

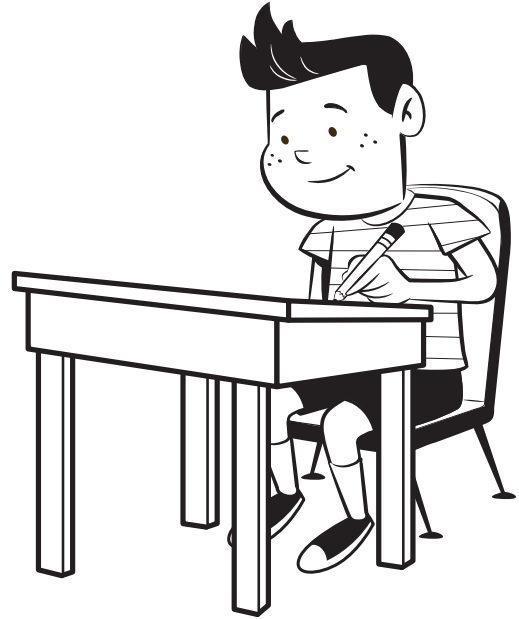
Read & Write About It

3rd–5th Grade

Objectives

CCSS Writing

- W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- W.3.2a: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
- W.3.2b: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- W.3.2d: Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.



Materials Needed

- Jackie Robinson reading passage
- Jackie Robinson Fact Sheet graphic organizer
- Whiteboard, overhead projector, document camera or interactive whiteboard
- Informative passages and graphic organizers (“Chocolate Town,” “Praying Mantis” and “Why Can’t You Tickle Yourself?”)
- Fact cards and writing assignment prompts (“Scientists at Work,” “Natural U.S. Landmarks,” “The Olympic® Games” and “Going West”)

Introduction

Note: This lesson plan can be completed in more than one day.

Explain to students that authors of informative/explanatory texts write to convey specific facts or ideas about a person, topic or event.

State that you will read aloud an example of this type of writing using the Jackie Robinson passage. Have students read along with you. As a class, list the key pieces of information to determine the facts that the author wants the reader to know about the topic.

Explain that deconstructing a passage in this way helps them become better writers. This process will assist them in thinking about how to use a list of facts to create an interesting paragraph or passage about a given topic.

Procedure

1. Display the written passage about Jackie Robinson on the whiteboard, document camera or overhead projector. Read the passage aloud, and invite students to read along silently.
2. Next, give each student a copy of the Jackie Robinson Fact Sheet graphic organizer.

3. Have students look at the organizer, and ask, "If there is one fact about Jackie Robinson that you think people should know, what would it be?" (Reinforce their answers with a fact about Jackie Robinson, and have students decide whether to include it on their sheet.) Then ask, "What are some other facts you learned about him? What are some of his "firsts" that the author mentions?" Finally, ask, "Is there anything else that you read about Jackie Robinson in this passage that you found especially interesting?"
Invite student volunteers to share responses as you fill in the graphic organizer together.
4. Allow students to refer back to the passage to find details about Jackie Robinson's life as well as interesting facts to highlight, and encourage them to discuss why these details and facts are important.
5. Write a paragraph about Jackie Robinson as a class. Model the process of choosing a topic sentence, and emphasize that each sentence after the topic sentence must support the topic and provide details about it. Encourage them to use key details and quotes from the text. Use the last paragraph in the Jackie Robinson passage to model a strong conclusion.
6. When you have written the paragraph together, have students read it aloud to make sure that it makes sense and that each sentence supports the topic sentence.

Guided Practice

1. Divide the class into small groups of three or four students.
2. Give each group a copy of one of the informative passages and graphic organizers. (Note: Depending on the size of your class, there may be more than one group working on the same passage/graphic organizer.)
3. Challenge students to read the passage and use information from the passage to fill in the graphic organizer.
4. If time permits, have students use the information on the graphic organizer to write a paragraph about the topic, as instructed on the bottom of the page. Or have them complete this step as homework or as a follow-up lesson on another day.

Independent Practice

1. Invite students to choose a fact card and corresponding writing assignment prompt for one of the following topics: "Scientists at Work," "Natural U.S. Landmarks," "The Olympic® Games" and "Going West."
2. Encourage students to select one of the writing assignment prompts.
3. Challenge students to read the fact cards and work together to write an organized, well-written paragraph that conveys information about the topic.
4. Have students read their paragraphs to the class to share what they have learned, and display the paragraphs on a bulletin board for others to read.

JACKIE ROBINSON

Many people come to mind if you think of important people in baseball history. Among them is Jackie Robinson, the first African American player in Major League Baseball.

Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. The team made it to the World Series that season. They did not win the series, but Robinson showed that blacks and whites could play the game together. That year, he earned the title of National League Rookie of the Year.



Over his 10-year baseball career, Robinson led the Dodgers to six league victories and one World Series Championship. He led second basemen in double plays in four of the 10 years he played. He also led the National League in stolen bases in both 1947 and 1949. In 1949, he led the league in batting average and was chosen as most valuable player, or MVP.

Robinson had other “firsts” before playing professional baseball. While attending college at the University of California, Los Angeles, Robinson became the school’s first four-letter man. That meant he was a star player in four sports: football, track, basketball, and baseball.

Robinson earned his highest honor in 1962 when he was chosen to be included in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Fifty years after becoming the first black professional baseball player, Major League Baseball honored him by choosing to retire his number. No player on any team would ever wear that number again. It was the first time a number had been retired from Major League Baseball.

Can you find out?

- A man named Branch Rickey helped to get Jackie Robinson into the major leagues. Who was he?

JACKIE ROBINSON FACT SHEET

Write at least one detail about Jackie Robinson in each base below.

Interesting Fact:

Interesting Fact:



- Write a paragraph about Jackie Robinson using the facts you have listed.
- Begin your paragraph with this topic sentence: "Jackie Robinson had many 'firsts' throughout his lifetime."

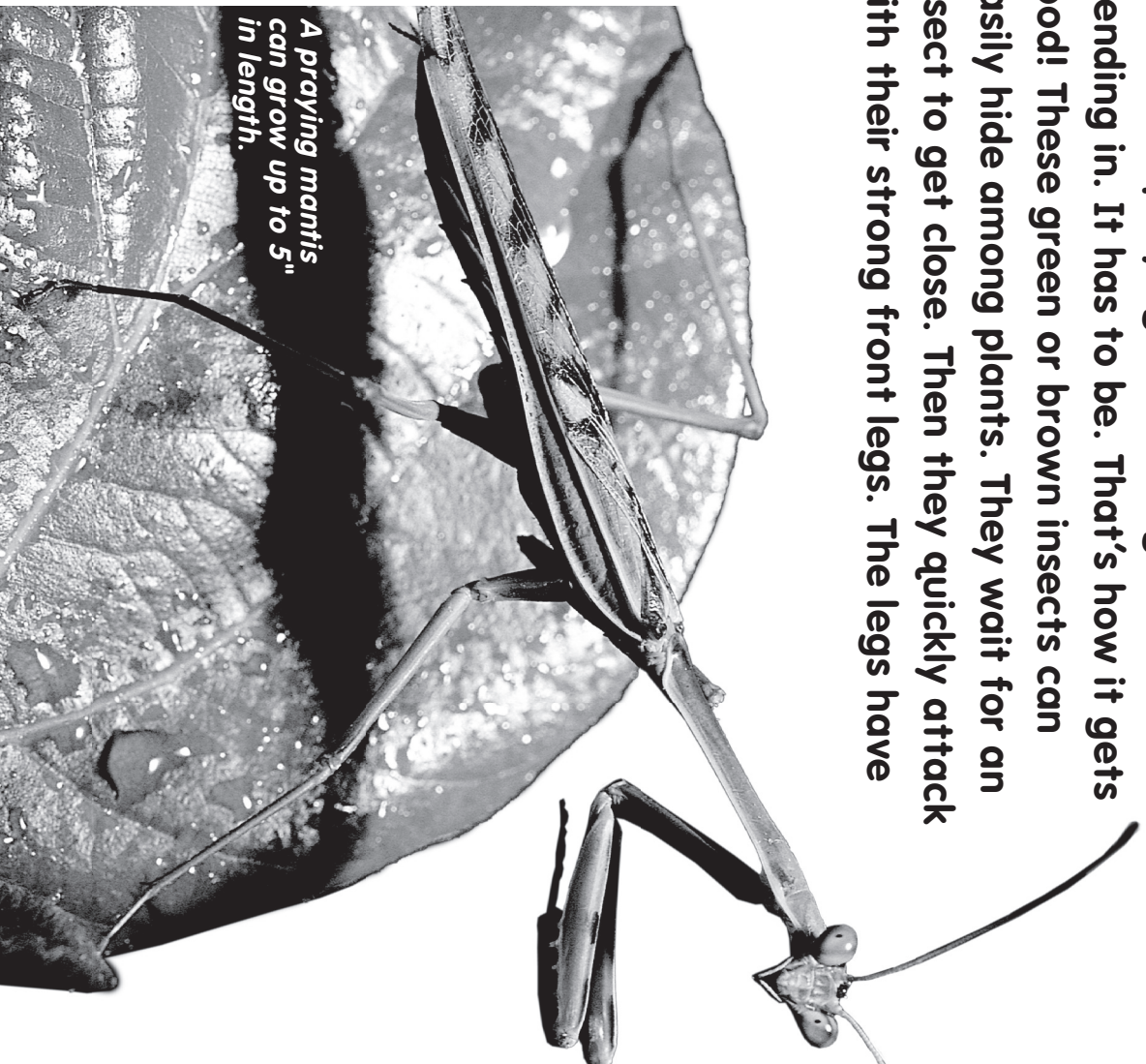
PRAYING MANTIS

The praying mantis is good at blending in. It has to be. That's how it gets food! These green or brown insects can easily hide among plants. They wait for an insect to get close. Then they quickly attack with their strong front legs. The legs have

small spikes on them, too. The spikes help to hold down prey.

If the praying mantis is in danger, it stands tall and spreads out its wings or front legs. This makes it look bigger and can scare away enemies.

Here's another interesting fact about the praying mantis. It can rotate its head in almost a full circle to see its surroundings. It is also able to see very well because it has two large compound eyes and three more simple eyes in between. It can see up to 60 feet away. It watches and stalks its prey until it is ready to strike. Now that's keeping an eye on things!



*A praying mantis
can grow up to 5"
in length.*

Can you find out? • Why is this insect called a praying mantis?

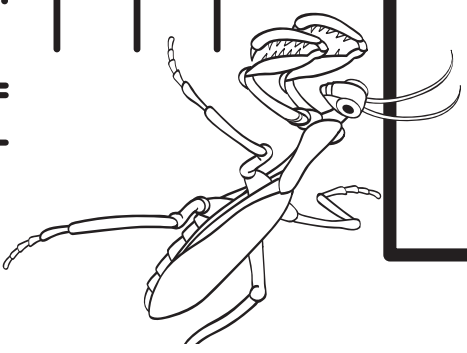
PRAYING MANTIS FACT SHEET

Fill in the chart with the different facts you've learned about the praying mantis.

How the Praying Mantis Hides	
What Is Special About Its Front Legs	
What It Does When in Danger	
How It Hunts	

Other interesting facts I learned:

- _____
- _____
- _____



- Write a paragraph that begins with this topic sentence: "I believe this insect is called a 'praying' mantis because..."



CHOCOLATE TOWN

It's no wonder that Hershey, Pennsylvania, is also called Chocolate Town, U.S.A. The Hershey Company makes more than a billion pounds of chocolate there every year!

Where does the chocolate come from? It all begins with the cacao tree. This tree grows in jungles around the world, from Brazil and Indonesia to the Ivory Coast of Africa. Cacao trees grow a melon-like fruit that contains cocoa beans. These beans are used to make chocolate.

Once the beans get to a Hershey Company factory, they are cleaned and stored until the workers are ready to use them. Then, the beans are roasted in large roasters at very high temperatures. A special machine takes the shells off the dry, roasted beans.

It's the inside part of the bean, called the nib, that is used to make chocolate.

Next, the nibs are milled, or turned into a liquid. Now, the real fun begins! To turn the liquid chocolate into a sweet treat, the factory workers mix in cocoa butter, sugar, and milk. This liquid gets poured into molds. The filled molds go on a bumpy ride to remove any air bubbles in the chocolate. Then, they go through a long tunnel where they are cooled into a solid candy bar. The molding machines can fill a lot of molds—more than 1,000 per minute! Finally, the

bars are wrapped with a special wrapper. They're ready to go to stores!

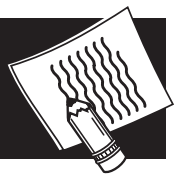


Can you find out? • Who started the Hershey Company, and in what year?

CHOCOLATE TOWN

Write at least one detail about the Hershey Company's chocolate factories in each box below.

Location	Where Chocolate Comes From	Beans	Nibs
Added to the Liquid	How Chocolate Gets Its Shape	Final Step	Interesting Fact(s)



- Write a paragraph about the Hershey Company's chocolate factories and how they make their delicious chocolate.
- Begin your paragraph with this topic sentence: "Chocolate Town, U.S.A., has a long history of providing treats for chocolate lovers."

WHY CAN'T YOU TICKLE YOURSELF?

You have probably been tickled before. Maybe someone in your family sneaked up and found your ticklish spot. Many people have these ticklish spots. However, if you try to tickle yourself, you won't be able to do it. Why can't you tickle yourself?

When you are tickled, your body reacts with a defense mechanism. You feel the tickle and panic because you feel like you have bugs crawling on you! The tickle makes you laugh. It's your body's way of reacting to something that it didn't expect to happen. You probably laugh the hardest when you are not expecting to be tickled.

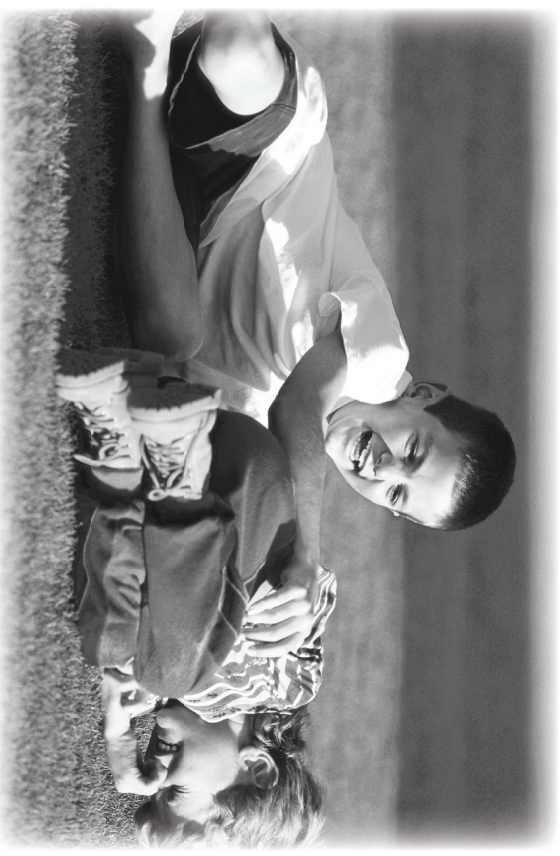
The nerves in our bodies are what help us to feel touch, like the touch of someone tickling you.

What are nerves? Also called nerve cells or neurons, nerves are like little messengers. We have nerves all over our bodies. They send signals to and from the brain, telling us if something is hot, is cold, or in this case, tickles.

When you try to tickle yourself, though, it's different.

Your brain tells your body to expect to be tickled. You know what it will feel like if you tickle yourself. Let's say you move your hand to a ticklish spot. Your brain tells your body to get ready for it. So your body knows your hand is coming. It's not a surprise like it is when someone else tickles you.

Can you find out? • What are your ticklish spots? See if you can tickle yourself.



WHY CAN'T YOU TICKLE YOURSELF?

Fill in the cause-and-effect boxes to show why you can't tickle yourself.

CAUSE

Someone sneaked up on you and found your ticklish spot.



EFFECT

CAUSE



EFFECT

Signals are sent to and from the brain, telling you if something is hot, cold, or if it tickles.

CAUSE

You try to tickle yourself.

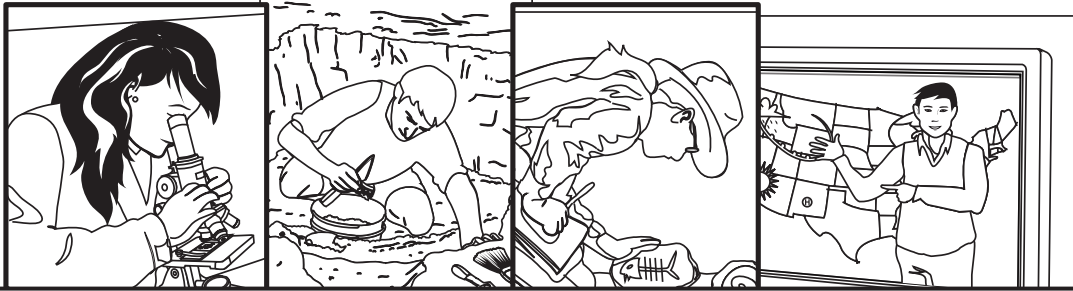


EFFECT



- Use your cause-and-effect sheet to write a paragraph about why you can't tickle yourself.
- Begin your paragraph with this topic sentence: "It may sound strange, but even the most ticklish people can't tickle themselves."

Scientists at Work



1

Choose a type of scientist to write about. Write a letter to someone who has this job. Think about some questions that you may have about this job and include them in the letter.

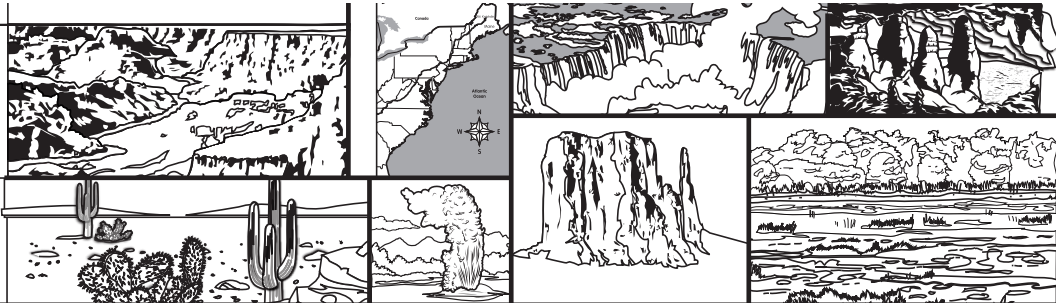
2

Choose a type of scientist to write about. Why do you think this job is important? What do you think we learn from the work this scientist does? Explain why you would like to have this job or why you wouldn't.

3

Choose two types of scientists to write about. Compare and contrast how they are alike and how they are different.

Natural U.S. Landmarks



1

Choose a landmark that you have visited or want to visit. Describe your visit or the reasons you would like to visit this landmark.

2

Choose a landmark and create a travel brochure about it. Include as much detail about it as you can. Draw pictures of the landmark. On one page of the brochure, write a paragraph to persuade people to come visit this landmark. Tell why they should see it.

3

Choose a landmark and write a fictional story about taking a class field trip there. What would you and your classmates do? What would you see? What kind of adventure could you have there? Include real details about the landmark in your story.

The Olympic® Games



1

Choose a sport from the Summer or Winter Olympic Games. Write an informative paragraph about what is needed to play the sport or what skills are necessary to be good at it.

2

Choose a sport with an Olympic champion you really like or admire. Write a letter to this person explaining why you admire him or her and why you consider the person a hero. You may need to do some research if you are not familiar with any Olympic champions.

3

Write about an Olympic sport. Write an imaginative story about a person who plays that sport. Include what you think this person's life is like. You may want to include a funny story about something that happens while the person is practicing for the Olympic Games or when the person is at the Olympic Games.

Going West



1

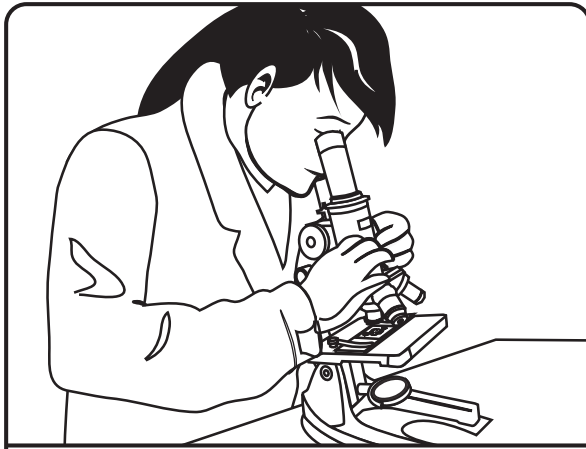
Choose a topic. Describe what it is or who they are and why the thing or the people involved are important in American history.

2

Write a journal entry about one of the topics. Pretend that you are at this place, traveling with these people, or using this thing. Include the date, where you are going or where you are, and what is happening. Describe the people, places, and things you see.

3

Write a historical fiction story about one of these topics. Use real dates, names, and places, but make up an adventure about them.



Biologist

Fold

Facts:

- Biologists study plant and animal life.
- Some biologists study plant and animal cells, as well as bacteria, fungi, and viruses.
- They use equipment like microscopes to see cells and organisms that are too small for the eye to see.
- Biologists help develop medicines.
- They do research and give reports to the government, universities, and businesses.

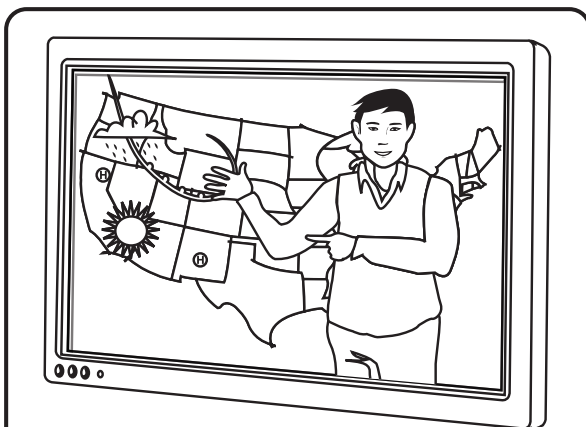


Geologist

Fold

Facts:

- Geologists study Earth's crust.
- They study what Earth's crust is made of, or its structure and composition.
- They study the physical history of Earth.
- Some geologists study rocks and minerals.
- Geologists work for the government, at museums, at colleges, and for private companies, like gas and oil companies.
- They use their knowledge to try to solve engineering and construction problems in buildings.



Meteorologist

Fold

Facts:

- Meteorologists study Earth's atmosphere and its weather.
- They make forecasts, which are predictions about what the weather will be like.
- They use special equipment to measure the temperature, humidity, wind speed, rainfall, and air quality.
- They can use data (information) from satellites.
- To be a meteorologist, you need to go to college and take classes in calculus, physics, dynamics, and other math and science courses.

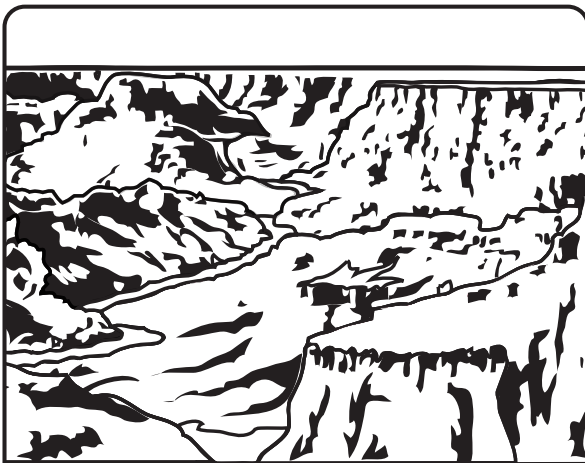


Everglades

Fold

Facts:

- Everglades National Park is a large subtropical wilderness in Florida.
- It was dedicated as a national park in 1947 in order to protect the many plant and animal species that live there.
- Some of the plants and animals are not found anywhere else on Earth.
- It has more than 360 different species of birds, 300 species of fish, 40 species of mammals, and 50 different kinds of reptiles.
- It has many ecosystems and habitats, including mangrove forests, coastal lowlands, pinelands, and freshwater sloughs.

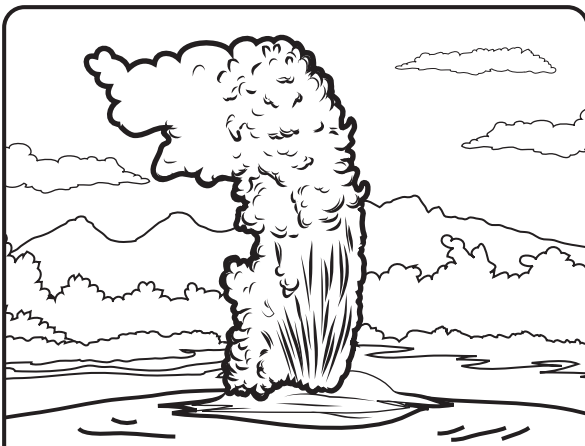


Grand Canyon

Fold

Facts:

- The Grand Canyon is about 277 miles long, 18 miles wide at its widest places, and one mile deep.
- Most tourists visit the South Rim, where Grand Canyon Village is located.
- Some visit the North Rim, which is 1,000 feet higher than the South Rim.
- The Inner Canyon is below the rim, and people can hike or ride a mule through it.
- The Colorado River runs through the canyon.
- There are many trails to walk or hike, including the Bright Angel Trail, which was used by Native Americans.
- Some of the oldest rocks there are 1.8 billion years old.



Old Faithful

Fold

Facts:

- Old Faithful is a hot water geyser at Yellowstone National Park.
- It erupts and sprays water about every 45 to 110 minutes.
- The water is very hot, about 204°F.
- The water shoots up an average of 130 feet to 140 feet high.
- An eruption can last up to five minutes!



Gold Rush

Fold

Facts:

- In 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento, California.
- By early 1849, the Gold Rush had started.
- Thousands of people came to California looking for gold.
- People sold supplies to the miners, such as coffee, flour, and even water, at very high prices.
- The people who came were known as "forty-niners."
- They came from all over the United States and from South America, too.

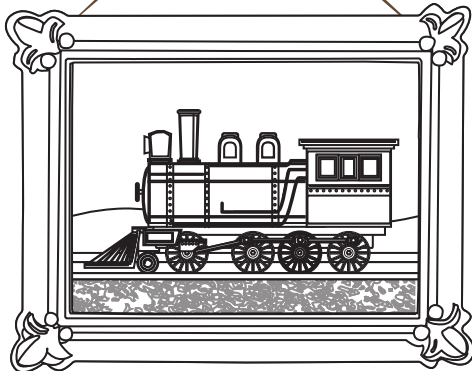


Oregon Trail

Fold

Facts:

- The Oregon Trail was the longest, but easiest, way over land to get from the eastern United States to the West.
- It took between four and six months to make the journey.
- Many people started the journey at Independence, Missouri.
- The Great Migration was a large wagon train with 1,000 people that made the journey in 1843.
- People used a wagon loaded with supplies, such as flour, sugar, coffee, tea, and dried fruits and meats.

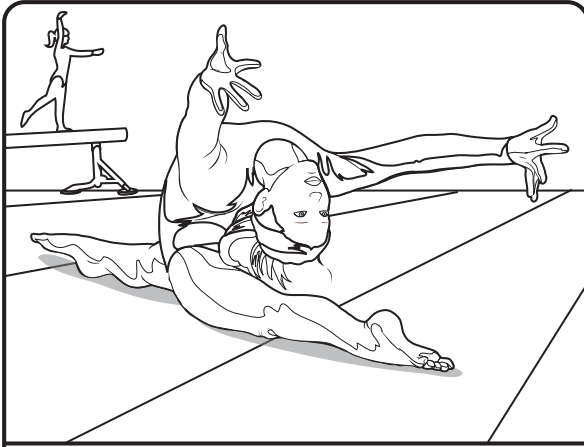


Transcontinental Railroad

Fold

Facts:

- The Transcontinental Railroad was the first railroad to run east to west across the United States.
- It ran from Omaha, Nebraska, to Sacramento, California.
- When the railroad was completed, it took four days to travel from Omaha to Sacramento.
- The Union Pacific Railroad started in the East and the Central Pacific Railroad started in the West, and they met at Promontory, Utah.
- Thousands of workers built the railroad by hand!

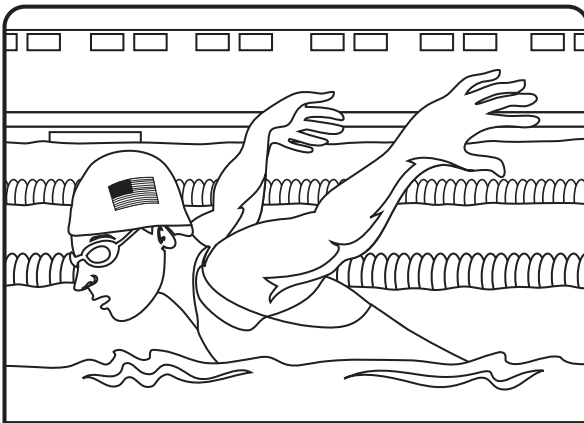


Gymnastics

Fold

Facts:

- The ancient Greeks invented gymnastics more than 2,000 years ago.
- At the 1976 Summer Olympic® Games, Nadia Comaneci scored seven perfect 10s. She was the first person to ever score a 10 in gymnastics.
- Women's gymnastics has four events: balance beam, vault, uneven bars, and floor exercise.
- Men's gymnastics has six events: vault, parallel bars, pommel horse, rings, horizontal bar, and floor exercise.
- Gymnastics helps build strength, endurance, coordination, and flexibility.
- Some well-known gymnasts include Mary Lou Retton, Shawn Johnson, and Bart Conner.



Swimming

Fold

Facts:

- Swimming has been an event at the Olympic® Games since 1896.
- There are 17 different swimming events in the Olympic Games.
- Racing events vary in length: 50, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1,500, and 10,000 meters.
- Michael Phelps, Mark Spitz, and Natalie Coughlin are famous swimmers.
- Swimmers compete using the butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.
- The lanes in the pools are designed so swimmers can swim faster.
- Swimmers wear swimsuits, goggles, and swim caps.

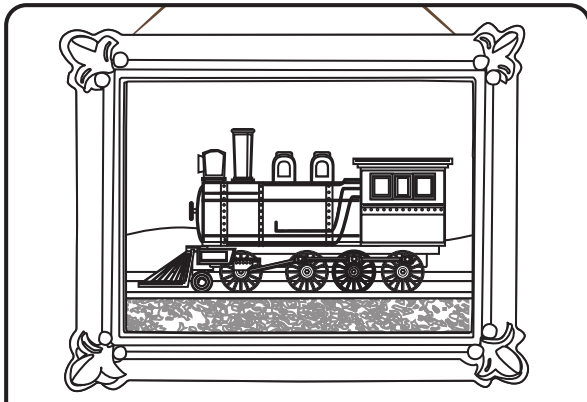


Snowboarding

Fold

Facts:

- Snowboarding is similar to surfing, skiing, and skateboarding.
- It is a somewhat new sport that was developed in the 1960s and 1970s, and it became popular during the 1980s and 1990s.
- It became an Olympic® sport in 1998.
- There are six Olympic snowboarding events.
- The events are the half-pipe, the parallel giant slalom, and the snowboard cross. Three are men's events and three are women's events.
- Snowboarders wear special boots that attach to the snowboard.

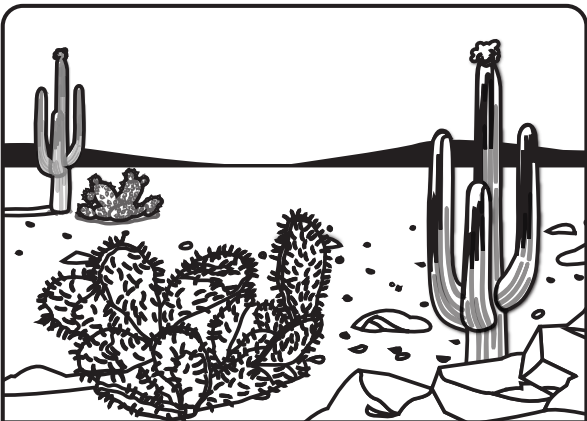


Transcontinental Railroad

Fold

Facts:

- The Transcontinental Railroad was the first railroad to run east to west across the United States.
- It ran from Omaha, Nebraska, to Sacramento, California.
- When the railroad was completed, it took four days to travel from Omaha to Sacramento.
- The Union Pacific Railroad started in the East and the Central Pacific Railroad started in the West, and they met at Promontory, Utah.
- Thousands of workers built the railroad by hand!



Death Valley

Fold

Facts:

- Death Valley is a national park and is part of a large desert in California.
- It is the hottest, driest, and lowest point in the United States.
- Less than two inches of rain falls there each year.
- The temperature can reach more than 120°F in summer.
- There are many places to hike, backpack, go mountain biking, or go bird-watching.