

## Teaching News Is Elementary

### June 27, 2016

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

**Materials you will need for this lesson:** The Seattle Times e-Edition, pencil and paper, dictionary, computer access

**Article: “Mount Rainier seeks votes in online funding contest”**

**Page: NW Wednesday, B1**

**Date: Wednesday, June 1, 2016**

#### Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

What is a national park? Have you ever been to a national park? If so, which national park have you been to?

The National Park Service services 58 national parks. Challenge yourself to see how many national parks you can name in your state. Check your answers on the U.S. National Park Service website: <https://www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm>.

#### Vocabulary:

Read the following quotes and determine the meaning of the word based on how it’s used in the sentence:

“Government funding for national parks has been **lagging**, even as more people visit, and donations don’t fill the gap. That left the National Park Service with an estimated \$11.5 billion maintenance **backlog** in 2014, according to a Government Accountability Office report released earlier this year.”

**Lagging:** falling behind in movement, progress, or development; not keep pace with another or others.

**Backlog:** a build-up of work that needs to be taken care of.

“It’s fallen into such **disrepair** that we’re no longer able to **occupy** and use it,” King said of the house, a two-bedroom with a kitchen and bathroom. “Either we **intervene** and do significant work or we’re going to lose it.”

**Disrepair:** poor condition of a building or structure due to neglect.

**Occupy:** to fill, exist in, or use a place or period of time.

**Intervene:** to get involved, to jump in the middle of something, to interfere.

“That leaves the **pitch** work to Washington’s National Park Fund, a nonprofit that raises donation money to **bolster** Washington’s three national parks: Mount Rainier, Olympic and North Cascades.”

**Pitch:** a talk or a way of talking that is intended to persuade you to buy something.

**Bolster:** support or strengthen; prop up.

“We’re **anticipating** a lot of visitors this year because of the national park **centennial**,” King said.”

**Anticipating:** regard as probable; expect or predict.

**Centennial:** a hundredth anniversary.

### **Journal Writing Prompts:**

**“The maintenance backlog comes as more people visit the national park system, which turns 100 this year. Visits to national park sites, including monuments and other attractions, rose to more than 307 million last year, an increase of 14 million people from 2014 and 34 million more people when compared to 2005.”**

Pretend you are writing a postcard to someone from a National Park of your choice. Try to keep your word count under 150 words. Where is the park located? What does the park look like? What kind of attractions and monuments are there? What kind of things can you do there?

### **Discussion Questions:**

**“In 2014, the Park Service estimated it had a maintenance backlog of about \$11.5 billion, according to the report. King said Mount Rainier National Park has about \$1.3 billion of infrastructure in the park, including roads, utilities, trails and structures.”**

Why are national parks important? Why do you think that we have national parks? What would it be like to visit a national park for the first time? According to the article, what kind of challenges are the national parks facing? Why do these challenges exist? How do you think you can help the national parks?

### **Small Group Discussion and Activity:**

Visit [voteyourpark.org](http://voteyourpark.org) to view the project proposals that are being voted on. Read through all of the proposals and choose the one that speaks the most to you. Conduct your own research on this particular national park and write your own pitch for why you think this is the most important project to fund. Share your pitch with the rest of your class!