

Yosemite National Park

Junior RANGER HANDBOOK

A Park Guide for Ages 4 to 12



It's Your Park

স্বাগতম Bienvenidos وسهلاً أهلاً Mabuhay 欢迎
Welcome स्वागत Willkommen ようこそ Karibuni
Bienvenue ברוכים הבאים
환영합니다

Welcome to Yosemite National Park! Each year millions of people like you come from all over the world to visit this World Heritage Site. Yosemite became a park in 1864 so people could experience the unique things found here. Today, there are protected public lands all over the world.

Much of the information on pages 4 and 5 of this handbook can apply to just about any park you visit.

Name a park you like to visit near your home.

Circle or write some things you like to do there. _____

Hike



Picnic



Bike



Fish



Sports



Draw your own.



How to Become a Yosemite Junior Ranger

Yosemite is proud to welcome Junior Rangers of all abilities. To become a Junior Ranger, take this guide with you as you travel around the park and complete the activities that are the best fit for you. A free guide with activities adapted for kids with diverse communication, learning, motor, and/or sensory needs can be found by searching for “Junior Ranger” at nps.gov/yose. When you’re done, share your booklet with a park ranger at any visitor center to receive your badge.

Ages 4 to 7

Complete five activities.

Ages 8 to 12

Complete seven activities.

All Junior Rangers need to attend a guided program. Be sure to introduce yourself to your guide!

NAME OF PROGRAM

DATE

GUIDE SIGNATURE



Inside!

Learn more ranger skills from Ranger Squirrel.



Do Your Part



Junior Rangers are stewards. That means you pledge to care for and protect all the wonders in our national parks. Now that you are on the path to becoming a Junior Ranger, it's time to practice being safe, smart, and kind.

Take action! One way to protect Yosemite is to learn and practice the skills of Leave No Trace. Check each box as you read about the skills here. Watch other people in Yosemite today and spot someone who is following Leave No Trace. Share your observation with your group.

Find and circle the Junior Rangers who are keeping Yosemite and themselves safe.

Know Before You Go.

Be prepared! Before you head out for a day in the park, make a plan. Check the weather, wear the right shoes and clothing, and pack your map.

Choose the Right Path.

Stay safe and protect Yosemite's plants and animals by traveling only on marked paths, and pay attention to ranger instructions and signs.

Trash Your Trash.

Put garbage, even crumbs, in the correct bins: trash or recycling. If you need to go to the bathroom in the great outdoors, bury poop in a small hole eight inches deep and a hundred big steps from water. Place your toilet paper in a plastic bag and put the bag in a garbage can.





Leave What You Find.

Want to take a pine cone or flower home with you? Take a picture instead. Keep Yosemite healthy and beautiful for everyone by leaving all natural things where you found them.

Be Careful with Fire.

Never play with fire, and enjoy campfires only in designated areas. Be sure to put out fires completely with water, not dirt.

Respect Wildlife.

The best way to take care of Yosemite's animals is to let them stay wild. Keep your distance and don't try to feed them or let them get into your food.

Be Kind to Other Visitors.

Share trails with other hikers and use quiet voices so everyone can hear and enjoy the natural sounds of Yosemite.



Discover Yosemite

Yosemite is filled with natural wonders like meadows, mountain slopes, sequoia groves, and star-filled night skies. Use your senses to discover Yosemite.

Stand quietly on a trail and close your eyes. What do you **hear**?

Touch the bark of a tree or a granite boulder. How does it **feel**?

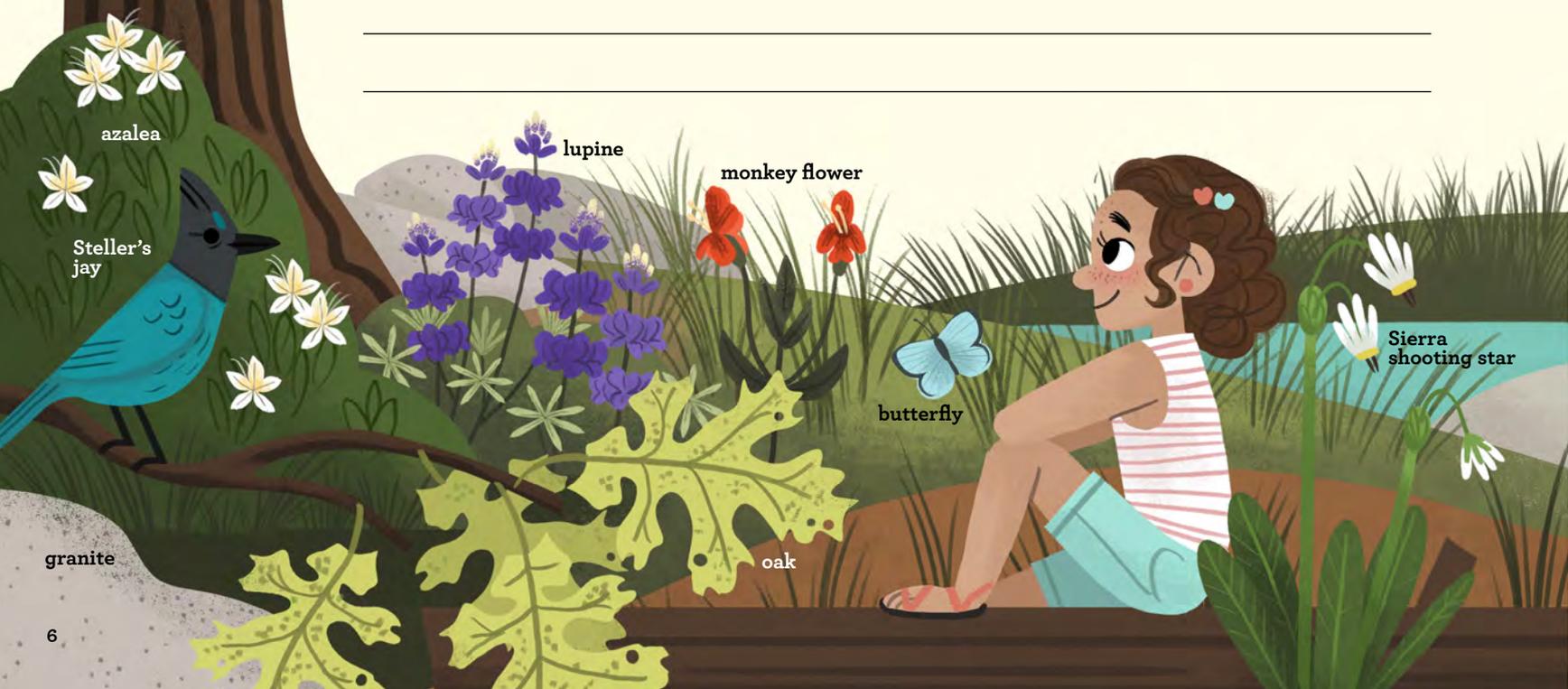
Smell the air in a meadow or grove, or the bark of a tree. What does it **smell** like?

Look closely at a wildflower or plant. (*Remember not to pick it.*) What do the leaves look like? Are the stems long or short? How many petals does the flower have?

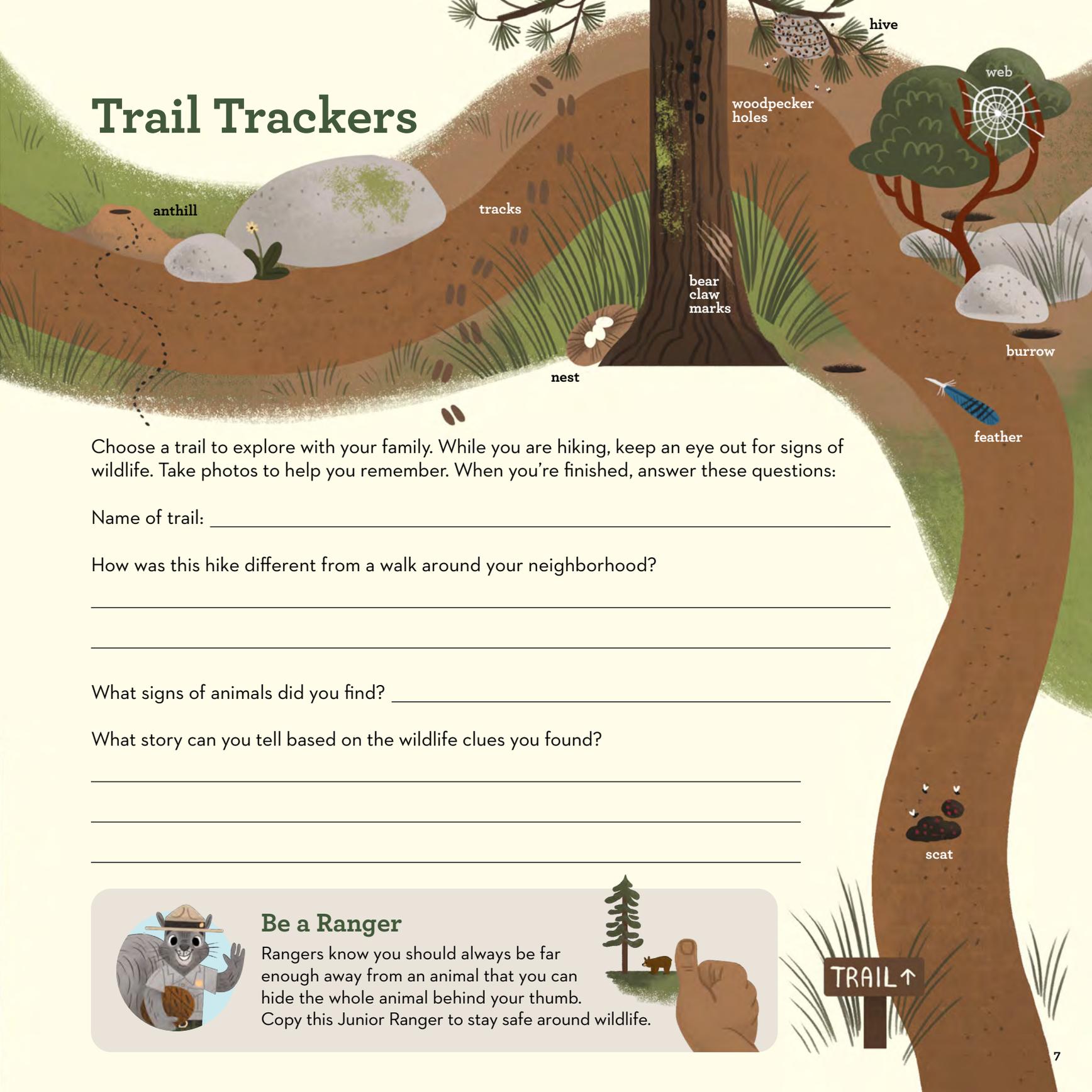
Look up at the night sky. What do you see?

Move like a tree branch in the breeze.

After using all my senses, I wonder:



Trail Trackers



Choose a trail to explore with your family. While you are hiking, keep an eye out for signs of wildlife. Take photos to help you remember. When you're finished, answer these questions:

Name of trail: _____

How was this hike different from a walk around your neighborhood?

What signs of animals did you find? _____

What story can you tell based on the wildlife clues you found?



Be a Ranger

Rangers know you should always be far enough away from an animal that you can hide the whole animal behind your thumb. Copy this Junior Ranger to stay safe around wildlife.



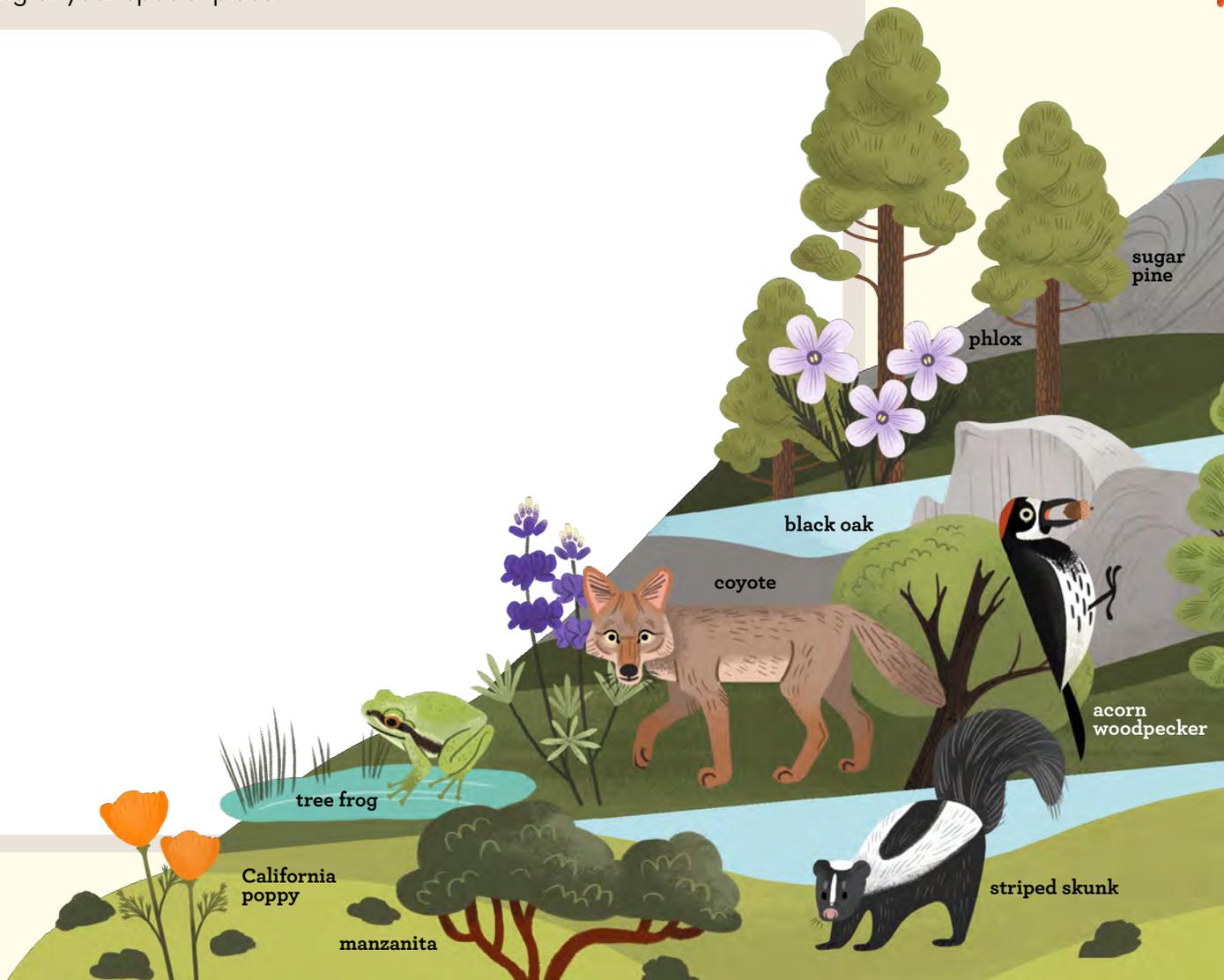
TRAIL ↑

Nature's Neighborhoods

Yosemite's ecosystems are home to special combinations of plants and animals that make these places look, feel, and smell different. Rain and snowfall, elevation, and temperature all influence what lives there. Many plants and animals live in more than one ecosystem. You can't always put nature into tidy categories!

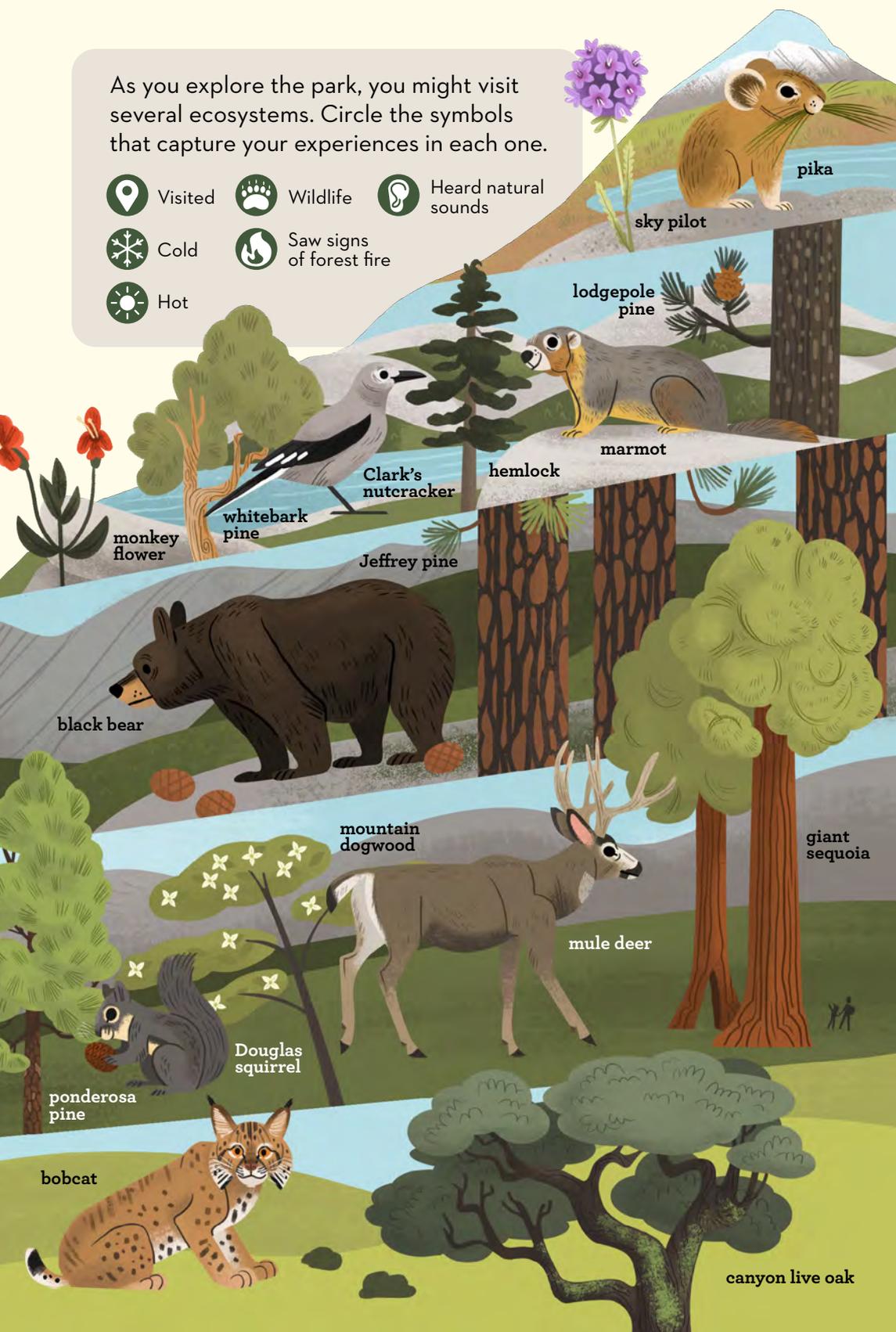
Your Special Place

Find a place in Yosemite that you love. What makes this spot special to you?
Make a drawing of your special place.



As you explore the park, you might visit several ecosystems. Circle the symbols that capture your experiences in each one.

-  Visited
-  Wildlife
-  Heard natural sounds
-  Cold
-  Saw signs of forest fire
-  Hot



Alpine Zone

9,500 feet elevation and above

LOCATIONS TO VISIT

Mount Hoffmann, Mount Dana



Subalpine Forest

8,000 to 9,500 feet elevation

LOCATIONS TO VISIT

Olmsted Point, Tuolumne Meadows



Upper Montane Forest

6,000 to 8,000 feet elevation

LOCATIONS TO VISIT

Big Oak Flat, Glacier Point, Crane Flat, North Dome



Lower Montane Forest

3,000 to 6,000 feet elevation

LOCATIONS TO VISIT

Yosemite Valley, Wawona, Mariposa Grove, Tuolumne Grove, Merced Grove



Foothill Woodland & Chaparral Zones

1,000 to 3,000 feet elevation

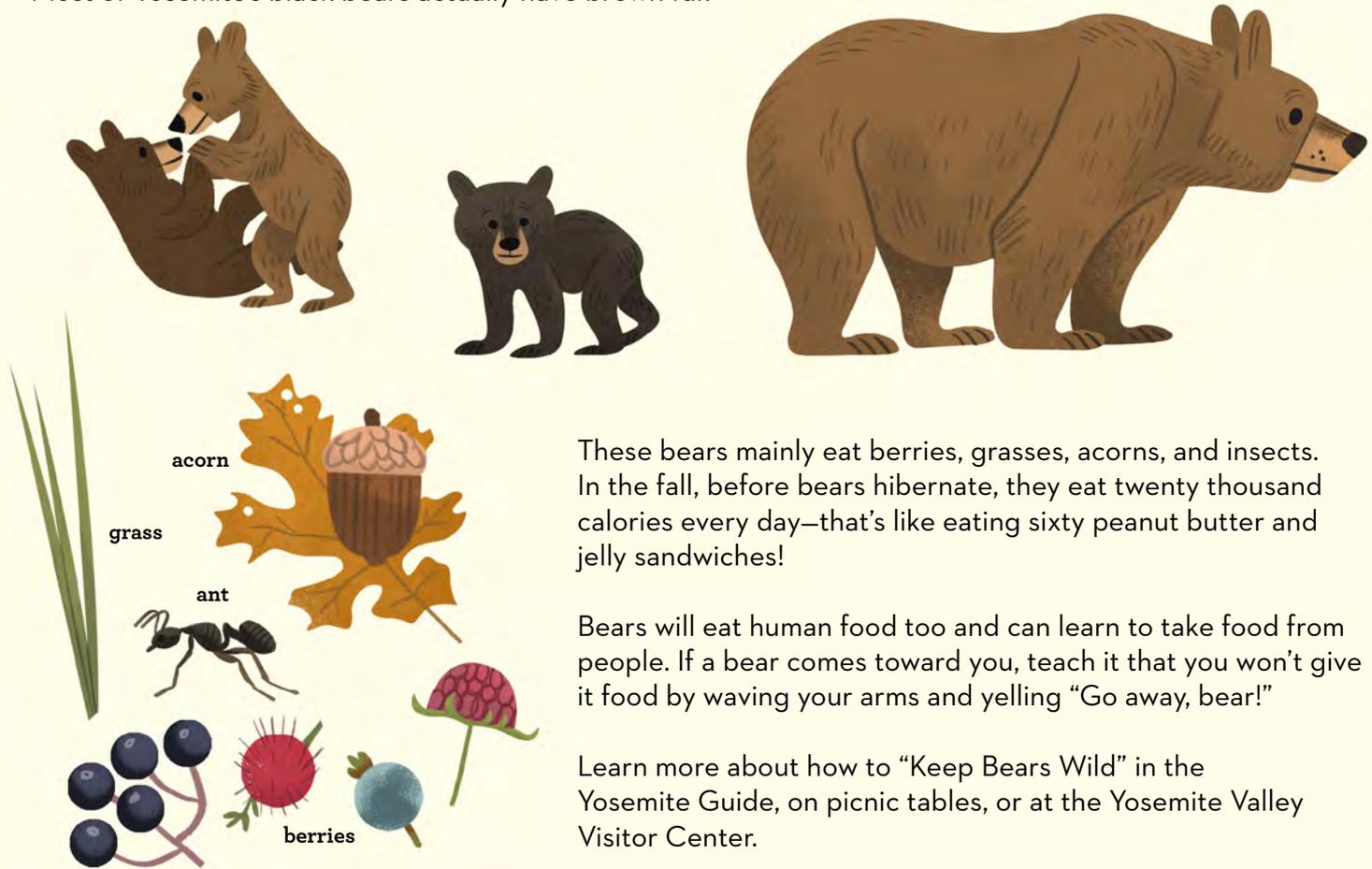
LOCATIONS TO VISIT

Gateway towns of Mariposa or Oakhurst



The Wild Ones

Yosemite National Park is home to more than three hundred American black bears. It is special to see a bear and admire its wild ways. Most of Yosemite's black bears actually have brown fur.



These bears mainly eat berries, grasses, acorns, and insects. In the fall, before bears hibernate, they eat twenty thousand calories every day—that's like eating sixty peanut butter and jelly sandwiches!

Bears will eat human food too and can learn to take food from people. If a bear comes toward you, teach it that you won't give it food by waving your arms and yelling "Go away, bear!"

Learn more about how to "Keep Bears Wild" in the Yosemite Guide, on picnic tables, or at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center.



Be a Ranger

This time, be a bear! Can you see food through the windows of your car? Help your family keep bears safe by making sure that no food or drinks are visible during the day and are stored in a bear box at night.





Help this bear find wild foods on the way to its den, then tell the story of this bear.

Giant Sequoias



Giant sequoia trees grow in only one region in the world: the western slope of the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. Yosemite has three groves of these incredible trees. One of the trees in the park, called the Grizzly Giant, is nearly two thousand years old and stands 209 feet (64 meters) tall.

Find a giant sequoia tree in the Mariposa, Tuolumne, or Merced Groves.

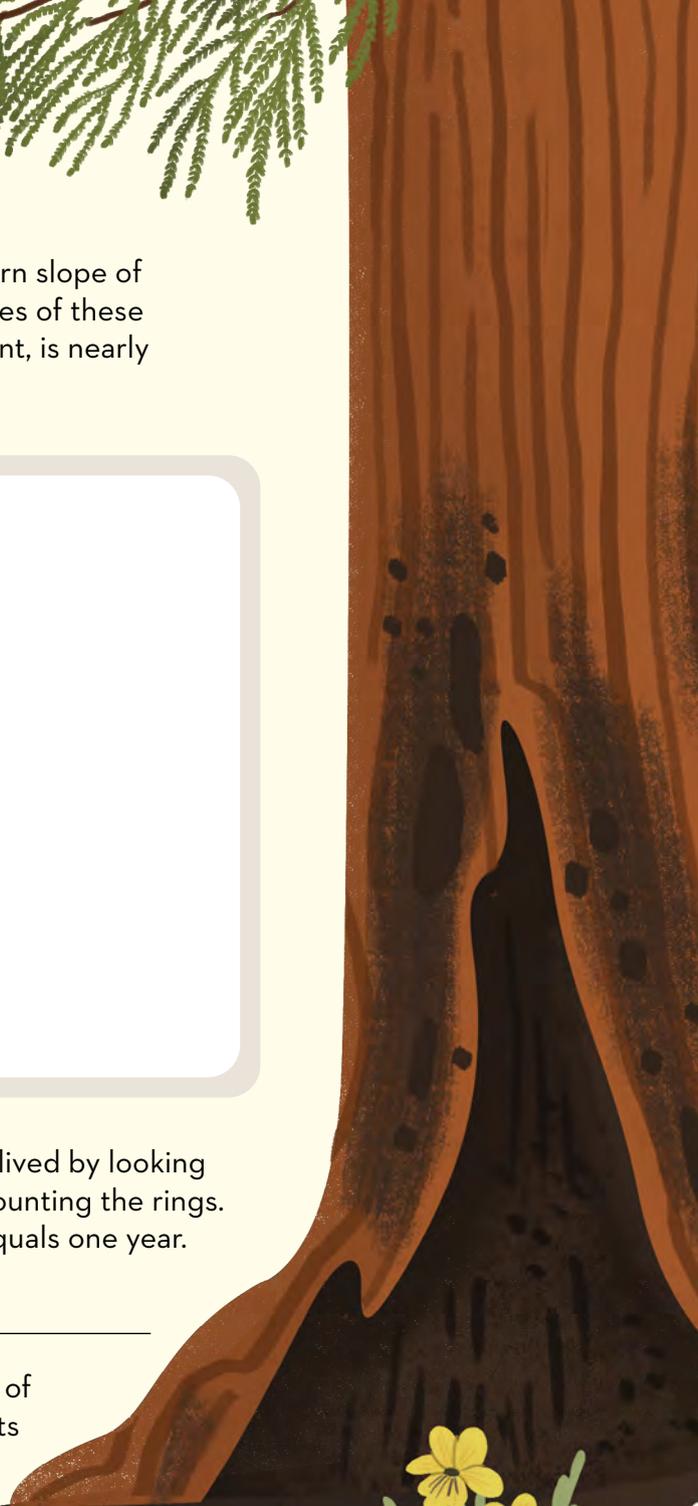
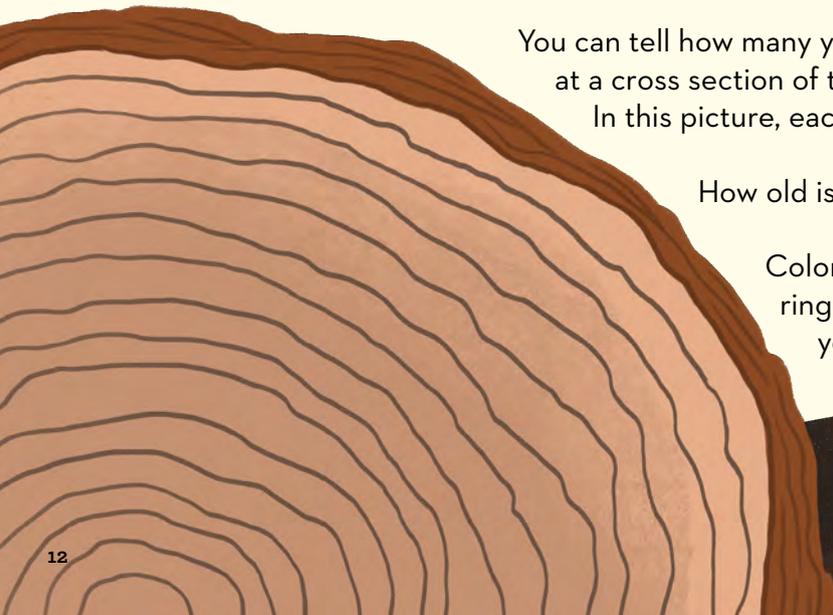
Lie down on your back in a safe place and look up. Write about or draw your experience.



You can tell how many years a tree has lived by looking at a cross section of the trunk and counting the rings. In this picture, each light space equals one year.

How old is this tree? _____

Color in the number of rings that represents your age.



Forest Life

Fires are an important part of the forest life cycle. Every summer, lightning starts forest fires in Yosemite, and sometimes specially trained park rangers will use a managed fire to keep an area healthy.

In giant sequoia forests, fire makes the cones pop open and release their seeds. In other parts of Yosemite, small, frequent fires keep the forest floor full of light, which helps wildflowers and grasses grow.

Yosemite's meadows depend on small fires to keep out shrubs and trees. Native people in Yosemite have always used fire to keep meadows and black oak trees healthy.

California is in a long-term drought with higher temperatures and less rain and snow. Droughts can make fires hot and huge by causing trees to die. There are millions of dead trees in the Sierra Nevada mountain range that are fuel for fires and can turn a healthy forest fire into a dangerous one. Yosemite has had both kinds of fires.



Find a place in Yosemite that has burned. Hint: look for blackened tree trunks. Describe or draw what you see.



Be a Ranger

Rangers watch the weather. How likely are you to see rain today?

Meadows

Meadows are full of life. They are home to many different plants and animals. A healthy meadow is like a sponge—it holds water both on top of and under the ground, which makes it a great place for water-loving plants to live. A meadow also works as a natural filter, keeping water clean.

Climate change and humans' actions, such as walking on delicate meadow grasses, have caused Yosemite's meadows to become drier. Now park scientists must figure out how to make the park's meadows healthy again. One way they do this is by using managed fires to remove plants that will take away too much water from the meadows.

Be a Ranger



Rangers make observations about nature. Meadows are found throughout Yosemite, from Tuolumne Meadows to Yosemite Valley to Wawona. From a trail or boardwalk, stick your finger into the meadow soil. What does it feel like?



Draw a line to the place each animal could find a home in a meadow.



monarch butterfly



red-legged frog



acorn woodpecker



coyote



red-tailed hawk



pocket gopher

A River of Stars



Humans and animals all share the same moon and stars.

Yosemite's night skies are very dark, making this a great place to enjoy views of our Milky Way galaxy or to look for patterns of stars called constellations. Maybe you'll see something tonight that you've never seen before!

These are some constellations you might see in Yosemite. Connect the dots to help you identify them once the sun goes down.

Draw a nighttime memory.

Yosemite Is Home

Native people have lived around Yosemite and its valley for thousands of years. Native people still live here, and they belong to the Seven Traditionally Associated Tribes of Yosemite National Park. Members of the seven tribes work closely with rangers to ensure that the land is respected. Their deep ties to Yosemite are strengthened through seasonal celebrations in the park, educational youth projects, and each group's yearly Traditional Walk, which honors the tradition of their elders in crossing from one side of the mountains to the other.

While they have their own languages (shown by the words of greeting, below) and their own ways,

the Native people here have always had much in common, including the use of fire to keep the land healthy and the harvesting of acorns as an important food.

Long ago, people from faraway countries brought diseases and harsh treatment to California. Then the gold rush drew thousands of people to Yosemite. They took the land and sent the Native people away.

But the Native people from this area persisted and are still here today. As you explore Yosemite, you are sharing their homeland.

Manahu! I'm helping restore a meadow.



Bishop Paiute Tribe

Michəksəsəə! This year, I get to go on a Traditional Walk!



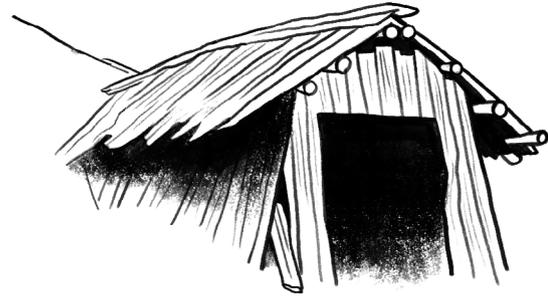
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation

Munahoo! I'm going to see the Grizzly Giant.



North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California

Visit the village behind the Yosemite Valley Museum and look for the roundhouse building that the Traditionally Associated Tribes of Yosemite still use today for ceremonies. Once you've located it, finish drawing the building.



How U! I'm going to climb Lembert Dome.



Mono Lake
Kootzaduka'a Tribe

Howni' u! I'm finding out more about how my relatives lived here.



Bridgeport Indian Colony

Hi-le! I'm learning to weave using red bud.



Picayune Rancheria of
the Chukchansi Indians

M.Chucksus! I'm feeling the spray at Bridalveil Fall.



Tuolumne Band of
Me-Wuk Indians

Faces of Yosemite

Many different people have played an important role in making Yosemite what it is today. Yosemite was first home to and cared for by Native people. Artists, businesspeople, rangers, laborers, scientists, athletes, and visitors have played a role in Yosemite's history.

All the people on this page have done something special here. Solve each riddle, then draw a line from the riddle to the person it matches.



Tie Sing



Shelton Johnson



George Melendez Wright

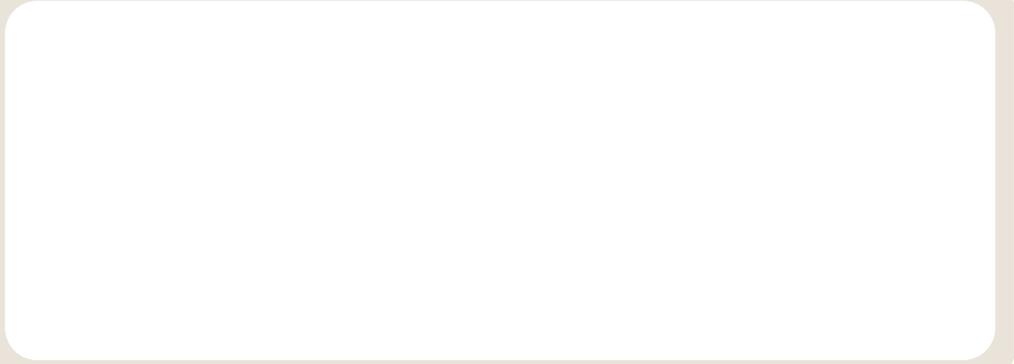
I learned on closer inspection
Yosemite had Buffalo Soldier
protection.
Through some living history
I help visitors of color to see
that this park has a family
connection.

I free-climbed El Capitan's Nose.
Three thousand feet up—boys,
it goes!
Then to affirm my athletic power
I climbed it in just twenty-three
hours.
Years later I still hear the bravos!

When politicians camped here
in splendor,
I cooked wilderness biscuits so
tender
that with full tummies, in bliss,
they cried "Let's protect this!"
and became Yosemite defenders.

Be a Ranger

Rangers know that anyone can make history. Now you have a story here too! Draw yourself in Yosemite.



Lynn Hill



Julia Parker



John Muir

I learned to weave baskets from
elders and kin
and to tell tales of how Yosemite's
been.

Sharing craft and tradition
was for decades my mission,
and this art was my listeners' win.

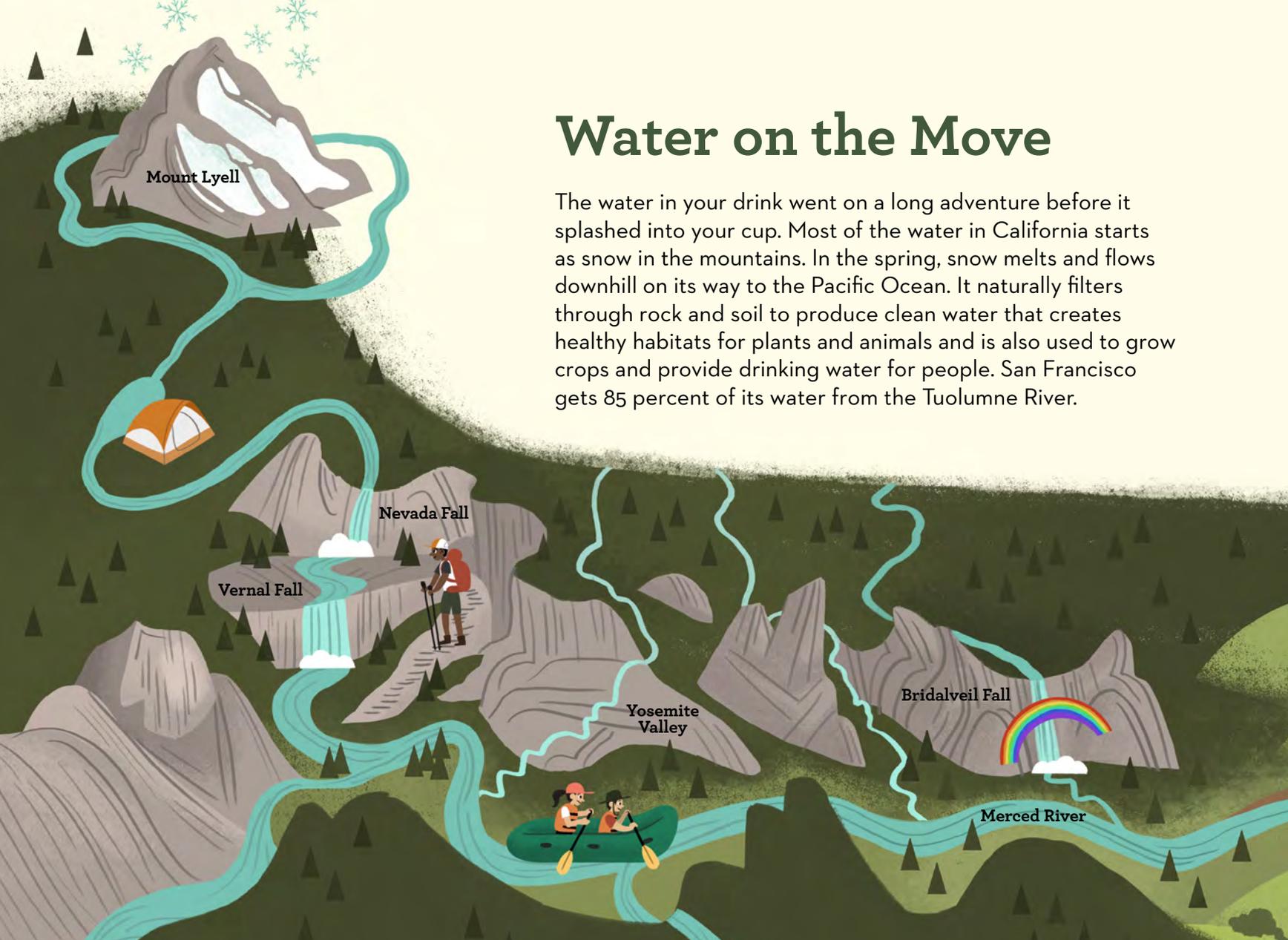
Through wild places often I'd
wander,
then I wrote that they should be
honored.

My work helped lay the foundation
for saving lands for generations.
Now I'm known as the national
parks' father.

I was a scientific activist
who studied park animal practices.
I showed managers of wildlife
how to treat wild creatures right
so as to become nature's
advocates.

Water on the Move

The water in your drink went on a long adventure before it splashed into your cup. Most of the water in California starts as snow in the mountains. In the spring, snow melts and flows downhill on its way to the Pacific Ocean. It naturally filters through rock and soil to produce clean water that creates healthy habitats for plants and animals and is also used to grow crops and provide drinking water for people. San Francisco gets 85 percent of its water from the Tuolumne River.



Watch some water.
Draw water
designs that you
see, such as ripples
or water flowing
around a rock.



A watershed is an area of land that channels water from the mountains into streams and rivers. A raindrop or snowflake in Yosemite will eventually flow across the land into either the Tuolumne or Merced Rivers. Because Yosemite is protected, these watersheds are too.

Slowly melting snow keeps water flowing in Yosemite Falls and other falls around the park throughout much of the year. When the waterfalls are dry, it means last year's snow has all melted.



foothills

Central Valley

San Joaquin River

delta

San Francisco Bay

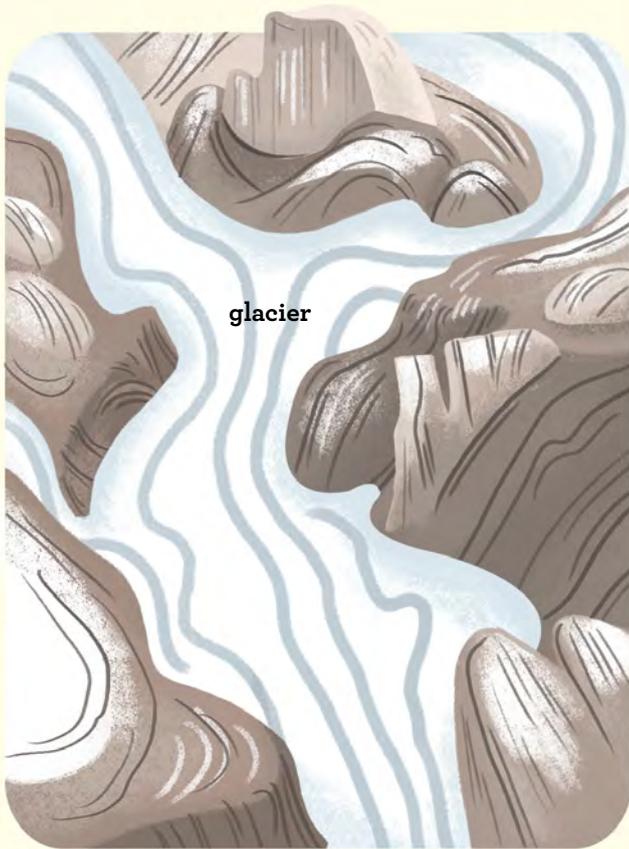
Pacific Ocean

Sacramento River



Be a Ranger

Rangers drink water to stay healthy. Fill your water bottle in a faucet or filling station and take a sip right now. You are tasting clean water from Yosemite's rivers.



Geology Rocks!

Geology is the study of the earth and its rocks. Yosemite's rocks have lots of stories to tell. Formed deep under the ground, all the rock you see was once magma. As the Sierra Nevada mountains formed below the surface of the earth, magma slowly rose up and cooled into granite.

Along came rivers that slowly cut the beginnings of the valleys. Then massive sheets of ice called glaciers bulldozed their way downhill for many thousands of years to erode Yosemite into what you see today. Yosemite Valley's distinct U shape is evidence of these glaciers. Water erosion, ice, and rockfall all continue to shape the land. Yosemite changes every day!

No matter where you are in Yosemite, you are touching and looking at geology. Mark off each geologic feature you see in the park until you have three-in-a-row bingo!



Be a Ranger

Rangers look closely at nature. Pick up a rock. How many of the four minerals that are common in Yosemite's granite do you see?



Quartz
clear or white



Mica
shiny dark sheets



Feldspar
light color, tannish
white or pink,
opaque

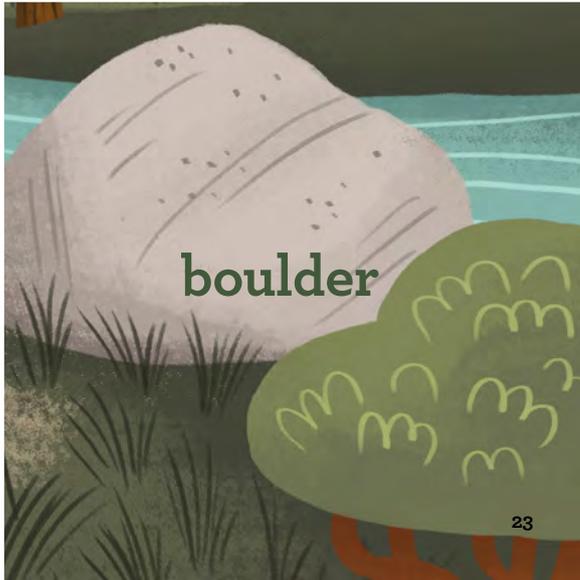
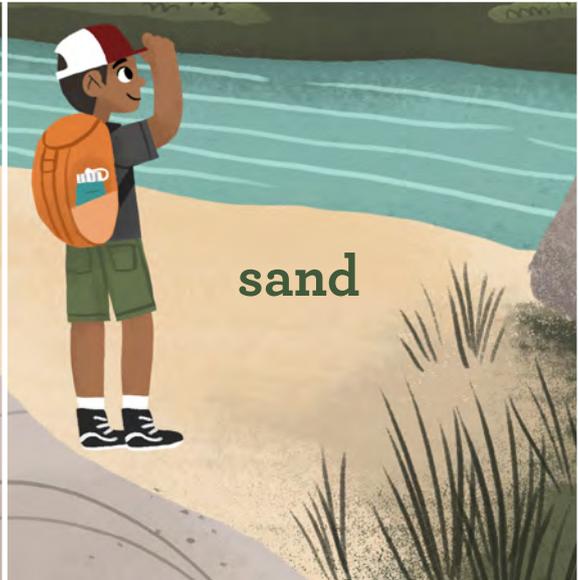
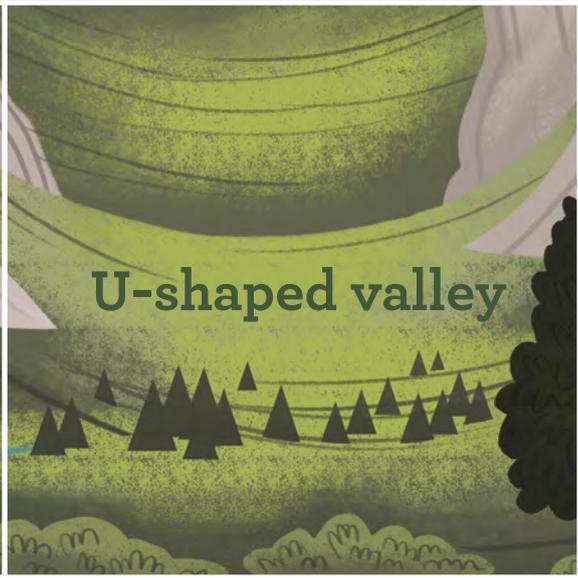
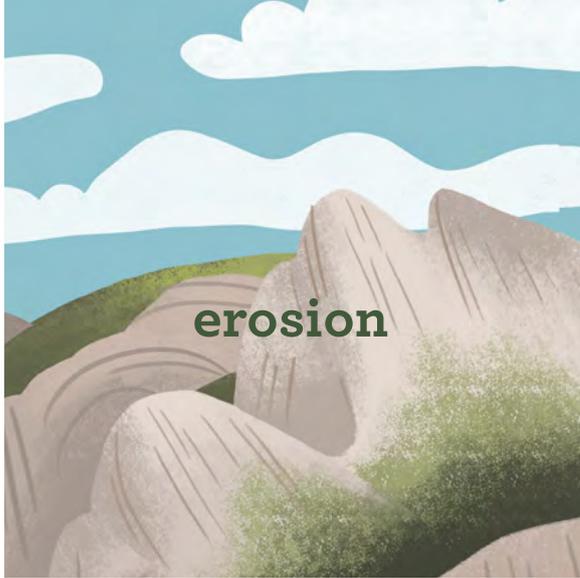
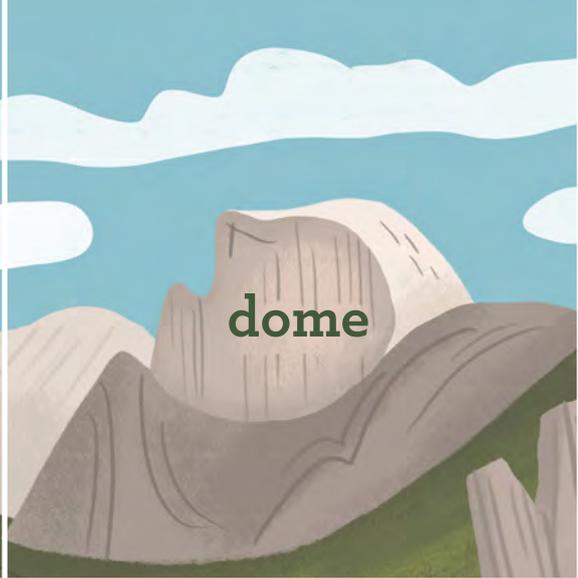


Hornblende
dark or black
crystals

.....

Leave the rock where you found it so others can learn about geology too!





YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Junior Ranger Certificate

As a Yosemite Junior Ranger, I will continue to learn about, explore, and protect Yosemite as well as other historic and wild places.

NAME

DATE

RANGER SIGNATURE



Have a member of your group take a video of you holding your book and telling us "My favorite part of my visit to Yosemite is..."

If your family uses social media, you can share it with the hashtag **#YosemiteJuniorRanger** and see what other Junior Rangers love about Yosemite too!

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YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY

yosemite.org



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