

# Second and Third Grades

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## John Muir: One Person Who Made a Difference

**Unit Concept:** *John Muir had many experiences which gave him the vision to save wilderness areas.*

**Objective:** In at least two 45- to 50-minute sessions, students will observe the natural world, make journal entries, and create booklets about John Muir.

**Preparation:**

1. Use journals or notebooks the students may already be using. If journals are not in use, staple lined paper onto cardboard with a construction paper cover for students to decorate. Have pencils ready to use.
2. Make a sample copy of the booklet John Muir: One Person Who Made A Difference, and copy a page for each student. Print on both sides of the paper with the top sides up. Cut sheets in half *horizontally*.

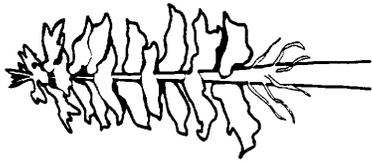
**Procedure:**

3. Let the children know that John Muir was "One Person Who Made a Difference," and explain how carefully and quietly he would observe nature and record in his journal with writings and drawings. Determine the boundaries outdoors for a special nature spot and prepare the students for observing, writing, and sketching living things. Ask the students what kinds of life they think they will see outside.
4. Take the children outside and allow 5–15 minutes for observations and recordings. Take a journal yourself to serve as an example. Upon returning, ask for volunteers to share from their work and see if they can persuade their peers to make a positive difference in the area they observed.
5. Make the John Muir booklets. Students put the pages in order; helpers staple the booklets.
6. Read the stories with the children. Ask students which stories are their favorites and whether they have had similar experiences.

**Extensions:**

7. Extend the work for third grade by exploring the native people John Muir met in California and Alaska. Ask how their lifestyles may have influenced John Muir's views on nature and his vision for conservation.
8. Sing "This Land is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie from *Rise Up Singing* and compare the different living things in the ecosystems in this song.
9. Identify special places outdoors to protect. Students might adopt a spot to keep free of litter and weeds or to plant wildflowers. Plan visitations each season and keep records of how their special spot changes with the weather and the seasons, and note whether different wildlife live there at different times of the year. Remind students that John Muir kept track of his observations in his journal over many years and that his journal was the basis of his written and oral work.

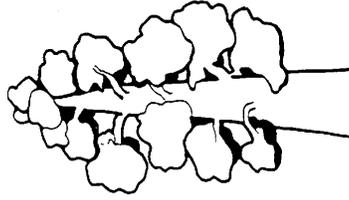
Sequoia trees are the largest living things. Coast redwoods may be the tallest living things, but the most massive is the giant sequoia. These trees were so big around, loggers couldn't use saws. They blasted the trees with dynamite.



Coast Redwood

6

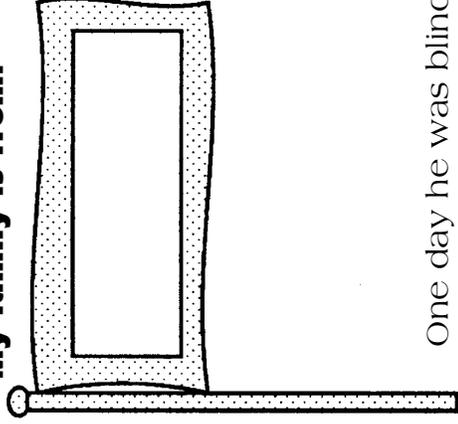
John Muir knew sequoia grew in only a few places of the world. He worked with others to save them from being cut down. You can visit groves of big trees in Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks.



Sequoia

3

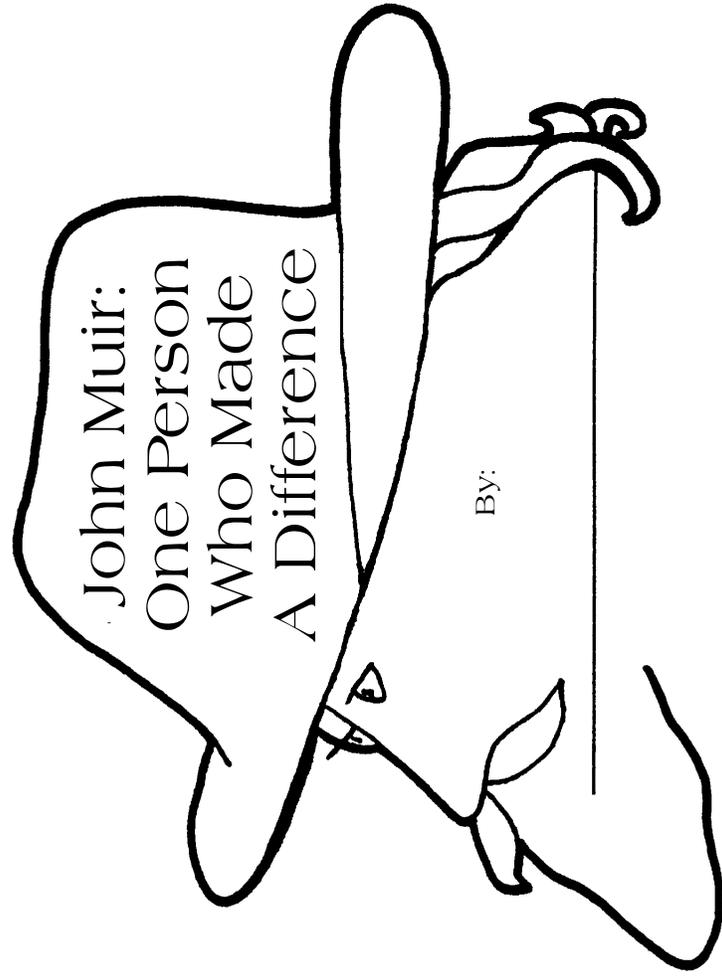
**My family is from:**



As a child, John Muir worked hard on his family's farm. He cut down trees and plowed fields. He loved to read so much he would get up at one o'clock in the morning to read before work! He invented machines to tip him out of bed and open his books!

One day he was blinded at work. He promised himself that if he could ever see again, he would look at the beauty of nature as much as he could.

I am like John Muir because:

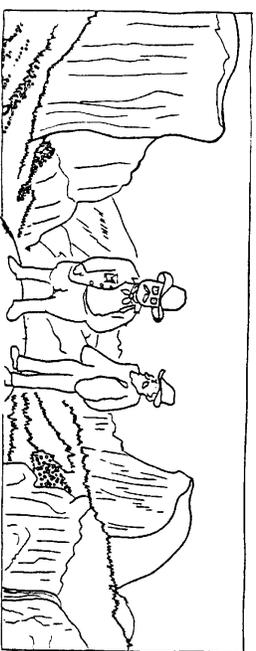


John Muir could see again! He took a 1,000-mile walk. He took a ship to San Francisco. Then he walked to Yosemite. He loved Yosemite's rock cliffs, waterfalls, plants, and animals.



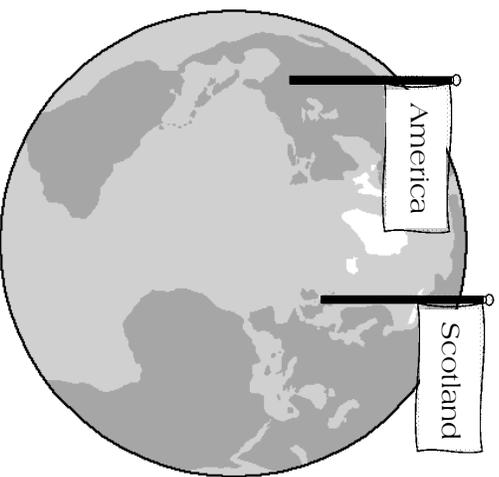
John Muir became angry that people cut down trees and grazed livestock in Yosemite. He learned from nature and taught others to care about nature.

Imagine camping in Yosemite with the President of the United States! John Muir understood nature so well, people came from far away to talk with him, even the President.



John Muir and President Roosevelt camped for three days. They talked about how to protect important places, such as Yosemite, which was one of our first national parks. John Muir is known as the father of national parks because he cared enough to protect the places he loved.

Many people came to America from other lands. John Muir came from Scotland. He learned to read there. He learned about the birds and trees of Scotland before he came to America. Where is your family from?



John Muir had a home in Martinez with his wife and two daughters. They had a large farm with many kinds of fruit trees. John Muir knew so much about plants, he made a fortune selling his fruit. He wrote about his travels in his "scribble-den" on the top floor of his home. He would roll bread up into balls and dry them on the roof. All he would take camping would be his bread and tea.

