

My Journey Home Family Connection

This week your child is reading *Mysteries at Cliff Palace*, a play about a boy who hopes to solve a mystery while taking a guided tour with his family at Mesa Verde National Park.

DAY
1

Vocabulary on the Go With your child, role-play the parts of a museum director and a detective as they discuss the mystery of an item missing from a museum. Use as many of the following words as you can in your scene.

stunned realization checking resemble critical

DAY
2

What a Character Have your child name a favorite TV show or movie. What are some traits of the main characters? Are they curious? silly? hard-working? lazy? How do these characters handle the problems they face in the show? Together, talk about the lesson the producers want the audience to understand, and whether or not the lesson relates to real-life experiences.

DAY
3

Uncovering the Past How do archaeologists learn about past civilizations? With your child, use library books and websites to investigate what archaeologists do and how they form theories about the lives and activities of people who lived long ago.

CHALLENGE

Together, search the Internet for information about archaeologists and a current archaeological dig. Then help your child create a want ad to find qualified workers for the project.

Protect the Park Read and discuss the following newspaper article with your child.

Thistles Threaten Park

MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK – Over the last decade, wildfires have ravaged countless acres of the pinyon-juniper woodlands that cover mesa tops in this national park. While the ancient cliff dwellings have sustained only minor damage, the wildfires have created an additional problem.

Vast acres of earth exposed as a result of the wildfires left the region vulnerable to invasion by non-native weedy plants. One of these, the musk thistle, now covers hundreds of acres of land, and its dense numbers are choking off native species.

While park officials are employing a variety of methods to eradicate the musk thistles and

other invasive weeds, they want the public to help, too, by not picking the pretty purple flowers. Collecting any plant life is illegal in the park, but park officials are actively urging the more than 500,000 yearly visitors to the park to help them in their efforts to restore the park's natural plant life. Visitors should seriously consider *not* picking just one "souvenir"—a single musk thistle head can contain and spread hundreds of seeds.



From a Ranger's View Discuss how park rangers might view the tourists to Mesa Verde, Yosemite, or other national parks. What types of behavior would the rangers welcome in visitors? What kinds of things would rangers discourage? Together, create a ranger's wish list that describes the ideal park visitor.



Book Links

- *Building Big*, by David Macaulay
- *Chasing Vermeer*, by Blue Balliett **CHALLENGE**



Internet Challenge Help your child search for websites to learn more about other ancient sites, such as Canyon de Chelly and Bandelier National Monuments.

Mysteries at Cliff Palace
Home Letter

Home Letter

Dear Family,

This week's question is "What lessons can we learn from other cultures?" We will read and perform a readers' theater selection, **Mysteries at Cliff Palace**. Ruben hopes to solve the mystery of the vanished people of the cliff dwellings when he and his family tour Mesa Verde National Park. The informational nonfiction selection, **Cave of the Crystals**, will amaze students. They will learn about the largest natural crystals ever discovered! Finally, students will read the poems **Places and Names: A Traveler's Guide** and **Los libros/Books**.

This week's...

Target Vocabulary: dwarfed, procedure, transferred, enthusiastic, adapted, conserving, critical, realization, available, resemble

Vocabulary Strategy: Suffixes *-ness*, *-less*, *-ment*

Comprehension Skill: Theme—examine characters' qualities and motives to recognize the theme

Comprehension Strategy: Analyze/evaluate—think carefully about the text and form an opinion about it

Writing Focus: Informative writing—journal entry

Activities to Do Together

Vocabulary

Review this week's **Target Vocabulary** with your child. Help your child use a print or online dictionary to review meanings. If the online dictionary has an audio pronunciation feature, have your child listen to each word's pronunciation and repeat it.

A Mystery

Watch a children's mystery movie with your child. Afterwards, talk with your child about the steps that were taken to solve the mystery.

Journal It!

Talk with your child about his or her day. Then have your child write a journal entry about it.



Go to the *eBook* to read and listen to this week's selection.

Mysteries at Cliff Palace

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|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. vacant | 22. triumphant |
| 2. insistent | 23. occupant |
| 3. reversible | 24. digestible |
| 4. patriotism | 25. curable |
| 5. finalist | |
| 6. honorable | |
| 7. contestant | |
| 8. observant | |
| 9. urgent | |
| 10. pessimist | |
| 11. comfortable | |
| 12. absorbent | |
| 13. optimism | |
| 14. journalism | |
| 15. novelist | |
| 16. terrible | |
| 17. frequent | |
| 18. laughable | |
| 19. radiant | |
| 20. collectible | |
| 21. evident | |

Name _____ Date _____

Mysteries at Cliff Palace
Vocabulary Word Cards

stunned

conserving

analyzing

critical

transferred

realization

enthusiastic

available

adapted

resemble