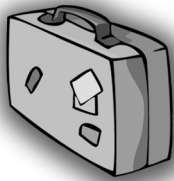




The Mystery at
**Death
Valley**



Teacher's Guide
by
Carole Marsh

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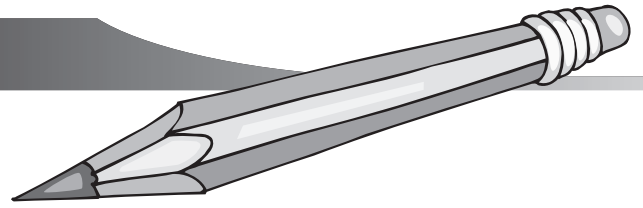
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Dear Teacher,

In 1979, I began writing children's mysteries set at historic places that still existed—primarily so that kids could go and see what they had read about. Frankly, I found no more fun, educational, and stress-free (actually, just plain joyful!) activity to do with my then school-age children than to visit a fascinating historic site!

Death Valley, as well the people who traversed it and settled in it, fascinated me well before I visited there many years ago. But once I saw Death Valley, I was hooked by its stark, lonely beauty and often tragic history. The ghost towns whispered my name; the pioneer trails beckoned me to follow them; and the wrinkled dunes and craggy rocks stood quietly by as silent, stoic onlookers to days and people gone by.

I loved night in Death Valley, where the stars twinkle like nowhere else. I loved the daytime, too, where hues of purple, red, and gold splash the rock walls. I wanted to learn more about the people who had faced this hostile place before me, and lived to tell about it!

It's this kind of curiosity I want to pass on to young readers today. One of the things I like most about writing these kinds of mysteries is helping kids and adults learn together. Reading and going and seeing and doing is what education is all about! And maybe, just maybe, a fledgling interest in a place or subject will lead to a lifelong passion for an era, a place, or a people! That would suit me just fine!

Enjoy your blisteringly hot Death Valley adventure! And keep lots of water handy!

Carole Marsh

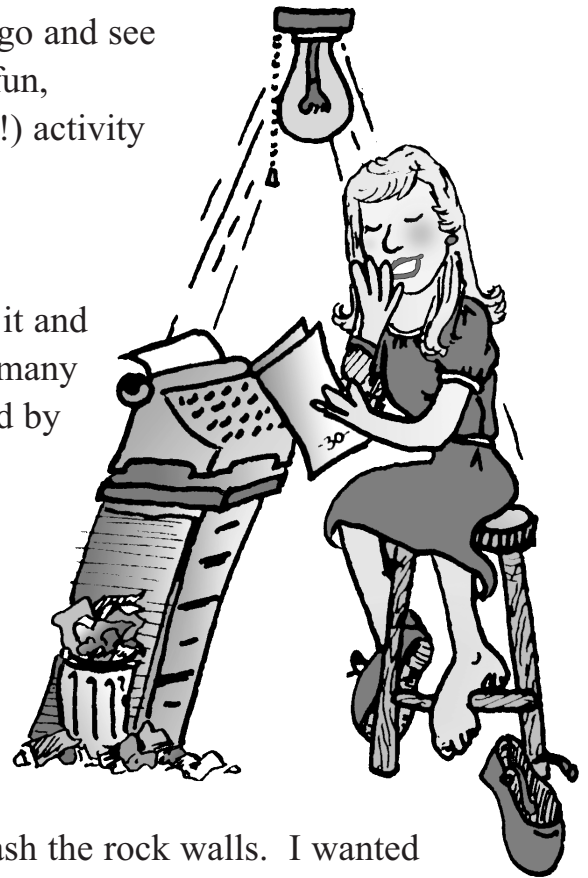
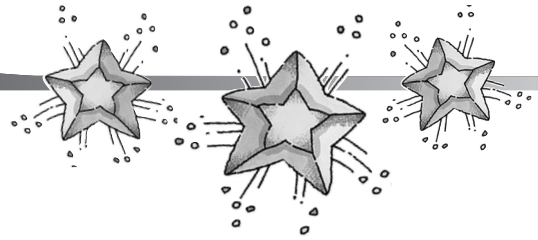


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<i>Page #</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i><u>EXPLORE!</u></i>
14	Careers	An architect designs houses as well as office buildings, skyscrapers, landscapes, and even entire cities. An architecture student would take college classes like design, graphics, computer applications, art history, math, physics, structural systems, and building and materials construction.
17	Medical	Crutches are medical devices used to help a disabled person walk. Today they are available in a variety of colors and materials to make them more attractive and less noisy.
18	Science	When you snap your fingers, the noise comes from the friction created by quickly forcing the middle finger off the thumb. Why do you usually snap your fingers?
18	Vocabulary	To be flabbergasted is to be dumbfounded, amazed, or stunned.
21	Travel	The U.S. Interstate Highway System began to spread across the country in the 1950s. Special motorist-testers voted on the color of the highway signs, choosing the familiar white on green that we still see today.
22	Geography	The term “sea level” means the height of the surface of the sea midway between the average high and low tides. It is used as a standard in reckoning land elevation or sea depth.
22	Weather	What’s the hottest, driest place in North America? Death Valley! In 2001, Death Valley had 154 days in a row of temperatures reaching 100°F or above!
23	Biology	Dehydration occurs when the body does not have as much water and fluids as it needs. Some symptoms of severe dehydration include extreme thirst, very dry mouth, lack of sweating, little or no urination, and rapid heartbeat. Dehydration can be deadly!
26	Place Names	Other spooky place names in Death Valley include Dry Bone Canyon, Deadman Pass, Coffin Peak, and Devil’s Cornfield.

Page-by-Page Guide

- 27 Safety Two important safety tips while touring Death Valley include keeping your gas tank full and notifying someone else if you are desert wandering!
- 31 History One of the men traveling with Juliet Brier said she usually had one child on her back, one in her arms, and one by the hand walking next to her. The Brier family finally made their home in Marysville, California, north of Sacramento. Can you find it on a map?
- 32 Safety A fire ring is a device used to contain campfires and prevent them from spreading.
- 39 Figure of Speech To “lower the boom” means to stop someone from doing something. What was Erin stopped from doing?
- 39 Vocabulary A hot shot is a person of impressive skill and daring, especially one who is highly successful and self-assured.
- 40 Careers A marine biologist studies organisms in the ocean.
- 41 Architecture Many homes in the western U.S. have a Spanish-style look with a white stucco exterior and red terracotta tile roofs.
- 42 Vocabulary Something crenelated has a series of square indentations.
- 45 Figure of Speech The term “or bust” is used to show determination about doing something. “Death Valley or Bust!” means “I will get to Death Valley or die trying!”
- 46 Imagery Much of this page describes a dream. The writer uses strong imagery to describe what is happening. Can you picture it? Can you draw it?
- 49 Music “Achy Breaky Heart” is a hit country music song recorded by Billy Ray Cyrus in 1992. It is his most successful song.
- 50 Travel Route 66 starts in Chicago, Illinois, and ends in Santa Monica, California. It crosses eight states and three time zones. What are the names of those time zones?

Page-by-Page Guide

- 51 Plants The saguaro cactus grows in southern Arizona and western Sonora, Mexico, with a few stray plants in southeast California. Experts estimate that the largest ones are about 200 years old!
- 53 Exaggeration To brainwash is to affect one’s mind by using extreme mental pressure. Erin exaggerates by saying that “she might as well instigate the brainwash.”
- 54 Plants Mesquite is a hardwood tree that grows in the southwestern United States. When used in barbecuing and smoking foods, its wood adds a distinct flavor to meat.
- 54 Figure of Speech To put in your “two-cents-worth” means to add your opinion to a discussion.
- 57 Reading A biography is the story of someone’s life. Why do we read about the lives of people who lived before us?
- 57 Figures of Speech To “judge a book by its cover” means to judge someone by what they look like only, not by what kind of person they are.
- 58 Math Scotty was born in 1872. How old would he be if he were still living today?
- 58 Industry Borax is a white crystalline powder used in many manufacturing processes and as a detergent. Beginning in the 1880s, teams of 20 mules hauled huge loads of the mineral more than 150 miles out of Death Valley to the railroad junction in Mojave. It was a long, hot, difficult journey starting at sea level and rising to cross over a mountain range.
- 58 Occupation Scotty was a swamper on the 20-mule team. When teams stopped for the night, the swamper unharnessed the mules, gathered firewood, cooked the meal, and washed the dishes.
- 59 Economics As a stunt rider in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, Scotty roped wild steers, rode wild horses, and rounded up buffaloes. He made \$50 per week, which was very good pay at that time.

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| 61 | Vocabulary | A grubstake is money given to a person starting a business in return for a share of the profits. |
| 62 | Character Analysis | Death Valley Scotty pulled stunts to get attention and stay in the public eye. What does that tell you about him? |
| 62 | Sayings | Scotty and Mr. Johnson became very close friends although they were quite opposite in nature. There is an old saying that “opposites attract.” Why do think that is the case? |
| 63 | Figure of Speech | If someone’s “name is Mud,” they are in trouble for something, or have a bad reputation. |
| 65 | Feelings | Erin says she “couldn’t help but feel a little sorry for someone as interesting as Scotty.” Why do you think she would say that? Would you feel sorry for someone like him? |
| 66 | Vocabulary | To sue someone is to file a legal action against someone. |
| 66 | Behavior | When Scotty bragged that he had sold his mine for \$1 million, do you think he had any idea of the lawsuits that would follow? |
| 69 | Geography | The contiguous United States covers four time zones: Eastern Standard, Central Standard, Mountain Standard, and Pacific Standard. Death Valley is in the Pacific Standard Time Zone. |
| 70 | Tourism | There really is a sign in the Death Valley Visitors Center that says: “20 miles from water; 20 miles from wood, 40 feet from Hell.” It was made up by 19 th century folks who passed through the valley. What do you think it means? |
| 71 | Language | To be “speechless” is to be temporarily unable to speak due to surprise or amazement. |
| 71 | Weather | In deserts, drastic changes occur between night and daytime temperatures. In Death Valley, the sun warms the ground during the day like in the desert, but at night, the heat can’t escape because it gets trapped by the mountain walls. Nighttime temperatures provide some relief from daytime highs, but not as drastically as in a desert. |

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- 73 Disasters A flash flood is rapid flooding occurring after extreme rainfall or a dam or levee failure. In August 2004, a flash flood in Death Valley caused significant road damage and two deaths.
- 73 Animals There are many varieties of rattlesnakes, but they all have jointed rattles on their tails and triangular heads. Rattlers have two pits under their nostrils to detect heat. This enables them to hunt warm-blooded prey even in darkness.
- 74 Humor Erin describes a cartoon of a family driving into Death Valley followed by a car full of skeletons driving out. What do these cartoons mean?
- 74 Safety People should stay away from abandoned mines for many reasons. Mines pose danger from falls, cave-ins, rusting machinery, polluted water, or even leftover explosives.
- 75 Health Mr. Johnson's health improved in the dry desert climate. He had suffered a severe back injury in a train accident. Some people who have joint inflammation pain from arthritis claim that a dry, warm climate helps ease the painful symptoms of that disease too.
- 75 Vocabulary An outcast is a person who is rejected from society or home.
- 76 Construction A home with indoor plumbing is a home with bathrooms inside the house, as opposed to outdoor plumbing in an outhouse!
- 80 Decision Even though Erin was disappointed that they weren't going to Scotty's Castle right away, she decided to accept it. What other choice could she have made, and what would have been the results of that choice?
- 81 Education Clemson University is located in South Carolina. The tiger is its mascot, and the school colors are orange and regalia purple.
- 83 Health Sunscreens carry SPF ratings. SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. The higher the SPF number, the longer the sunscreen's protection will last.

Page-by-Page Guide

- 84 Vocabulary A kaleidoscope is a complex pattern of constantly changing colors and shapes, or an optical toy in a tube that produces patterns as bits of colored glass are reflected by mirrors.
- 84 History Movie company Paramount Pictures restored Rhyolite’s bottle house in 1925. Rhyolite is not actually located within the boundaries of Death Valley National Park.
- 84 History The Old Harmony Borax Works was designated a California Registered Historical Landmark in 1962. The plant was built in 1882 to refine the borax found on the salt flats.
- 88 Language “23 skidoo” is a phrase that became popular in the early twentieth century. It typically means leaving quickly, being forced to leave quickly, or “getting out while the getting’s good.”
- 89 Idioms To be “dead on your feet” means to be exhausted or worn out.
- 89 Literature Dante is Dante Alighieri, a famous Italian poet of the Middle Ages.
- 92 Motivation Erin struggles to get up when she is told she has the “Death Valley disease.” Why does she want to get up?
- 92 Health Heat stroke is a severe health condition characterized by a very high body temperature; irritability, confusion, or unconsciousness; nausea; cessation of sweating; and other symptoms.
- 93 Clothing The Stetson hat is a cowboy hat with a high crown and wide brim created by John B. Stetson around 1865.
- 94 Idioms Something that is “as easy as pie” is very easy!
- 94 Speculation Scotty said, “Well, are you coming? Or not? 23 skidoo, kiddo, 23 skidoo!” to Erin in her dream. What did he mean?
- 95 Geography An alluvial fan is a fan-shaped body of sediment deposited where a stream leaves a steep mountain valley. Death Valley is famous for the amazing size and shape of its alluvial fans.

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- 95 Science Lightning leads to thunder. Lightning produces rapid expansion of the air surrounding and within the lightning bolt. This expansion creates a sonic shock wave, which produces thunder.
- 98 Plants Death Valley has beautiful spring wildflower displays if the conditions are just right. However, park visitors are forbidden from picking any flowers so they may produce seeds for next season.
- 99 Geology Ubehebe Crater displays variegated colors of strata along its sides and blackish ash at its rim. It is especially beautiful at sunset or sunrise.
- 102 Behavior Erin was “so deep in her thoughts” that she didn’t hear her parents and Dr. Stone discussing leaving to visit Scotty’s Castle. Have you ever been so lost in thought that you didn’t hear something important?
- 102 Imagery Why did Erin think that Scotty’s castle was a mirage when she first saw it?
- 103 Tourism Scotty’s Castle is a very popular place to visit! Visitors can take one or two tours. Park rangers in costumes lead the Living History Tour around the house itself. The Underground Mysteries Tour explores the basement, utility tunnels, and power house.
- 105 Vocabulary An edifice is a building, especially one that is very large.
- 106 Speculation The book says that no matter how quickly Erin moved, she could not catch up with the rest of her family. Do you think she really wanted to catch up to them?
- 106 Literature *Phantom of the Opera* is a French novel about a disfigured musical genius who haunts the catacombs beneath the Paris Opera House. It was made into a movie and a play.
- 107 Vocabulary Precarious means to be dangerously insecure or unstable.

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| 109 | Design | Tapestries are heavy textiles with a woven design used for curtains and upholstery for furniture. |
| 109 | Science | The shape of a kiva fireplace is very efficient. The broad base helps heat radiate better toward the base where heat is needed the most. The narrow top lets fumes escape easily. |
| 110 | Architecture | Scotty's Castle has 25 rooms and 9 surrounding buildings. They actually named it "Death Valley Ranch," although it became known as "Scotty's Castle." |
| 111 | Life | Scotty entertained the Johnson's guests in the magnificent living room. In his later years, Scotty often sat in a rocking chair on the front porch and greeted the many visitors to the castle. |
| 111 | Home | The staircase in the living room of Scotty's castle is next to a waterfall that served as a form of air conditioning to cool the room. |
| 114 | History | Buffalo Bill Cody was a Pony Express rider, Civil War soldier, buffalo hunter, U.S. Army scout and guide, Indian fighter, and showman. |
| 114 | Vocabulary | To venture is to proceed somewhere despite risk of possible danger. |
| 115 | Suspense | Who did Erin think was on the other side of the wall when she saw the twinkling blue eye? How did the author create that impression? |
| 118 | Vocabulary | Critical means marked by a tendency to find and call attention to errors and flaws. Do you like to be around critical people? When is it good to be critical? |
| 119 | Behavior | What is the author saying when she says that Erin's mom sometimes disappeared for hours in Walmart? What was she doing? |
| 122 | Language | Scotty was a con artist, a person who swindles others after gaining their trust. |

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| 122 | Life | Scotty's grave marker actually has more text on it than is mentioned in the book. It says, "I got four things to live by: Don't say nothing that will hurt anybody. Don't give advice—nobody will take it anyway. Don't complain. Don't explain." |
| 123 | Behavior | Erin thinks she understands why Scotty liked his three-room house with no electricity or running water better than the castle. Why do you think he did? |
| 123 | Plants | Death Valley is home to more than 1,000 plant species from pine trees to spring wildflowers. |
| 123 | Geography | Freshwater springs provide much of the limited water in Death Valley. They come from a regional aquifer that extends to southern Nevada and Utah. |
| 127 | Geography | Erin's family will be heading to northern Arizona to visit the Grand Canyon. |
| 130 | Vocabulary | A "restless spirit" is someone who is always moving, or who lacks physical or mental rest. |
| 131 | Character | Scotty had a tender heart for animals. He loved his dog Windy and brought home any stray dogs that he found. |

Discussion Questions

1. Think about the story Mimi told Christina and Grant about Juliet Brier and her three young sons crossing Death Valley more than 150 years ago. What kind of character traits did pioneers like Juliet possess?
2. Erin wants to go to the beach instead of Death Valley. What are some positive features of each place? What are some negative features?
3. In the story, Scotty is a ghost who lingers around the castle. Why does he say he likes Erin so much? Why does Erin's personality appeal to him?
4. Why did Erin's parents often get her interested in a subject and then suggest she read about it? What's the difference between hearing about something and reading about it yourself?
5. Death Valley Scotty was known as a "con man." What is that? Why do you think con men do the things they do?
6. Scotty's Castle is located in an isolated area. Would you like to live so far away from people and from civilization? Why or why not?

Bonus Info!

Lingo of the Wild West

- "Adam's Ale" means water.
- "Afeared" means scared or afraid.
- "Argy" means to argue.
- "Atwixt" means between.
- A "Bad Egg" is a bad person.
- "Bazoo" means mouth as in "shut your big bazoo!"
- "Belly Robber" was another name for the cook.
- "Bettermost" means the best.
- A "buckaroo" is a cowboy.
- "Caboodle" means the whole thing as in "the whole kit and caboodle."
- "Chow" means food.
- A "chucklehead" is a fool.
- "Hellabaloo" means confusion.
- "Hern" means hers.
- "Hisn" means his.
- "Hold Your Horses" means stay calm.
- "Nairn" means none.
- "Nary-one" means neither.
- A "sinker" is a biscuit and "sipper" is gravy.
- "Skittles!" means nonsense.

Geography: Find It!

1. Find Death Valley National Park on the map below. Circle it. It is near the border of California and what other state?
2. Plan a visit to Death Valley National Park. How will you get there? Use a highlighter to trace your journey on a map. How many miles will you have to travel?
3. List some of the geographical features of Death Valley. How different is Death Valley from where you live?
4. What resource can you use to find the latitude and longitude of a particular location? Find the latitude and longitude of Scotty's Castle.
5. Scotty's Castle has 25 rooms. Make a list of what you think those 25 rooms might include.



Bonus Info!

Why Grapevine Canyon?

Scotty's Castle is located in Death Valley, but its elevation in Grapevine Canyon helps keep the temperature comfortable during most of the year. The castle sits at about 3,000 feet above sea level, avoiding Death Valley's searing heat.

Before Albert Johnson built Scotty's Castle, Panamint Shoshone Indians had lived in the canyon for hundreds of years. In the 1880s, German immigrant Jacob Steininger was the first European to settle in Grapevine Canyon. He started a fruit and vegetable farm.

Johnson began to buy land in Grapevine Canyon in 1915. He liked the fact that the area had few people around but was within 20 miles of railroad transportation. He eventually bought the Steininger Ranch, and started constructing his castle in the 1920s.

Mathematics: Calculate It!

1. Scotty's Castle has 25 rooms. It cost about \$2 million dollars to build it. About how much was the cost per room?
2. Death Valley National Park has about 785 miles of paved, unpaved, and 4-wheel-drive roads. There are 5,280 feet in a mile. Calculate how many feet of roads there are in the park.
3. Death Valley's highest temperature reading was 134°F on July 10, 1913. Convert that temperature to a Celsius scale by following these steps: Subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit temperature, and then divide that sum by 1.8. What is your answer?
4. Higher elevations are cooler than lower elevations in Death Valley. Temperatures drop about 3 to 5 degrees with every thousand feet. Using 5 degrees as your measurement, what is the temperature at sea level if it is 82°F at Scotty's Castle at 3,000 feet?
5. Create a bar graph showing the wildlife Erin sees at Death Valley National Park: 5 coyotes, 2 bobcats, 6 gophers, 12 lizards, 15 kangaroo rats, 3 iguanas, 8 bullfrogs, and 6 rattlesnakes.
6. In recent decades, rainfall has increased in Death Valley. Rainfall has averaged 2.5 inches per year in the last 30 years. What is the total average rainfall in the last 20 years?

Bonus Info!

Gold Mine Names

One of Scotty's cons was selling shares in a nonexistent gold mine. Check out the names of these real gold mines in California!

- Deadman's Gulch
- Last Chance
- Haunted Bar
- Lost Peg Leg Claim
- Last Hope
- Last Resort
- Lost Parrot Mine
- Ghostmine
- Lost Treasure Mine

If you had a gold mine, what would you name it?

English: Write It!

1. Write a short story about a young girl or boy who gets lost in Scotty's Castle and has to stay there overnight until he or she is found. Maybe a friendly animal shows them around! Maybe they find a hidden treasure! Have fun with your idea!
2. Think about all five senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling. Write a new Death Valley adventure where Erin uses all of her senses.
3. Make a poster inviting people to come visit Scotty's Castle. Make it inviting! Make it colorful! Make it mysterious!
4. On page 73 of the mystery, you'll find a list of warnings about visiting Death Valley. Write each warning on a separate piece of paper. Under each warning, list why that warning is important, and list bad things that could happen if that warning is ignored.
5. Pretend you are a newspaper reporter living in California when Scotty's Castle was built. Write an article about the castle once it is completed. Make sure your article covers the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why?
6. Create an acrostic of the words DEATH VALLEY describing the land and the wildlife in the area.

Bonus Info!

Writing Tips

Every story has to have characters, a plot, and a setting. Characters are the people in the story. Who are the main characters in *The Mystery at Death Valley*?

A plot is what happens in the story. Without a plot, the story has no action and no meaning. What is the plot of this mystery?

A setting is where the story takes place. What is the setting in *The Mystery at Death Valley*?

There are many different types of stories you can write. Mysteries (like this story!), adventure, funny, dramatic, romantic, non-fiction (that means it's true!), and the list goes on and on!

Vocabulary: Use It!

Use the clues to unscramble the words taken from the mystery book. Use these words and their definitions to increase your vocabulary!

- Happens when you don't drink enough
HYDDATREED D _____ R _____
- Reminds you of the past
SLGAOTINC N _____ T _____ C _____
- This desert plant might stick you
ATCUSC _____ C _____
- White exterior of Spanish-style homes
TCOUSC _____ T _____ C _____
- Story of someone's life
GABHPIROY B _____ R _____ Y _____
- An illusion or a ghost
AHTPONM _____ N _____ M _____
- There's a GRAND one of these in Arizona
NOACYN _____ N Y _____
- A noisy tail tells you this reptile is nearby
TAREALTSNEK
_____ T _____ S _____ E _____
- Metal that is hammered and decoratively shaped
GWORUHT RINO
_____ W _____ G _____ R _____
- A large farm where cattle, sheep, and horses are raised
ACNRH _____ C _____

Bonus Info!

Who's Buffalo Bill?

Death Valley Scotty spent some time as part of "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," a circus-like show that performed around the country in the late 1800s.

Buffalo Bill was a well-known cowboy who earned his nickname hunting buffalo to feed workers building a railroad after the Civil War. He created a rip-roaring, side-splitting exhibition, complete with buffalo, bears, longhorn steers, bucking broncos, gun-toting cowboys, and Native Americans dressed in full tribal regalia. Sharpshooter Annie Oakley was one of his most popular performers.

Eventually, Buffalo Bill's show became so popular that he took it to Europe, which was a huge undertaking in those days! Even England's Queen Victoria saw the show.

You can visit the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyoming.

Art: Create It!

1. Paint your own beautiful sunset in Death Valley. Include brick red, fiery orange, delicate purple, tawny brown, and other colors that decorate desert sunsets.
2. Create paper bag puppets of Death Valley Scotty, Mr. Johnson, and Erin. Supplies may include paper bags, glue, construction paper, scissors, markers or crayons, and yarn. Use your puppets to tell a story from the early days when Scotty's Castle was being built.
3. Illustrate a comic book about Erin's visit to Death Valley. Illustrate three of your favorite scenes from the book, including characters, dialogue, and scenery.
4. Create a poster inviting tourists to visit Scotty's Castle! Think about things that catch your eye, and use those elements in your artwork. Make it bold, make it eye-catching, and make it memorable!
5. Design a new cover for *The Mystery at Death Valley*. Cut photos out of magazines or draw your own pictures. Create an interesting type font! Don't forget the fun icons on the front cover!
6. Make a list of five animals that live in the California desert. Illustrate your animals on a poster board and list three bullet points of information next to each one.

Bonus Info!

California State Facts

Capital City:
Sacramento

State Bird:
California Valley Quail

State Motto:
Eureka ("I have found it.")

State Flower:
Golden Poppy

State Tree:
Redwood

Highest Point:
Mount Whitney

Lowest Point:
Death Valley

State Song:
"I Love You, California"

Statehood Date:
September 9, 1850

State Nickname:
The Golden State

Delicious Tortillas!

Combine 3 cups all-purpose flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and 1 cup water. Mix and knead ingredients until smooth. Separate and roll into 12 equal balls. Cover with a warm cloth for about 15 minutes. Using a rolling pin, flatten the dough balls into thin pancake shapes about 5 to 6 inches wide. Use a lightly floured board or counter for rolling. Fry the tortillas in a non-stick skillet over medium heat on a hot plate until blisters appear. Press down with a spatula and flip, cooking the other side. Remove and keep warm in a folded cloth towel. Now you can make tacos, burritos, or quesadillas!

Quick Quesadillas!

Heat up a quick and calcium-rich treat with some freshly fried tortillas and grated cheese. Place a tortilla on a warm griddle and sprinkle with cheese. Cover with another tortilla. Press down with a spatula and heat on medium until cheese begins to melt. Flip and repeat. Slice into quarters or eighths for a tasty snack!

Bonus Info!

Water in the Desert

No one can survive in a desert environment without water! So where did Scotty's Castle get its water? A series of fresh water springs about one mile east of the Castle provided water to the estate. There was so much water flowing from the springs that Scotty's Castle had several fountains on the grounds and in the main house and annex.

Scotty and Mr. Johnson had other big plans for water. The spring water would also have filled the spacious swimming pool and irrigated the gardens if they had been completed. In fact, much of the decorative tile for the pool remains in storage today. Other uncompleted water-related projects include reflecting pools, ponds, and two man-made lakes.

Activities

Survival Gear!

On page 27 of the mystery, Grant reads a list of supplies that Mimi and Papa took into Death Valley National Park when they visited the area many years ago. The list included:

- 12 bottles of water
- 1 box of food
- 2 maps
- 2 extra gallons of gas
- first aid kit
- 2 blankets
- flashlights and batteries
- toilet paper

Write each item on an index card. Lay the cards face down on a desk at the front of the room. Ask for 8 student volunteers to pick a card. Each student must explain why their item is critical to survive in the desert. Other students may ask questions like “What’s in your box of food?” “What’s in your first aid kit?”

When each card has been addressed, ask students to think of other things that might come in handy if a family were to get stranded in the desert. Remember, Mimi and Papa made their list before electronic devices like cell phones and GPS units were available. Times have certainly changed! BUT, here’s an interesting note: cell phones do not work in Death Valley National Park! Park rangers warn visitors not to depend on them in an emergency.

Direct students to write their ideas on the board and discuss them in the same way the class discussed the bulleted list.

What’s the most important thing about driving in a hostile environment? Be prepared for the worst!

Activities

Search for the mysteriously hidden words below!

J	F	S	G	N	E	G	O	M	H	F	C	E	T	T
U	U	R	N	R	B	O	H	G	O	A	Z	S	E	Q
F	R	R	I	I	D	S	L	O	L	B	R	A	S	W
O	N	N	D	I	A	Y	Y	I	S	E	K	C	N	I
W	A	Q	K	E	V	T	F	T	T	T	X	R	U	N
C	C	S	V	Q	S	O	N	A	T	G	T	I	S	D
V	E	W	E	O	R	E	W	U	B	O	N	A	O	Y
M	C	E	W	N	T	D	R	M	O	U	C	T	H	R
O	R	O	I	K	A	L	Z	T	C	M	C	S	N	J
X	E	A	Q	B	S	U	T	C	A	C	A	D	T	V
Z	E	C	R	A	T	E	R	T	B	N	S	M	A	E
H	K	N	N	C	Q	O	Q	O	E	I	T	L	K	G
T	A	H	N	O	S	T	E	T	S	H	L	V	R	I
J	O	H	N	S	O	N	R	Y	Q	E	E	T	W	G
K	Q	T	B	V	B	O	T	N	Y	W	Y	M	Y	Z

WORD BANK

BADWATER
CACTUS
CALIFORNIA
CASTLE
CRATER

DESERT
ERIN
FURNACE CREEK
GHOST
JOHNSON

MOUNTAINS
SCOTTY
SKIDOO
STAIRCASE
STETSON HAT

SUNSET
VALLEY
WINDY

Chapters 1-4 Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Do you know what these words mean? Write their definitions in the space provided.

1. hover
2. sashay
3. dubious
4. villa

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

5. What was the reason Scotty could not bear to give up his castle?
6. What was the first real highway across the country after the automobile was invented?
7. Why is it so odd that Scotty's Castle is located in Death Valley?

Write T for True and F for False.

8. ____ Scotty enjoyed watching the visitors who came to the castle.
9. ____ Erin's family ate breakfast in a diner along Route 66.
10. ____ Erin would rather go to Scotty's Castle than the beach.

Chapters 5-7 Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Do you know what these words mean? Write their definitions in the space provided.

1. borax
2. immortal
3. disgusted

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

4. What kind of life did Scotty lead as a child?
5. How old was Scotty when he joined Buffalo Bill Cody's "Wild West" show?
6. Who was the insurance executive interested in Scotty's gold mine?
7. Why did Scotty finally have to admit that his gold mine did not exist?

Write T for True and F for False.

8. ____ Death Valley Scotty was born to a wealthy Massachusetts family.
9. ____ Scotty broke the record time for train travel from Los Angeles to Chicago.
10. ____ Scotty's wife stood by him throughout all his stunts and scams.

Chapters 8-11 Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Do you know what these words mean? Write their definitions in the space provided.

1. rustic
2. frail
3. outcast
4. foiled

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

5. What made Erin understand why people came from all over to visit Death Valley?
6. Who insisted that Mr. Johnson build a “real house”?
7. What modern features did the castle include that were uncommon in 1922?

Write T for True and F for False.

8. ____ Erin’s family stayed at a motel in Furnace Creek.
9. ____ Mr. Johnson’s health became worse in the desert climate.
10. ____ Erin was disappointed when her plans to visit Death Valley were delayed.

Chapters 12-14 Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Do you know what these words mean? Write their definitions in the space provided.

1. boomtown
2. hazy
3. passel

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

4. Where is a house made of 52,000 bottles?
5. What is the lowest spot in North America?
6. What geologic feature is found at Devil's Golf Course?

Write T for True and F for False.

7. ____ Erin was glad her family had lots of thermoses and canteens of water when they visited Death Valley.
8. ____ Erin felt as if Scotty was calling her in a dream.
9. ____ Erin became ill from too much heat.
10. ____ Dr. Stone said that it never rains in Death Valley.

Chapters 15-18 Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Do you know what these words mean? Write their definitions in the space provided.

1. geology
2. turpentine
3. void
4. turret

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

5. What was one of Dr. Stone's favorite places to visit?
6. What musical instrument suddenly came to life in the Music Room?
7. What was sitting on the leather sofa in the Grande Hall?

Write T for True and F for False.

8. ____ It was terribly hot inside Scotty's Castle when Erin's family took their tour.
9. ____ Erin broke a glass vase in the Music Room.
10. ____ Scotty's Castle didn't have any bathrooms.

Chapters 19-22 Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Do you know what these words mean? Write their definitions in the space provided.

1. suspicious
2. exasperation
3. sinister
4. bronze

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

5. What stared back at Erin through the bedroom wall?
6. What is the quotation on Scotty's tombstone?
7. Who was calling Erin's name when she was in the bedroom?

Write T for True and F for False.

8. ____ Death Valley Scotty's grave is located in Hot Stuff Valley.
9. ____ Scotty's personal ranch had no electricity or running water.
10. ____ Erin hated to leave Death Valley.

The Mystery at Death Valley

Vocabulary End-of-Unit Quiz

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Using the word bank, fill in the correct vocabulary word in the sentences below.

Word Bank				
stucco	irrigate	jovial	mirage	ominous
itinerary	emigrant	panorama	enticing	traverse

1. The outside walls of Scotty's Castle are fashioned with _____, a plaster used to coat interior and exterior walls.
2. Scotty's Castle looked like a _____ to Erin because it was so unusual to see such a beautiful building in the middle of a desert!
3. Juliet Brier was an _____ trying to reach the gold fields in California.
4. Erin's parents had an _____ to make sure they saw all the sites that interested them in Death Valley National Park.
5. Erin and her parents had to _____ much of the southern U.S. to get to Death Valley from South Carolina.
6. Erin saw and heard many _____ things as she wandered through Scotty's Castle.
7. Mimi got Grant and Christina interested in her mystery book by telling them _____ details about Death Valley.
8. Death Valley Scotty was a _____ character who loved to talk and be the center of attention.
9. When Erin first laid eyes on Death Valley, she was overwhelmed by the breathtaking _____ before her.
10. Anyone who wants to grow crops in a desert environment must know how to bring in water to _____ them.

The Mystery at Death Valley

Matching Characters

End-of-Unit Quiz

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Match the mystery characters with their descriptions.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ Mimi | A. Wanted a “real house” |
| 2. _____ Papa | B. Liked to go to Ubehebe Crater |
| 3. _____ Death Valley Scotty | C. Made chocolate-frosted brownies |
| 4. _____ Mr. Johnson | D. Worked as a stunt rider |
| 5. _____ Christina | E. Caught the “Death Valley Disease” |
| 6. _____ Erin | F. Had three young sons |
| 7. _____ Grant | G. Broke his ankle |
| 8. _____ Juliet Brier | H. Enjoyed Scotty’s company |
| 9. _____ Mrs. Johnson | I. Liked to design houses |
| 10. _____ Dr. Stone | J. Made peanut butter crackers |

The Mystery at Death Valley

Fill-in-the-Blank End-of-Unit Quiz

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Fill in the blanks to complete the following:

1. Scotty liked to watch Castle visitors take these:
 H R

2. Juliet Brier and her family got lost in Death Valley around this holiday in 1849:
 _____ S S
3. This is where Erin really wanted to go on vacation:
 _____ C _____
4. Erin's relationship to Grant and Christina:
 _____ U _____
5. Rattlesnake juice is really this beverage:
 _____ G J _____
6. Scotty's Castle can be described as this type of building:
 S H I A

7. You should bring plenty of this when spending time in Death Valley:
 _____ T _____
8. Scotty's Castle is located in this area of Death Valley:
 G V A N

9. When Erin dreamed about Scotty as a young man, he was holding this:
 _____ W P _____
10. This was the time of day when Erin and her parents toured Scotty's Castle:
 _____ N O _____

The Mystery at Death Valley

True or False End-of-Unit Quiz

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Write T for True and F for False.

1. ____ A television show was made about Route 66.
2. ____ Juliet Brier agreed to stay behind with her children while the others in their party pressed on toward California.
3. ____ Walter E. Scott was an honest man.
4. ____ Albert Johnson worked as a doctor in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before moving west.
5. ____ Skidoo is a ghost town in Death Valley.
6. ____ An earthquake caused the formation of Ubehebe Crater.
7. ____ Scotty had a dog named Windy.
8. ____ Scotty enjoyed being in his three-room house more than being in the castle.
9. ____ Erin learned that the desert may look dead, but it is alive with life.
10. ____ Scotty's ghost liked Erin because she was not afraid to do things differently, like he had done his whole life.

Answer Key

Page 15, Mathematics: Calculate It!

1. \$80,000 per room; 2. 4,144,800;
3. 56.7°C; 4. 97°F; 6. 50 inches

Page 17, Vocabulary: Use It!

1. dehydrated; 2. nostalgic; 3. cactus;
4. stucco; 5. biography; 6. phantom;
7. canyon; 8. rattlesnake; 9. wrought iron;
10. ranch

Page 22, Chapter Worksheet 1-4

5. memories; 6. Route 66; 7. such a forbidding environment for a big, beautiful home;
8. T; 9. T; 10. F

Page 23, Chapter Worksheet 5-7

4. traveled with his family who raced horses;
5. 16; 6. Albert M. Johnson;
7. He bragged that he had sold his mine for \$1 million and people began to sue him for money he owed them.;
8. F; 9. T; 10. F

Page 24, Chapter Worksheet 8-11

5. its beauty and massive size; 6. his wife;
7. a generator, refrigeration, and indoor plumbing;
8. T; 9. F; 10. T

Page 25, Chapter Worksheet 12-14

4. ghost town of Rhyolite;
5. Badwater; 6. jagged rock salt spikes;
7. T; 8. T; 9. T; 10. F

Page 26, Chapter Worksheet 15-18

5. Ubehebe Crater; 6. pipe organ;
7. a man in a hat; 8. F; 9. F; 10. F

Page 27, Chapter Worksheet 19-22

5. a twinkling blue eye; 6. “Don’t complain. Don’t explain.”;
7. her mother; 8. F; 9. T; 10. T

Page 28, Vocabulary End-of-Unit Quiz

1. stucco; 2. mirage; 3. emigrant;
4. itinerary; 5. traverse; 6. ominous;
7. enticing; 8. jovial; 9. panorama;
10. irrigate

Page 29, Matching Characters End-of-Unit Quiz

1. C; 2. G; 3. D; 4. H; 5. I; 6. E;
7. J; 8. F; 9. A; 10. B

Page 30, Fill-in-the-Blank End-of-Unit Quiz

1. photographs; 2. Christmas;
3. beach; 4. aunt; 5. orange juice;
6. Spanish villa; 7. water; 8. Grapevine Canyon;
9. newspaper; 10. afternoon

Page 31, True/False End-of-Unit Quiz

1. T; 2. F; 3. F; 4. F; 5. T; 6. F;
7. T; 8. T; 9. T; 10. T