

### Background

John Muir’s life was shaped by multiple influences and events that fed his passion for conserving wild places in America and around the world. His life is best understood in three distinct phases: as a child in Scotland through his early adulthood as a factory worker, his call to the natural world when he ventured on a 1,000 mile walk, and his arrival at Yosemite, and his final years as a rancher and activist.

### Goals

- Read, view and discuss significant moments and influences in the life of John Muir that laid the foundation for his passion for wild places and his work as an activist.
- Witness that a single person can make a world of difference.

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### Objectives

By the time each student arrives at the John Muir National Historic Site, the student will be able to:

1. Identify three major influences or events that shaped the life of John Muir.
2. Discuss three or more reasons why John Muir’s life is and continues to be nationally recognized nearly 100 years after his death.
3. Cite at least one quotation of John Muir and explain how it relates to the student’s life.
4. Develop a class list of at least six questions to ask park rangers during the guided tour at the historic site. *These questions can be developed during any lesson prior to the tour.*

### Assignments

1. The **Reading Reflections Unit** consists of reading, viewing, listening, discussion, writing and art activities.
2. **Puzzles and More** includes activities that create an opportunity to focus on specific aspects of John Muir’s life and work.

**Background**

This unit presents a set of activities that orient students to the life of John Muir and the key influences in his life that shaped his actions.

1. **John Muir Biography** is a reading activity paired with student study questions and class discussion.
2. **John Muir Reading Reflection Project** uses his quotations as a basis for students to understand his passion and concern about the natural world.
3. **Timeline** is an opportunity to highlight important moments in the life of John Muir with important moments and activities in the student's life.

**Lesson One: John Muir Biography****Ch. 1 Lesson One**

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**Background**

Many authors before and since John Muir's death have written about Muir. Since each author expresses a different aspect of this complex man, reviewing multiple selections provide even more insight into Muir's values and philosophy.

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**Objectives**

1. Complete a set of student study questions describing biographical information about the life of John Muir.
2. Actively participate in a class discussion regarding reading material, movies or audio recordings.

**Procedures**

1. Assign students to read either or *John Muir, America's First Environmentalist* by Kathryn Lasky or *John Muir, Protecting and Preserving the Environment* by Henry Elliot. Students may read alone or with a parent.
2. Listen to audio recording of *John Muir and Stickeen*, as told by Garth Gilchrist in class.
3. Watch a YouTube.com video during class. Encourage students to watch others at home with family members.

4. Encourage interested students to read other materials from the student bibliography as desired. Many selections are written for a high grade reading level and may require a parent's assistance with reading. The parent may also aloud to the student. *Listed selections are available for check out at public libraries.*
5. Encourage students to share their reading materials with their parents so they can begin discussions at home in the following areas: 1) the need for and importance of conservation and 2) how students can become involved in their own community.

## **References**

### ***Literature***

Elliot, H. (2009). *John Muir, Preserving and Protecting the Environment*. Crabtree Publishing Company: New York, NY.

Lasky, K. (2006). *John Muir, America's First Environmentalist*. Candlewick Press: Cambridge, MA.

### ***Audio recordings***

Gilchrist, G. (2000). *My life of adventures. John Muir*. On CD. Dawn Publications: Nevada City, CA

Gilchrist, G. (2000). *Stickeen and John Muir's other animal adventures*. On CD. Dawn Publications: Nevada City, CA.

### ***\*Videos***

*Biography of John Muir, No. 1 "A glorious journey"* 10 min. view at <http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=-CDzhIvugw8>

\*A selection of additional videos are listed in Student Bibliography

## **California Content Standards**

Third grade. Reading Comprehension. 2.2, 2.7

Fourth grade. Reading Comprehension 2.3

## **Common Core Standards**

Reading Standards for Literature

Third grade. 1,3,4,7

Fourth grade. 1,3,4,7