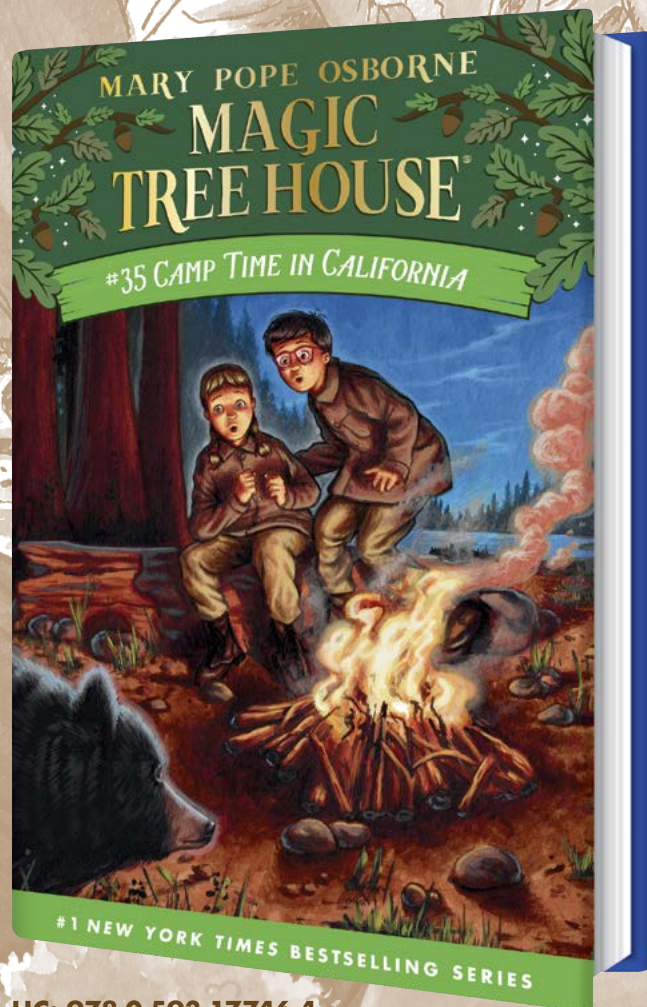


# EDUCATORS' GUIDE

# MAGIC TREE HOUSE®



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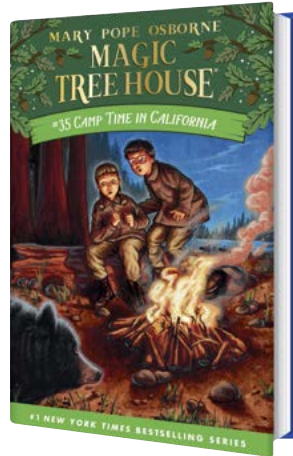
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Grades 1–4





# Camp Time in California



## ABOUT This Book

*Camp Time in California* takes Jack and Annie to Yosemite National Park in 1903. They meet naturalist John Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt on the most important camping trip in conservation history. Together, they discover the full truth of nature's magic.

## ABOUT This Guide

It's important for students to understand and appreciate our country's natural resources and the efforts to preserve and conserve them. Who better than Jack and Annie to help kids become more aware of the natural environment?

*Camp Time in California* has inspired these **Magic Tree House** activities that encourage a sense of wonder about nature and offer opportunities for students to think about and engage with the natural world. In this guide, Jack, Annie, John Muir, and Teddy Roosevelt will help you bring geography, science, and more to life for students in your second- to fifth-grade classrooms. The guide also includes modifications and extensions to help you differentiate instruction for your students.

**"The lack of power to take joy in outdoor nature is as real a misfortune as the lack of power to take joy in books."**

**—Theodore Roosevelt**

# CAMP IT UP

From sleepaway camps to family vacations to pitching backyard tents, camping is a popular outdoor activity. However, some students may have never been camping or have much knowledge about what camping can be. Have students learn about camping from each other. Start a discussion with these questions:

- What is camping?
- Why do people go camping?
- Where do people go camping?
- What things do people do when they go camping?
- Have you ever been camping?

Collect items that relate to camping, like flashlights, sleeping bags, a tent, field guides, binoculars, etc., and hide them. Create a map that your students can use to

locate these items that you've hidden in your classroom, in the library, or on school grounds. Once everything has been located, shift gears and head outside, if possible. Pitch the tent, unroll the sleeping bags, and open *Camp Time in California* for a read-aloud adventure!

## Modifications and extensions:

- Project or share a [virtual campfire](#) on your screen as you read aloud.
- Secure enough flashlights and books for everyone, turn off the lights, and have silent reading or a read-around by flashlight.
- Invite a park ranger or outdoor enthusiast to share their camping experiences and read aloud from *Camp Time in California* in person or virtually.

# PARK HOPPING

Jack and Annie's missions always take them to the most amazing places. *Camp Time in California* is a great way for students to virtually explore the geography of Yosemite and of the hundreds of national parks in the United States.

Start with where Yosemite is located. Find it on a map together. Get directions from an online mapping service to show students the route and distance from your location to Yosemite. Ask students to share their ideas about what they think they would see at this national park. Then share what's contained in Yosemite's 1,187 square miles by watching this ["Experience Your Yosemite" video](#) and sharing these [statistics about Yosemite's natural resources](#). Ask students to think about what they've watched and learned and compare it to their initial ideas about the park.



Have students look at a [list of national parks](#). Ask:

- Are you familiar with any of these national parks? Which ones?
- What do you know about them?
- Have you been to any of these parks? What did you do and see?
- If you have not been to any of these parks, which ones do you think you'd like to visit? Why?
- What local parks are you familiar with? What do you think is the difference between a local and a national park?

Have students look at a wide variety of national parks and do additional research on parks that are of interest to them. Have them choose one park and compare it to Yosemite, looking at themes such as location, physical characteristics, and the relationship between the environment and people. Take a student poll to find out which national parks are your students' favorites and why. Have them share what they learned about Yosemite and other national parks.





## Modifications and extensions:

- Students who have been to a national park (or other large park) can give a "tour" of the park to other students, sharing their experiences, photos, videos, etc.
- Have students plan a trip to the park of their choosing, researching their destination and creating a detailed trip itinerary.

## Resources:

Google Earth offers [spectacular virtual visits to 31 U.S. National Park sites](#).

Test their knowledge using this fun [National Parks Quiz](#) from National Geographic.

# NEW PLACE TO PARK

Now students will write their own adventure with Jack and Annie! Students should start by deciding where they want them to go and when. It should be a place and time students are interested in visiting themselves. Have them research the park they select using nonfiction books and reliable online resources. Remind students to plan their adventure carefully and get all the facts Jack and Annie need for a fun and interesting journey. They should make sure their research notes include:

- Location
- Climate
- Current local customs, food, and clothing
- How people travel
- Notable people or places
- Animal inhabitants
- How the park has changed over time

For students to write their stories, Jack and Annie need a reason to visit this time and place. Ask students why they chose this park. Is there someone interesting to meet or something unusual to see? Once students know why Jack and Annie are going to this park, they can use their research to write their adventure! Encourage students to write and illustrate their stories in the style of a Magic Tree House adventure.

## Modifications and extensions:

- Have students work in pairs to do their research and write a story together.
- Have students present their adventure as a comic or graphic story.
- Have students work in small groups to do their research and develop their story as a play that they perform for the class.
- Have students create posters, flyers, or short videos advertising their new Magic Tree House adventure!

## Resources:

National Parks Foundation: [All National Parks](#)

National Park Service: [Find a Park](#)



# DRAWN TO NATURE

As John Muir explored the wilderness, he carried notebooks with him, describing and sketching what he saw and felt and recording his scientific observations. When Jack and Annie arrive in Yosemite, they have their own notebooks for drawing the wonders they see. Explain to students that writing and drawing in a field journal will help them observe more carefully and remember and learn more about what they see and hear outdoors.

## Journal Prompts:

**I see . . .**

**I hear . . .**

**I wonder . . .**

**I was surprised by . . .**

**I feel . . .**

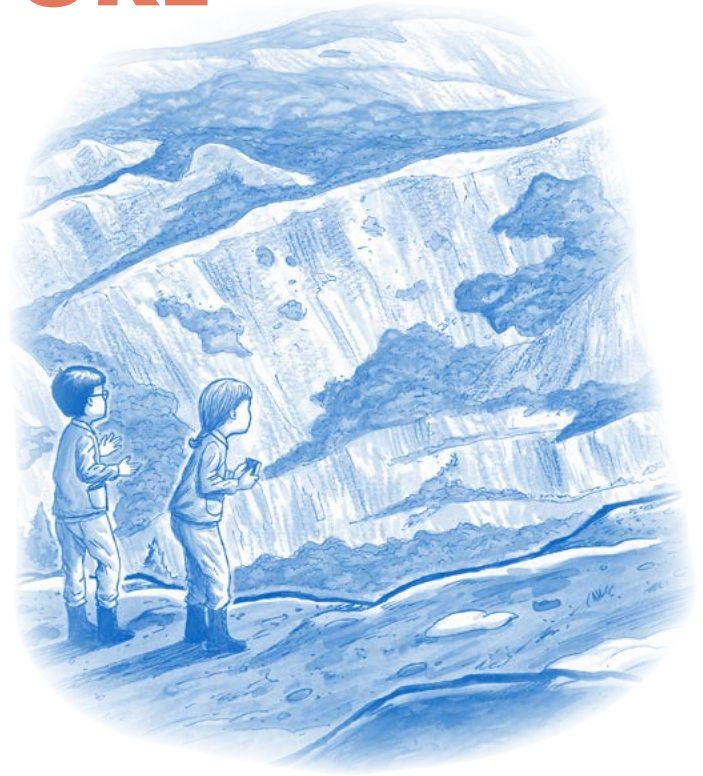
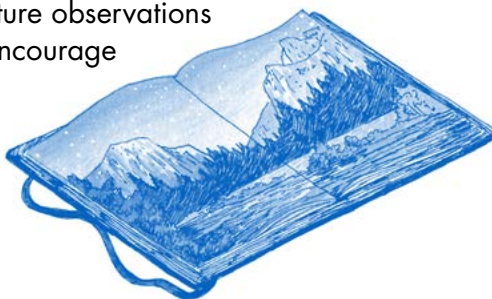
Let students know that their field journals can look however they want them to look! Emphasize that this is their place to write and draw their own observations, thoughts, feelings, questions, and

ideas. But let them know that they should always include date, location, and weather information with each journal entry in order to be able to compare their observations.

Remind students that it's okay that they don't have magic pencils like Jack and Annie to make pretty pictures in their journals and that being outside doesn't always mean being in the wilderness. Students can observe and draw urban landscapes as well. Help them understand that the goal of sketching in their field journal is not to make beautiful drawings, but to accurately observe and record information. They can use line drawings to show significant features, drawing what is important to remember—the shape of a bird's beak or the whorls on a tree—and labeling what they draw.

Make plenty of time for students to head outdoors. While outdoors, have them quietly listen to and look at what's around them. Students should practice making observations, adding notes and drawings in their field journals. Give them opportunities to research what they've observed and add any new information to their journals.

As students make discoveries and get excited about their own nature observations and experiences, encourage them to share their writings and drawings with the class.



## Modifications and extensions:

- Take students on a field trip to a park or plan a visit to a nearby natural area to observe and identify local wildlife. Ask students to brainstorm and write about what they think could be helpful or harmful to the animals and their environment. Invite a local naturalist or park ranger to review and discuss their ideas and share some examples of what students could do to help wild creatures in their community.
- Have students use an observation or drawing in their field journal as a poetry writing prompt.

## Resources:

Sierra Club:

[Journal Writing with John Muir](#)

National Park Service:

[Draw with a Park Ranger](#)

[Digital copies of John Muir's journals](#)

written by John Muir between 1867 and 1913

Nature's Notebook [Education Program](#)





# TREE TIME

When the treehouse lands in Yosemite, Jack and Annie are amazed by the size and the beauty of the trees there. Have students use Google Earth to visit the massive sequoia trees of [Tuolumne Grove](#) or [Mariposa Grove](#). Ask students to imagine themselves standing among these giant, ancient trees. Have students sketch or write about the trees, and encourage them to study the entire grove and the area around it. Then, with observations in hand, have students head outside to compare the giant sequoia with a tree on school property or in a nearby park. Students should observe and note the tree's size, shape, and texture, as well as the size, structure, shape, and texture of its leaves. They should also study the area around the tree. Encourage students to use the information they have gathered and a field guide to identify their tree.

In *Camp Time in California*, Annie and Jack are very upset when they learn that one of the very largest and oldest trees in Yosemite has been cut down. Today, Yosemite's famous Grizzly Giant in the park's Mariposa Grove is estimated to be about 3,000 years old, plus or minus a few centuries. How old are the trees your students observed? With tape measure in hand, and a calculator, follow these instructions to help students [estimate the tree's age](#).

Once students have an idea about the age of the tree, have them think about significant events that have taken place during the tree's life. These might be events of historic importance or just something that happened in the neighborhood. Have students write their trees' stories. Invite parents and community guests to come hear the stories of the trees.

## Modifications and extensions:

- Students can pretend to be the tree and tell the tree's story from the its point of view.
- Students can observe a tree they know well—one in their own yard or one that they pass every day—and tell the stories that they share with the tree (trying to climb it, getting a cat down, finding a bird's nest, etc.).

## Resources:

Arbor Day Foundation:

[What Tree Is That?](#)

[Virginia Tech Dendrology Factsheets](#)

Yosemite Nature Notes 11:

[Big Trees](#)



## Lights Out!

Jack and Annie are amazed at the number of stars they can see at night in Yosemite. Share this [Night Skies video](#) with students, then talk about their own experiences with viewing stars at night. Ask students if they think light pollution is a problem where they live and what ideas they have to reduce it.

From [Globe at Night](#), a campaign for preserving our starry skies, you and your students can learn more about the effects of artificial light on wildlife and join an international effort to measure and submit night sky brightness observations based on the visibility of constellations.



# POWER OF THE PEN

Talk with students about how, when people believe in something, they often want others to join them in their beliefs and might try—very hard—to get others to change their minds, like John Muir did. Discuss with students what John Muir and Jack and Annie did in *Camp Time in California* to persuade President Roosevelt to want to make all of Yosemite a national park.

Talk about how in real life John Muir wrote about preserving the wilderness and how his descriptions of sequoias brought the beauty of nature to readers nationwide. Discuss effective persuasive writing and how it uses logic, facts, opinion, and emotion to get a reader to accept a point of view. Share some of John Muir's inspiring and persuasive words. Then have students write their own persuasive pieces about a facet of nature or an environmental concern they want others to care about. Have them start by identifying their purpose and audience. Students should think about supporting reasons and what words might be most persuasive and be prepared to present their writing to the class.

## IN FACT

*Camp Time in California* touches on the origins of the National Park Service and the influence of John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt on preservation and conservation history. But there's more to the story of American conservation for students to discover. Understanding that there are multiple perspectives and stories is critical to a deep understanding of historical events. *Heroes for All Times* includes a chapter about John Muir, but there is even more to the story. Ask students to do some research of their own to find facts. Have them share what they find in a class-authored Yosemite Fact Tracker!

Start talking with students about how to look at history and historical fiction:

- How do you determine whose point of view matters?
- Whose perspectives frame US history? Why?
- Whose perspective do you want to hear?
- How can the place or time period a person lives in affect what they write?

### Modifications and extensions:

- Read articles or passages by John Muir aloud to students.
- Assign students a specific audience, such as readers of a popular magazine or website or an elected official.
- Suggest students supplement their writing with images. When presenting their work to the class, they can explain how the images they chose or created are persuasive and express compelling perspectives.

### Resources:

["The Treasures of the Yosemite"](#)

by John Muir, *The Century Magazine*, Vol. XL, No. 4, August 1890.

["Features of the Proposed Yosemite National Park"](#)

by John Muir, *The Century Magazine*, Vol. XL, No. 5, September 1890.



- Why is it important to understand that women and men of different cultures and backgrounds contributed to our early history and to making America what it is today?

As students read *Camp Time in California*, ask them to note:

- Who is this story about?
- What really happened and what was made up by the author?
- Whose point of view is represented? What evidence do you find in the book?
- Whose point of view is not included? What evidence do you have?



Discuss their findings and ask students to look for outside sources to back up their ideas. Then have students research multiple perspectives and additional details that provide a fuller, more diverse account of the history of Yosemite, doing the kind of research needed to create a Magic Tree House Fact Tracker. Have students work in pairs, and offer each pair its own specific research list that could include ideas from their findings as well as topics like:

- The people of Yosemite (the Ahwahneechee and other Yosemite tribes, Mariposa Battalion, the Hutchings, Galen Clark, Buffalo Soldiers, gold prospectors, John Muir)
- Yosemite wildlife: amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, and mammals
- Trees and plants of Yosemite
- Yosemite Valley Grant Act of June 30, 1864
- October 1, 1890 bill creating Yosemite National Park
- Yosemite Recession Bill of 1906

Student pairs should research the basic facts about their topics (what happened, who did what, where, and when). Help students organize and bring their research together to create a class-authored Yosemite Fact Tracker.

## Modifications and extensions:

- Instead of (or as a part of) creating a Yosemite Fact Tracker, students can research and complete a timeline of significant geologic and historic events.
- Limit the scope of the Fact Tracker to a single category, such as animals of Yosemite.
- Students ready to dig deeper can use the question stems below to do more research and add further critical insights to the class Yosemite Fact Tracker:
  - How did/does \_\_\_\_\_ affect \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What makes \_\_\_\_\_ important?
  - Why did/does \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What patterns do you notice in \_\_\_\_\_?

## Find more ways to make learning fun!

Participate in the [Magic Tree House Research Adventure Fair Program](#).

## Resources:

National Park Service:  
[History of People in Yosemite](#)

National Park Service:  
[Animals of Yosemite](#)

Frommer's:  
[The Flora in Yosemite National Park](#)

Library of Congress:  
Today in History:  
[Yosemite](#)

Sierra Club:  
[Legislation About the Yosemite](#)

Kiddle Encyclopedia:  
[Yosemite National Park Facts for Kids](#)

## Additional Resources:

- Become a Yosemite Virtual Junior Ranger  
[nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/upload/Virtual\\_JR\\_English\\_Print.pdf](https://nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/upload/Virtual_JR_English_Print.pdf)  
[nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/upload/Virtual\\_JR\\_Spanish\\_Print.pdf](https://nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/upload/Virtual_JR_Spanish_Print.pdf)  
[nps.gov/yose/images/Virtual\\_JR\\_Badge\\_Coloring\\_Page.jpg](https://nps.gov/yose/images/Virtual_JR_Badge_Coloring_Page.jpg)
- The National Parks: America's Best Idea:  
[Muir and Roosevelt's Campfire Conversation](#)
- Sierra Club:  
[John Muir: One Person Who Made a Difference Lesson Plan](#)
- Sierra Club:  
[In Yosemite with John Muir by Theodore Roosevelt](#)
- PBS The National Parks: America's Best Idea:  
[Theodore Roosevelt](#)
- TED ED:  
[Who Owns the "Wilderness"?](#)

Rachael Walker (belleofthebook.com) created this guide. She consults on a wide variety of educational programs and multimedia projects, and develops educational materials and reading resources for children, parents, and teachers.

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