

Alaska's National Parks

Developed by: Jennifer Reiter

Discipline / Subject: Social Studies

Topic:

National Parks/Geography

Grade Level: 2-8

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:

Junior Ranger Packets from your desired park, see links below

General Junior Ranger Information: <http://www.nps.gov/learn/juniorranger.cfm>

Lesson Summary:

The National Parks Junior Ranger Programs are a wonderful way to “virtually” visit Alaska and learn about its land and people.

Standard's Addressed: (Local, State, or National)

National Social Studies Thematic Standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environment

Learning Objectives:

The learner will:

- Discover details about Alaska's National Parks

*** Activities and objectives will vary by park***

Assessment:

Teachers should check the booklets before they are sent to the parks. Rangers will often also check the books and make comments or write notes back to the students.

Procedural Activities

Junior Ranger Programs can be handled in several ways. In my classroom we complete programs that match our curriculum in class. I also issue a monthly challenge for a park that the students can complete at home as an extra credit challenge. I also usually have one or two going at a time as a learning station. One of my bulletin boards is dedicated to the National Parks and we keep track of which students have completed which badges. Often times the students come back from vacations with badges they have sought out and earned on their own! The National Parks are an amazing way to learn about our country!

See Other Information Section below for more information.

Materials Students Need:

Junior Ranger packet for chosen park

Internet access

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:

In most cases, the students will need to utilize the park website to virtually tour the parks

Other Information:**Alaskan National Parks with Junior Ranger Programs that can be completed via mail include:**

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve - <http://www.nps.gov/bela/forkids/index.htm>

I use this park at the beginning of the year as part of our First Peoples Unit. Junior Park Rangers earn a patch for completing the program.

Western Arctic Parklands – <http://www.nps.gov/kova/supportyourpark/upload/wear-jr-bklt2.pdf>

I actually assign this badge as my reading homework during the race. It covers several parks in the state. The students can earn a badge, a patch, and even a water bottle depending on how many activities they complete!

Denali National Park and Preserve - <http://www.nps.gov/dena/forkids/beajuniorranger.htm>

I use this as my extra credit challenge for the month of February as we are knee deep into our Iditarod studies. They allow students to take a “virtual” trip and complete the activities. Junior Rangers earn a badge.

Kenai Fjords - <http://www.nps.gov/kefj/forkids/index.htm>

I use this program as part of my class assignments for the novel The Mystery on the Iditarod Trail by Carole Marsh as the characters actually visit the park! It doesn't state on the website that they will take the booklets by mail, so I usually email them before I begin to double check that it is still okay. They are very gracious and even offered to call my class to issue their oath over the phone!

Klondike Gold Rush - <http://www.nps.gov/klgo/forkids/beajuniorranger.htm>

I use this as part of a center on the Alaskan Gold Rush. Again, the website doesn't state that they will honor badges completed via mail, so I email to double check.

Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities

The nature of the programs allows for modification. There are usually minimal requirements to complete the badges. I usually require my students to do more than the minimal requirements. It's easy to scaffold to each student's individual needs.