



Excellence: NPS Careers Lesson

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Overview

The theme for this week is excellence. We strive to continually learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service. We encourage creativity, innovation, and vision so that we may achieve excellence as we fulfill the mission of NPS. As caretakers of the natural and cultural resources of the US, we individually and collectively collaborate to be worthy of the trust given to us by the public.

Learning Objectives

- YCC precipitants will learn about a few scientific careers within the NPS.
- YCC precipitants will get a sense of how people become qualified to work science positions in NPS.
- YCC precipitants will think about their strengths and interests in future career paths.

Materials Needed

- 1 copy of the True Colors Test for each student
- 1 copy of each pair of colors, cut up to be individual tables
- Writing utensils (pens or pencils)

General Outline

- 1. NPS: The Agency**
 - a. History*
 - b. Mission, Vision*
 - c. Federal Agency*
- 2. NPS: Career Paths**
 - a. Park Employee Background*
 - b. Park Ranger*
 - c. Biologist*
 - d. Physical Science Technician*
- 3. Activity**
 - a. Description*
 - b. Guidance*

Background (for park employee benefit)

High school YCC precipitants are feeling pressure from parents, family members, teachers, counselors, and friends to choose a career path. This lesson plan will present some of the science career paths they can take within NPS without overwhelming them. Be prepared to share a bit of your own path towards your position, from education to professional experiences.



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Procedure

1. NPS: The Agency

a. History

- i. Writer and historian Wallace Stegner called National Parks "the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst."
- ii. Since its establishment in 1916, the National Park Service has been entrusted to care for our National Parks. Over time, the number of National Parks grew, as did the agency's work beyond parks. We help communities preserve their history and create close to home outdoor experiences.

b. Mission

- i. Mission: "The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world."¹

c. Federal Agency

- i. The National Park Service is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior and is led by a Director nominated by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. The Director is supported by senior executives who manage national programs, policy, and budget in the Washington, DC, headquarters. DOI is organized into 12 regions. MONO is park of Region 1. Regional directors report to the NPS Washington Office, which reports to the DOI.
- ii. NPS has a workforce of over 20,000 employees and more than 2 million volunteers. Every single individual is instrumental in ensuring that NPS' mission is fulfilled.

2. NPS: Career Paths

a. Park Employee Background

- i. Give YCC precipitants a brief background on your career path! Tell them about:
 1. What is your position title?
 2. What educational path led you to this position? (Degree type, degree title, vocational education, courses that clarified your goals)
 3. What career path led you to this position? (Internships, jobs)

¹ National Park Service. (2019) "About Us."



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4. What kind of project do you work in?
5. What does a normal day look like for you?
- ii. OPM: U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Federal Position Classification and Qualifications website- This website provides Federal position classification, job grading, and qualifications information that is used to determine the pay plan, series, title, grade, and qualification requirements for most work in the Federal Government.
- iii. My DOI Career- DOI has over 300 occupations! Explore the website!
- b. *Park Ranger* - 0025
 - i. Description:² the most visible and unique position in NPS. They work on conservation, park resources, and law enforcement or interpretive services.
 - ii. Duties³
 1. Public safety: enforce laws, investigate criminal activities, apprehend criminal suspects, and perform emergency management activities including search and rescue, wild land fire, and emergency medical services.
 2. Visitor services: ensure visitors understand and abide by park rules and regulations, and provide general park information.
 3. Interpretative services: conduct community outreach programs and activities, including junior ranger programs.
 4. Resource management: manage natural, historical, and cultural resources to ensure park conservation.
 - iii. Education: education requirements can be found on the OPM website. Knowledge from multiple fields may be useful for this position:
 1. Physical and Life Sciences (Archeology, Biology, Ecology, Geology, Environmental Sciences, Environmental Technology)
 2. Resource Management (Forest Management, Wildlife Management, Natural Resource Management, Ecology and Conservation, Environmental Protection and Management)
 3. Law Enforcement (Criminology, Criminal Justice Administration, Public Safety, Police Science)
- c. *Biologist*⁴- 0401
 - i. Description: scientists that manage and conserve the native system and the natural and historic objects within the park setting. They consider resource scarcity, diversity, and genetic integrity.

² Park Ranger EDU. "Park Ranger Careers."

³ Park Ranger EDU. "Park Ranger Schools, Degree and Education Options."

⁴ Park Ranger EDU. "How to Become a Biologist with the National Park Service (NPS)."



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- ii. Duties: Ecosystem restoration through resource management: restore wetlands, protect bodies of water, control biological and/or chemical contaminants, alter fire patterns, restore species populations, manage pests and invasive species, cataloging species, and protect human health.
- iii. Education: Physical and Life Sciences (Marine Biology, Botany, Zoology, Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Ecology)
- d. *Physical Science Technician - 1311*
 - i. Description:⁵ scientists that collect, manage, analyze, and interpret a wide array of physical science data for resource scientists.
 - ii. Duties: monitor natural resources: apply methodologies, install and manage monitoring equipment, collect data, analyze the data with software, communicate results, and recommend best management practices for the resource for the park to adopt.
 - iii. Education: degree in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, or related disciplines appropriate to the position. *OR* combination of education and experience: Courses equivalent to a major, as mentioned plus appropriate experience or additional education.
- e. *Other Fields*
 - i. We are focusing on scientific careers because NPS hires a lot of people to manage natural resources, but social sciences are also crucial to the agency. Donor relations managers, policy analysts, IT specialists, museum technicians, and superintendents are some of the non-scientific workers that help parks run.

3. Activity

a. Description

- i. Tell YCC precipitants: “You are going to take a quick quiz to find how you approach academics, leadership, and what type of career path could fit.”

b. Guidance

- i. Hand each student a test sheet and a pen. Tell YCC precipitants: “Read the groups of words in each row. Decide which of the groups of words is most like you. Rank the order of the groups in that row: 4) the group is most like you; 3) the next most like you; 2) the next; 1) the group LEAST like you. Do this for each row.”
- ii. Give YCC precipitants around 7 minutes. After they are all done, ask them to add up their scores, and group them by color. Hand each group a sheet.

⁵ Park Ranger EDU. “How to Become a Physical Science Technician with the National Park Service (NPS).”



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“Look over this sheet together and discuss in your groups whether it applies.”

- iii. After they talk for about 5 minutes, have them come back together and ask the following reflection questions:
 - 1. Did you feel represented by every point in your factsheet?
 - 2. Do you see yourself in any of the fields of study or careers listed?
 - 3. How does your secondary color complement your primary?
- iv. Remind them that this is just about how they view themselves right now; their colors can change as they grow, and they are not tied to any path.



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True Colors Test

Read the groups of words in each row. Decide which of the groups of words is most like you. Rank the order of the groups in that row: 4) the group is most like you; 3) the next most like you; 2) the next; 1) the group LEAST like you. Do this for each row.

Row 1	Athletic Triumphant Spontaneous A: _____	Orderly Prepared Conservative B: _____	Romantic Harmonious Affectionate C: _____	Visionary Conceptual Intellectual D: _____
Row 2	Skeptical Ingenious Analytical E: _____	Warm Nurturing Emotional F: _____	Dutiful Sensible Thorough G: _____	Bold Charming Impulsive H: _____
Row 3	Punctual Meticulous Traditional I: _____	Kindly Loving Sensitive J: _____	Carefree Energetic Opportunistic K: _____	Curious Scientific Philosophical L: _____
Row 4	Parental Economical Well-organized M: _____	Casual Impatient Competitive N: _____	Humane Passionate Sympathetic O: _____	Technical Inquisitive Questioning P: _____
Row 5	Inventive Pondering Global-thinker Q: _____	Empathic Mentoring Supportive R: _____	Risk-taker Flirtatious Straight-talker S: _____	Stable Procedural Predictable T: _____

Note the ranking you gave each row in the table below, and add up the values. The color with the highest number is your primary color.

Blue	C _____	F _____	J _____	O _____	R _____	_____
Gold	B _____	G _____	I _____	M _____	T _____	_____
Green	D _____	E _____	L _____	P _____	Q _____	_____
Orange	A _____	H _____	K _____	N _____	S _____	_____



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BLUE: FEELERS

Authentic, enthusiastic, compassionate, sincere. They tend to be very social people. You value harmony. Genuine kindness, sincerity, and compassion are important to you. You enjoy opportunities to work with others and collaborate and any opportunity to develop a connection.	
Work & School You like teamwork (sharing, inspiring, helping). You like influencing others to lead more significant lives. You work and learn best when you can consider the human element. You flourish in an atmosphere of cooperation.	Leadership You expect others to express their own views. You work to develop others' potential, and you expect them to do the same. You believe change comes from human potential. You have an unstructured, free flowing approach.
Academia Arts Communication Education Helping professions	NPS Careers Educator Cultural Park Guide Human Resources

GOLD: PLANNERS

Dependable, organized, stable, concerned. You tend to need structure and organization. Order, rules, respect, and dependability are important to you. Time is a key part of your life. You need to be on time and want others to be punctual as well. Following the plan or schedule it best for you.	
Work & School You like routines, rules, and directions. You prefer to stay on one topic at a time. You need to know what is expected of you, and if you are on the right track. You believe that work comes before play, even if you need to work overtime.	Leadership You expect punctuality, order, and loyalty. You assume the "right" way to do things. You seldom question tradition. You have a detailed, thorough approach, which is threatened by change. You expect others to fulfill their roles.
Academia Accounting Business Government History	NPS Careers Donor Relations Lawyer Law Enforcement Park Ranger Anthropologist



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GREEN: THINKERS

Analytical, calm, cool, investigative, logical. You find innovative thinking and problem solving exciting, and you tend to be able to see the big picture and able to effectively analyze situations. Thinking outside the box is a real strength. You have an extreme need to be right.	
Work & School You work best by yourself. You like to focus on ideas until your desire for understanding is satisfied. You are easily bored if a subject holds no interest for you. You enjoy challenges and innovation.	Leadership You expect intelligence, competence, and follow through. You seek ways to improve systems. You are analytical and a visionary. You encourage change for improvement.
Academia Statistics Biology Chemistry Physics	NPS Careers Field or Laboratory Scientist Data Analyst Architect

ORANGE: DOERS

Witty, spontaneous, generous, eager. If you're an Orange, you tend to be action-oriented and are comfortable taking risks. You probably also tend to be competitive and seek out adventures with opportunities to push the boundaries. Living in the moment and enjoying an adaptable time schedule are important to you.	
Work & School You need to be hands on. You like to play games, compete, perform. You enjoy flexibility, change of pace, variety. You dislike routine and structure. You solve problems in active ways and negotiating. You can be direct and like immediate results.	Leadership You expect quick action, but want everyone to make it fun. You are flexible and welcome change. You work in the here and now. You institute change quickly.
Academia Art Crafts Music Theatre	NPS Careers Trail maintenance Cultural Park Rangers



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References

- National Park Service. (2019) "About Us." Retrieved from <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm>
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