

Nebraska State Parks Centennial Lesson Plan



Activity Title:

My Nebraska, My Parks

Grade Level:

Upper elementary

Methods:

There are many state park and reservoir properties offering a variety of locations, activities and places to stay. During this activity students will create a map and label park areas close to their community. Older students will then select a park that best fits their interests and plan a 3-day trip.

Materials:

Computer

Paper

Pencil

Road map

State Standards:

SS 3.4.3.a; SS 4.3.2.b; SS 5.3.3.a;

Objective:

Students will 1) research a state park in their area, 2) using a map, plan a trip to these areas, 3) present highlights of this park to classmates.

Background:

Every park is unique in what a visitor can see and do. There are parks with large forests, lakes, rivers or prairies. There are parks with historic buildings or forts. There are parks that offer long hiking trails, boating, a water park, or horseback riding. Parks offer a variety of places to stay: tent and RV camping, cabins, a lodge or even in a train caboose! There are many sources of information to help plan a park trip. Planning ahead will ensure that the visitor and the park are a perfect match.

Vocabulary:

Reference: the use of a source of information in order to ascertain something

Landforms: a natural feature of the earth's surface

Topography: a detailed description or representation on a map of the natural and artificial features of an area

Itinerary: a travel document recording a route or journey

Step-By-Step Instructions:

1. Find the closest state area (state park, state recreation area (SRA) or state historic park (SHP)) to your town.
2. Plan the route you would take to get there from where you live by using a road map. What roads would you take? How many miles do you have to travel? How long will it take to get there?

3. Download the map for your selected park. After reading the park's description, describe the landforms (hilly, flat, canyons), water features (lakes, rivers, streams), you might find.
4. Looking at the park map's description and program offerings, plan what activities you would like to do during your visit. Create a trip itinerary.

Example: Wildcat Hills Trip

Day 1- Arrive at the Wildcat Hills SRA. Set up a campsite and tent.

Go to Nature Center

Check out displays

Pay for campsite and park permits

Grab postcards!

Eat lunch

Hike (grab trail maps from Nature Center)

Visit Shooting Sports Complex (shoot archery)

Make supper/dinner

Have a campfire and tell ghost stories

Look at the stars

Time for bed

5. Draw a poster of the park you would like to visit. Make sure to include all of the cool sights, offerings, animals, plants or history!

Focus Questions:

1. What makes this park the coolest?
2. Why do you want to visit this park over the others?
3. How far away is the park from your town?
4. What activities will you do while at the park?

Resources:

Map of State areas: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/8ab3c5fa66bd4f5d85b352ae02ad4aa1>

Nebraska State Parks Guide: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/explore/>