

Check your ECCE Reading Skills – Part 3 – Activity 1

Key and Item Analysis

The Pioneer Yosemite History Center Yosemite National Park

The scenery of Yosemite National Park in California is world-renowned. Each year, millions of people are drawn to its thundering waterfalls, towering ancient sequoia trees, unique geologic features, and magnificent high country. Many visitors are less aware of the stories of individuals that have both changed and been changed by Yosemite. At the Pioneer Yosemite History Center, we commemorate these people and the challenges they faced during the establishment of this great park.

The Pioneer Yosemite History Center consists of historic structures from different eras of Yosemite history. Originally constructed in different locations throughout Yosemite, they were moved to Wawona in the 1950s and 1960s. As you walk among them, it is important to remember that the area does not represent a village. Instead, each building stands for a different chapter in the Yosemite story. Allow Yosemite history to come to life as you travel back in time to an era of horsedrawn wagons, covered bridges, and log cabins.

GREY BARN & COVERED BRIDGE

In the late 1800s, Wawona was the largest stagecoach stop in Yosemite. After hours of bouncing along dirt roads, stagecoaches stopped for the night at the Wawona Hotel. If a stagecoach needed a repair before continuing on its journey, the grey barn was the place to visit. The Washburns, proprietors of the Wawona Hotel, used the barn for this rather than for housing farm animals or storing grain and farm equipment. All Yosemite-bound traffic through this area crossed the covered bridge, which was built in 1857 by Galen Clark, but sold to the Washburns, who covered the bridge in the style of their native Vermont.

ARTIST CABIN

Explorers, writers, and early tourist parties of the 1850s returned from Yosemite with stories of spectacular beauty. Artists were drawn to Yosemite, where they found inspiration in the magnificent scenery. Many decided to live in the area permanently. Their artwork publicized and popularized Yosemite. As a result, many people chose to make the difficult journey to Yosemite and experience the beauty firsthand. Thus, artists played a key role in increased awareness, tourism, and protection of Yosemite.

HOMESTEAD CABIN

Much of the high country around Yosemite Valley had been claimed by individuals in the late 1800s. In the late 1880s, John Muir and other preservationists grew concerned that the increasing number of settlements and water use in the area would impact Yosemite's waterfalls. Muir led the movement to preserve the high country, and helped establish the expanded boundaries of Yosemite National Park in 1890. People who owned land in the Park fought legal battles to keep it. The cabin represents such disputes.

BLACKSMITH SHOP

By 1900, many people had made the trip to Yosemite on horseback or by horse-drawn stagecoach. Roads were rough on horses and riders. It took eight hours to travel approximately 25 miles from Wawona to Yosemite Valley. A four-up stagecoach (one being drawn by four horses) changed horses four times during the trip. Blacksmiths shops were located throughout the park, and "smithys" shod horses and repaired wagons.

CAVALRY OFFICE

Although Yosemite was set aside as a national park in 1890, the National Park Service had not yet been created. Following the precedent set in Yellowstone, the first U.S. national park, the U.S. Army managed Yosemite. Each summer over 200 soldiers, usually cavalry, rode from San Francisco to protect it. They patrolled trails, stocked fish, and enforced rules, such as no hunting or grazing. In 1899, 1903, and 1904, African-American buffalo soldiers served in the Sierra Nevada.

RANGER PATROL CABIN

In 1914, the U.S. Cavalry left Yosemite. The management of this huge park fell to a small group of 15 men. Their duties were made more difficult by the fact that automobiles had been allowed to enter the park in 1914. Buildings such as this were used as automobile check stations. Here drivers paid rangers a fee to enter the park and were informed of regulations.

Item Difficulty: Moderate

1. What should you keep in mind about the buildings you visit?
- A. They have been reconstructed.
 - B. They are from the same time period.
 - C. They are not part of one village.
 - D. They were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s.

Answer: C

Explanation: The correct answer is C. The third sentence in paragraph two states that the buildings in Yosemite area not from the same village, but each building symbolizes a different historical period: "...it is important to remember that the area does not represent a village. Instead, each building stands for a different chapter in the Yosemite story."

Item Difficulty: Moderate

2. What was the Grey Barn used for?
- A. sheltering animals
 - B. fixing stagecoaches
 - C. Storing tractors
 - D. Storing grain

Answer: B

Explanation: The correct answer is B. The third sentence of the paragraph with the title 'Grey Barn & Covered Bridge' states that the grey barn was used to fix stagecoaches: "If a stagecoach needed a repair before continuing on its journey, the grey barn was the place to visit."

Item Difficulty: More challenging

3. Why were artists important in Yosemite's history?
- A. Yosemite's scenery inspired them to become painters.
 - B. Their work made people want to visit the park.
 - C. They were the first to make the difficult trip to Yosemite.
 - D. Many of them decided to settle in Yosemite.

Answer: B

Explanation: The paragraph with the title 'Artist Cabin' states that many artists decided to live in Yosemite and that the artists' work made the area popular. Consequently, many people visited Yosemite to see the beauty of Yosemite for themselves: "As a result, many people chose to make the difficult journey to Yosemite and experience the beauty firsthand."

Item Difficulty: More challenging

4. How many horses were needed to make the journey to Yosemite by stagecoach?

- A. four
- B. eight
- C. sixteen
- D. twenty-four

Answer: C

Explanation: The correct answer is C. The fourth sentence of the paragraph with the title 'Blacksmith Shop' states that a stagecoach with four horses needed to change horses 4 times to complete the journey (4 horses X 4 times = 16 horses): "A four-up stagecoach (one being drawn by four horses) changed horses four times during the trip."

Item Difficulty: Less challenging

5. When could people drive their cars into the park?

- A. 1899
- B. 1903
- C. 1904
- D. 1914

Answer: D

Explanation: The correct answer is D. The third sentence of the paragraph with the title 'Ranger Patrol Cabin' states that cars were given permission to enter the park in 1914: "...automobiles had been allowed to enter the park in 1914."