



The Grand Canyon

1 Are you looking for an exciting vacation that is rated number one in the United States? Do you have a family to take with you? The Grand Canyon is one of the top-rated vacation spots in the world and is the number one vacation spot in the United States. With the help of the Colorado River, the Grand Canyon has expanded throughout history to become one of the most beautiful and inspiring sites ever. People from all over the world come to visit and see the beautiful canyon. If you want a silent nature trail where you can be alone and hike, the Grand Canyon might not be for you. It can get very crowded during the busy season. Now that the Grand Canyon has been officially named a UNESCO World Heritage site, about 4.5 million people visit each year.

2 The Grand Canyon can be found in Arizona near both the Utah and Nevada state lines and lies partly in each of the three states. The beautiful canyon is one of the National Parks of the United States. The recreation portions of the park can be found in Utah at the National Recreation Area. In this park, there is abundant plant life and animal species. The National Park Service shows that the Grand Canyon is home to 1,500 plants, 355 birds, 89 mammals, 47 reptiles, 17 species of fish, and 9 amphibians.

3 The south rim of the park is open year-round and is the busiest part of the park. It is close to the Utah state line and has the most beautiful views from far up on the cliffs. It is easy for anyone to get there and see the beautiful view. The north rim, however, is harder to access. Only hikers can access this part of the canyon because of the 10.5 miles that separate the two rims. The north rim is not open all year because it houses an airport and railway that do not run in the winter. It is also closed anytime there is inclement weather due to the danger it would pose to hikers along the bottom of the canyon.

4 The Grand Canyon Skywalk, built in 2007, is another attraction that brings people to the canyon. The Skywalk is made of glass and stands about 4,000 feet above the bottom of the canyon. Walking on the glass makes visitors feel like they are flying. Some people visit the canyon just to walk the Skywalk.

5 If you and your family are looking for a fun, family-friendly vacation spot, be sure to consider the Grand Canyon. The trip is one of the top-rated vacations in the United States and the world.

“The Grand Canyon” written for educational purposes.



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Rock Formations of the Grand Canyon

6 The word grand does not even begin to describe the amazing beauty of the Grand Canyon. It stretches about 277 miles long and 18 miles wide at its largest point. Six thousand feet down, the Colorado River runs through the canyon and has been flowing and eroding the sides of the canyon for millions of years. The amazing rock found at the bottom of this canyon is around two million years old.

7 Scientists go to the Grand Canyon to study the rock formations throughout the canyon. After at least 70 million years, the Grand Canyon has about 40 unique rock layers that show the geologic evolution over time. There are also fossils throughout the canyon rock that show the plants and animals that lived there.

8 The rock at the very bottom of the canyon is the Precambrian Basement Rock. This rock is classified as an igneous rock because it was formed by becoming superheated and turned into molten rock. The rock here is a lot like the Hawaii Islands formed from volcanic eruptions. When the magma from the eruption cooled, it formed a rock layer which is now the bottom layer of rocks found in the Grand Canyon.

9 The next rock layer, Bright Angel Shale, is slightly greenish shale and is found at the Tonto Platform area of the canyon. This layer is thought to be about 515 million years old. After it had formed from the magma, the canyon was underwater. Underwater creatures swam in the muddy, warm sea. Even the worm-like creatures liked the water and burrowed into the sea floor. Most of their fossils are destroyed now from the pressure of the upper rock layers, but some of their tunnels can still be seen today.

10 After the sea had declined, the canyon became muddy with many streams and small rivers flowed throughout. This environment was perfect for plants like ferns to grow, and reptiles moved in quickly. Fossils have been found of dragonflies with wings 12 inches across and ferns that fell into the mud thousands of years ago. This layer is called the Hermit Shale and is red because of the siltstone and sandstone.

11 Those streams and rivers eventually dried up and left a sandstone similar to the Sahara Desert. Reptiles, spiders, scorpions, and other desert animals and insects made their home here. Many of their tracks can be found fossilized in the sandstone still today. This layer of the canyon, called Coconino Sandstone, is a lightly colored cliff that runs all along the canyon. It is close to the top so many people can see this sandstone from where they stand at the top.

12 The top layer is the Kaibab Limestone, and it is the youngest rock layer found in the canyon. At about 270 million years old, there is evidence again that water covered the rock. Very shallow, warm water gave a home to sponges and other water creatures. Scientists easily find fossils of these creatures because the limestone is the uppermost layer of the canyon.

13 Though the Grand Canyon is not the widest, longest, or deepest canyon in the world, it continues to bring about 4.5 million visitors each year. Scientists also continue to frequent the site to collect fossils and study the rock formations made billions of years ago by Mother Nature.



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Native People of the Grand Canyon

14 The Grand Canyon has been forming for billions of years. For thousands of those, the caves and caverns in the canyons have provided a home for the Havasupai Tribe. Today, they are in a section of the canyon known as the Cataract Canyon but were once living throughout the entire canyon.

15 Many years ago, the Havasupai Tribe relied on hunting and gathering to survive. They lived above the canyon and inside the canyon walls. They came to depend on plant life and the Colorado River to meet their needs. The Hopi Tribe nearby began to trade with the Havasupai and introduced new crops that would later become important to the Havasupai people. Sunflowers and gourds were two of the important crops introduced by the Hopi Tribe.

16 Between 1882 and 1920, the United States government seized the land at the top of the canyon. The plateau happened to be where the Havasupai Tribe stayed during the winter. Over time, the government had taken almost all of their land and proclaimed it free for public use. The Havasupai people were not even aware that this had happened and did not find out their land had been seized for several years. That was not the only problem the Havasupai Tribe faced. Settlers began moving into the area with diseases that the Havasupai Tribe was not immune to. Many Havasupai people died of smallpox, measles, and the flu, and by 1906, only 166 tribal members were left alive.

17 It was not until 1928 that the Havasupai people were completely forced out of the canyon by the National Park Service. Though they fought to keep their traditions, their lives were never the same. The Havasupai people went to court to stand up and fight for their land. They were able to prove that the United States government had illegally seized the land in 1909. The following year they again had the right to live in the canyon and were given 185,000 acres of land. Another 25,300 acres were considered the property of the Havasupai people but were looked after and cared for by the National Parks Service.

18 Today the Havasupai Tribe is alive and well and dwelling in their Grand Canyon home. They continue to respect the traditions of the ancestors but have also adopted new traditions. The Havasupai Tribe has over 1,000 members who often work in and around the canyon, often choosing to work in the lodges and tourist offices.



Top Score Writing – Grade 7

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