationship between John Muir and the National Park System
- demonstrate stewardship of the environment
- demonstrate an understanding of the five basic themes of geography
- work collaboratively

(This lesson addresses Va. SOLs History 4.2; Science 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7; English oral language, reading, writing, literature, and research; and Computer/Technology 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4.)

Materials

Handouts for each student:

(All five handouts are attached.)

- 3 copies of the Word Study Investigation
- GEO-Force checklist (based on National Geographic Society's 5 basic themes for geography)
- Muir Image content organizer

For each cooperative team of 3 or 4 students:

- art paper (several pieces of different colors)
- tape/ glue stick
- scissors
- markers/ colored pencils
- United States map showing physical features
- 1 "limiting factor" index card (ideas for limiting factors: large herds of domestic goats, polluting factory upstream, lumber company, amusement park, shopping mall, dump site, etc.)

For the teacher (make transparencies):

- Word Study Investigation web for the word environmentalist (attached)
- Muir Image content organizer (attached)



Thirteen - WVNET

Day One

Pre-Viewing Activities

1. Distribute handouts to each student and explain that they will need to use only the first page at this point. Have students complete the Word Study Investigation web for: Wilderness. Use dictionaries, including the *American Heritage Dictionary* on CD-ROM. Optional: model the process on an overhead projector, allowing students to add to their webs at their desks. Follow with a discussion in which the students can share their histories, sentences, synonyms, and illustrations.
2. Team building activity: Designing an American Wilderness — Inform the students that they are going to work with their team members, during the next hour to design a small model of a wilderness area, using art materials.
3. Have students brainstorm the components of their future wilderness area, keeping in mind the 5 major geography themes on their GEO-Force checklist (10 minutes).
4. When they have decided on their area, have students get supplies (construction paper, scissors, tape, markers) from supply table and work at creating their wilderness area (10 minutes).
5. After 10 minutes have students continue to create, but use non-verbal communication only (20 minutes).
6. American Wilderness Tour: Have teams share their creations, emphasizing 3 important characteristics (20 minutes).
7. Optional: Have teams grant awards to other teams for specific outstanding wilderness characteristics.
8. Provide the students with positive feedback about the construction and details they included in their wilderness areas. Characteristics to emphasize: land forms, animals, plants, trails, visitor centers and points of interest (refer to the GEO-Force checklist).

Focus for Viewing

1. Have students complete a Word Study Investigation for the word: environmentalist. Follow with a discussion and have students share their histories, sentences, synonyms, and illustrations. In the related words area of their investigation sheet, encourage them to think of names of environmentalists to add.
2. Explain to the students that in this video they will discover how one environmentalist played a very important role in protecting America's wilderness areas. They will be learning who this famous person was in just a few moments. Tell them their task during the video will be to notice things about this person's life, what types of things happened in his lifetime, and how his actions influenced others to make informed choices about America's wilderness.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER **Pause vs. Stop**

When using a video interactively with students, teachers need to decide when to use **PAUSE** and when to use **STOP**. **PAUSE** the video when the anticipated discussion or activity will take less than two minutes. **STOP** for longer periods. Pausing for too long at one time can cause video heads on the VCR to become clogged which may require cleaning to correct.

Viewing Activities

1. **Focus Task:** In this first segment tell students that they will be hearing a lot about the year 1890. Ask them to remember several characteristics about that year. **START Portraits: The Americans #9** at the beginning of the video, showing portraits of the many famous Americans in the series. **PAUSE** immediately after the narrator, John Robbins, says, "The federal government named Yosemite Valley, in California, a National Park" (visual cue: framed picture of mountainous region). Ask the students to name the things mentioned (year-1890, new states- Idaho and Wyoming, president at the time-Benjamin Harrison, environmental concerns- insect damage, and population-63 million.) List these on the board.

Discuss with the students comparisons and contrasts in their own life (present year, present president, present environmental concerns, etc.). **REWIND** to the beginning of *Portraits: The Americans #9*.

Memory Function

Most newer VCRs have a feature often referred to as “memory.” If the memory function is “on,” then when rewinding OR fast forwarding a tape, the tape will automatically stop at zero. If the counter is purposely reset or zeroed at a particular place in a program, the memory function can be used as a quick way to replay a segment or to cue to a different segment on the same tape.

2. Ask students to listen this time for the name of the environmentalist who was so important in 1890. **PLAY. PAUSE** at the full screen illustration of John Muir. Follow with a brief discussion about what students may already know about John Muir.
3. Have the students turn to the Muir Image content organizer in their packet. On the overhead projector, display the Muir Image content organizer transparency. Add John Muir’s name to the left hand side of the chart. Have students do the same on their organizers. Inform the students that they will be adding information as we watch and discuss the video.
4. Instruct the students to listen and watch the video to discover some of the things about John Muir’s childhood (where he was born, where he grew up, what he did as a child, what his family life was like). **RESUME** the video. **PAUSE** after the narrator says, “John won a special award for ingenuity at the fair and his inventions were the most popular things on exhibit.” Follow with a discussion. Ask: What are some of the things John Muir did during his childhood? Describe a time when you had to carefully schedule your day to allow you to do something that you really wanted to do. How are the activities in John Muir’s life alike or different than the things you do? Have students add their name to the other side of the Muir Image organizer and fill in things about their childhood.

5. Tell students that during the next part of the video, you would like them to discover information about John Muir’s young adulthood. **RESUME. PAUSE** after the narrator says, “After college he wondered what to do next.” Again follow with a discussion. Ask: Compare Muir’s educational interests to yours. How does a person select a career and how do they prepare for it? Have each student add information to their content organizer. Encourage the students to make a prediction about what type of career John Muir may have after college, based on what they know about his life in college.

6. Tell the students to listen carefully to the next segment of the video to find out what job John Muir did after college. What discoveries did he make? What tools did Muir use to help him with his discoveries? What decisions did he have to make? **RESUME. PAUSE** after the narrator says, “When he couldn’t find any work in Canada, John returned to Indianapolis and worked in a factory that made wagon wheels.” Discuss with the students why Muir may have decided to take up odd jobs and what his skills were in these areas. Discuss briefly what a factory might have been like in the late 1800s. Discuss why John Muir may have chosen factory work over a career in the outdoors. Briefly discuss economic and career choices.

7. Tell them that in the next clip something surprising is going to happen to drastically change John Muir’s life. **RESUME. PAUSE** the tape after the narrator says, “Think how that might have felt. Blind- not being able to see all the things he loved in nature.” Discuss the accident; discuss sympathetic blindness and what it would be like to be all of a sudden blind.

8. Discuss how John Muir must have felt at this point in his life. Have the students make predictions about Muir’s future. Tell them to listen carefully to discover what his “big decision” was. **RESUME** the tape briefly and **PAUSE** when the narrator says that he regained his sight and plans to “devote his life to looking deeply at nature all over the United States.”

9. In the final video segment, ask the students to discover where John Muir ended up at the end of a

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1,000 mile journey, what his profession was, and what he chose to do in his spare time. **RESUME.** **STOP** when John is at the waterfall standing on the edge of a cliff and immediately after the narrator says, “Suddenly, there was a wind that blew the waterfall back against the rock wall.” (A good cliff hanger.) Ask students to predict the outcome of this situation. Remind them, if necessary, that John Muir becomes a famous environmentalist, so could this be the end? List the things that John did while living in the Yosemite Valley. Based on what they know about his life so far and his determination, what might the rest of his life be like?

10. To prepare the video for the 2nd day lesson, **REWIND** the video back to where Muir moves to the Yosemite Valley. Audio cue: The narrator states, “He went directly to the wildest place he could find—the Yosemite Valley”.

Post-Viewing Activities

1. Have students complete their Muir Image content organizers by adding information about their own lives, substituting hopes, dreams, and wishes to the young adulthood/ adult area of the organizer. Allow students time to compare and contrast their lives (and plans) with what they now know about John Muir’s life. This can be done with student teams, in pairs, or whole group.

2. Have students individually predict what will happen next in John Muir’s life and write this on the back of their Muir Image organizer.

3. Think-Pair-Share Question: What characteristics allow John Muir to fit the definition of environmentalist?

- individually answer this question by jotting down an idea or two
- team members share their ideas with each other
- teams share their ideas with the class

4. Have students add to their Word Study Investigation webs information they have discovered about the word environmentalist.

Day Two

Pre-Viewing Activities

1. Team Strengthening Activity: **IMPACT!** — Tell the students that today we are going to dig for more information about America’s wilderness so we can better understand it. Allow the students approximately 10 minutes to make enhancements to their wilderness area models, which they made in the previous lesson.

2. Have each team send a representative from their team to a designated area of the classroom (or outside the doorway, if possible).

3. Assignment for the remaining team members: brainstorm and list as many reasons why your wilderness is important to America.

4. Assignment for team representatives: Each representative randomly selects a limiting factor card and reads it. Break the news to them that the limiting factor they hold in their hand is changing the nature of their wilderness area. They must go back to their wilderness areas and explain to their team members how this limiting factor will ultimately change their wilderness area. Send them back to their groups to share their news.

5. Allow for disequilibrium.

6. Finally, suggest to the students to use creative problem solving to arrive at a solution to protect their wilderness area. Lead them, if necessary, to the idea of creating National Parks.

7. Provide the students with the opportunity to name their park, recycle their limiting factor card, and relate this simulation to situations in the real world where people get upset and sides are taken in exactly the same way.

Focus for Viewing

Have students complete a Word Study Investigation web for: National Park. Follow with a discussion and have students share their histories, sentences, synonyms, and illustrations. Briefly review what the

students learned about John Muir in the previous lesson. Tell the students that today, as they view the video you would like them to discover how John Muir encouraged the development of our National Park system.

Viewing Activities

1. In this first segment, ask the students to listen for limiting factors that effected the wilderness area where John Muir lived. **PLAY**, beginning the video at the point where it was rewound to at the end of the previous lesson. Audio cue: The narrator states, “He went directly to the wildest place he could find—the Yosemite Valley.” **PAUSE** when the female narrator says, “Every year, more and more people came,” and the male narrator says, “And no one seemed to care what the people did.” Discuss. Compare and contrast what happened in John Muir’s life to what happened in the wilderness areas that they created.

2. In the next segment, watch for how John Muir’s observations, discoveries, and choices encouraged the development of our National Park System. **RESUME** the video. **PAUSE** directly after John Robbins, the narrator, says, “He signed an executive order making many of the valleys and the forests surrounding Yosemite National Parks,” Visual cue: Muir is shown shaking hands with president Theodore Roosevelt. Follow with a discussion about John Muir’s contributions to protecting the wilderness. How did John Muir encourage other people to support his ideas about protecting the environment?

3. Ask the students to brainstorm where they might find more information about John Muir. Tell them in the next clip to listen for the names of some of the books written by John Muir as well as books written about him. **PLAY. STOP** at the end of *Portraits: The Americans #9*. Allow students time to jot down resources that interest them. **REPLAY** this segment of the video, if necessary. Suggest to the students information can also be found on the World Wide Web.

Post-Viewing Activities

1. Discussion: How was Muir a typical American? What made him famous? How did his choices keep natural areas from being destroyed? How did his actions encourage the development of our National Park system? Further discuss the importance of National Parks.

2. As a class or in small groups have the students access the Sierra Club home page on the World Wide Web at <<http://www.sierraclub.org>> Encourage the students to find more information about John Muir and to keep a record of the information they find and important web addresses. What else can they find out about John Muir’s boyhood? Who were the people important to John Muir? Why were these people important? How is John Muir related to geography? What is the Sierra Club John Muir Education Project? How can classrooms get involved in the project? Use this as a starting point for the following activity and for Action Plan #2.

3. In teams of 3 or 4, have students brainstorm projects that children can do to make a positive impact on our natural environment (ideas: planting a tree or trees, picking up litter, supporting recycling, maintaining a nature area, etc.). Have each team select one idea, and orally present their idea to their classmates.

Assessment

1. Students will be authentically assessed through participation in discussion groups as well as through classroom participation.

2. Students will show evidence that they understand what an environmentalist is and explain the importance of the National Park system.

Action Plan

1. The class will participate in a project for the National Park system, allowing each student the opportunity to make a positive impact on our National Park system.

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2. Have students use the National Park activity (in Post Viewing Activity #2, above) or an idea brainstormed in the post viewing activities to develop an action plan that allows the class to participate in the John Muir Youth Awards U.S.A. This is a national program designed to encourage students to learn about the environment and to use John Muir's ideas to make appropriate choices about our environment. To learn more about this program contact Harold Wood, chairman of the Sierra Club John Muir Education Project at: <hwood@lightspeed.net> or write to : Sierra Club John Muir Education Project, P.O. Box 3543, Visalia, California 93278.

3. Take the class on a field trip to a National Park and have students participate in that park's Junior Ranger Program. Shenandoah National Park has a wonderful photograph exhibit at the Byrd Visitor Center showing nature scenes. Each photo is accompanied by a quote by famous environmentalists and many by John Muir.

Extensions

Internet Resources/Sites:

<<http://www.sierraclub.org>> It contains information about John Muir and the Sierra Club including: fact sheets, photographs, resource lists, and lesson plans.

Using the Web, each student (or collaborating pairs) will research a national park. With their information students will use National Geographic's 5 organizing themes (GEO-Force checklist) to create a travel brochure for their chosen park. Students will orally present their work.

Geography/Art: Divide students into teams based on the geographic regions of the United States. Give each group a map of the United States showing locations of National Parks (available from National Parks). Using large art paper have each team construct a map of their region showing the national park sites in their region.

Science: Have students research an environmental group or an environmentalist. Possibilities for presentations of research include skits, reports, video, posters, mock interviews, etc.

Language Arts: Read books about John Muir or excerpts from books by John Muir.

Geography: Create a class map showing all 365 (plus!) national park locations.

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Word Study Investigation

by _____

Synonyms:

**Part of
Speech:**

National Park Illustration:

Word Origin :

Definition:

Related Words:

Sentence:

Geo- Force Checklist



Location:

absolute location

- longitude _____
- latitude _____

relative location

- describe how this location is perceived by humans

Place:

physical characteristics

- climate: _____
- vegetation: _____
- resources: _____
- topographic features: _____

cultural characteristics

- things added by humans: _____
- things altered by humans: _____

Human- Environment Interactions:

ways the environment molds humans:

ways human shape the environment:

Movement:

the effect of “things” moving to the location:

the effect of “things” moving away from the location

Region:

U.S. topographic region: _____

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Content Organizer

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WITH REGARD TO:

	Childhood	

WITH REGARD TO:

	College	Hopes, Dreams, Wishes . . .

WITH REGARD TO:

	Career Choices	Hopes, Dreams, Wishes . . .