

# **Passage Oral Reading - Grade 6**

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## **Student Forms Booklet**

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## CAMPING

Joey and James were camping by themselves for the first time, and they were excited about the campground they had selected. It was in a scenic wilderness area with acres of woods, great hiking trails, a lake, and a trout stream. Joey planned to go fishing the next day. James, however, was looking forward to swimming in the lake and trying out his new snorkel, mask, and fins.

That evening, they cooked a meal over the campfire. James was in charge of the hotdogs and beans, and Joey baked a pan of apple crisp for dessert. Both boys thought they were doing a pretty good job until James burnt the hotdogs. Joey laughed so hard that he knocked the apple crisp into the fire. Oh well, they thought, maybe breakfast would turn out better.

Much later, when the full moon had risen over the tree line, the boys grew drowsy. After putting out the fire, they climbed into their tent and zipped up their sleeping bags. It won't be hard to fall asleep, thought Joey, as his brother began to snore. Just as his eyes closed, a loud, crackling noise pierced the night. "What was that?" exclaimed James, fully awake again.

"I don't know," said Joey cautiously, "but we'd better take a look." Joey found his flashlight and quickly climbed out of the tent. His brother followed close behind. The peculiar noise continued and seemed to be coming from the lake.

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## THE HOT AIR BALLOON

Mr. Lopez was the hot air balloon pilot who would take Tommy and his dad for their first ride. Tommy's dad assisted Mr. Lopez in lifting the balloon's basket out of the pickup truck and onto the ground. Then Mr. Lopez familiarized them with the entire process of how the balloon worked. He showed them how the balloon connected to the basket, and he indicated where the fuel supply was located within it. Tommy and his dad peered inside and saw three metal tanks filled with propane gas. They were connected by rubber hoses to a strange metal nozzle several feet above the basket.

"That's the burner," replied Mr. Lopez. "It's what generates the hot air for the balloon." He walked over to his truck and pulled out a huge electric fan. Then he plugged it into the generator on the truck, pointed it into the opening at the bottom of the balloon laying on the ground, and flipped on the switch. Soon the balloon began to expand with air as it lay on its side.

"Is this how we fill up the balloon with air?" asked Tommy.

"Not quite," Mr. Lopez responded. "Eventually, we'll need to put hot air in the balloon, but this fan helps us get started. As soon as the balloon is partially full, I'll turn on the burner, which creates the hot air from burning propane. As you may recall, hot air rises. So, when the balloon gets enough hot air in it, it will rise...and with this basket connected to the balloon we'll be able to go for a ride."

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## BEING A STAR ATHLETE

My mom was a junior high school physical education teacher, so it should come as no surprise that I grew up thinking playing sports was just about the most important thing anyone could do. I was lucky that I grew up in a neighborhood with a lot of kids who were similar in age to me. We could almost always get enough people together to play a game of whatever sport was in season. In the fall, we played soccer. In winter, most of us played basketball, although some preferred hockey. In the spring, it was softball.

My dad was also a teacher. He taught shop class at our local high school. Sometimes, when he had to work in the woodshop on weekends, he'd let my sister and me into the gym to play basketball. I would spend two to three hours shooting baskets, and I really learned to love the game. When I got into high school my team won the regional basketball championships for three years in a row. I thought for sure that I'd become a professional athlete one day. Although I did manage a fairly successful basketball career in school, I ended up going into sports medicine instead! Now I help professional athletes become stars by treating their injuries and showing them how to stay fit and healthy.

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## COLD WEATHER

The radio announcers were all talking about the unusually cold weather we were about to experience. Apparently, a cold front was coming down from Canada, and it was coming fast. They expected it to arrive by noon.

All the meteorologists were forecasting a drop in temperature to at least twenty-five degrees below zero. When combined with the wind chill the temperature would feel like it was seventy-five degrees below zero. That kind of temperature would be dangerous because unprotected skin could freeze in a matter of minutes. The people on the radio talked about the importance of being cautious, and they urged people to stay indoors if possible.

I didn't want to hear about the weather being so cold that we should stay inside. I wanted to go sledding with my friends after school. I hoped the meteorologists were wrong, but they weren't. Before the end of school that day the temperature began to drop. Even the school basketball game was cancelled, so parents and students could stay home. I was beyond disappointed.

Mom came to pick me up so I wouldn't have to walk home in the cold. She told me that since everyone was staying home that evening, she had bought pizza and lots of snacks for a family movie night. With a grin, I realized that staying home wouldn't be so bad after all!

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## JERMAINE

Jermaine couldn't wait to go swimming, because it was the middle of summer and his apartment was unbelievably hot. He opened his red gym bag and threw in his swim trunks, a towel, sunscreen, and his pass to the community pool. On the way out, as an afterthought, Jermaine grabbed a handful of homemade chocolate chip cookies and shoved them into his pocket.

Normally, Jermaine would have headed down to his best friend Landon's apartment on the second floor. But Landon, that lucky guy, was away at summer camp for the next two weeks. Jermaine hoped some of their other friends would be waiting at the pool when he got there. He rode the elevator to the first floor and headed out the front entrance of the apartment building.

The swimming pool was about six blocks away, so it would take him a while to get there. The sun beat down on Jermaine as he walked, and the pavement felt like an oven. He thought about another hot day when his mom had joked, "The sidewalk is so hot, I can fry an egg on it!" The thought of eggs made him hungry, and he suddenly remembered his chocolate chip cookies. He reached into his pocket for one and realized too late that the chocolate chips had begun to melt!

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## LANGUAGE

My family has been living in Germany for six months now, and during this time I've eaten lots of different foods. Most of them were delicious, but I haven't had pizza in a long time, and I kind of miss it. My mother just told me that we're going to a restaurant that serves pizza, and so now I'm really excited. "You don't have to have pizza if you don't want one," she told me with a wink, and I knew she was joking because she already knew how badly I was craving it. Now I can't even stop thinking about pizza. I'm so eager to have it that I'm going try to get everyone to leave earlier for the restaurant.

When we get to the restaurant, we are happy to find that the server speaks English. We feel very grateful because our German-speaking skills are limited. Everyone orders a pizza, and I order mine with pepperoni. The server looks at me funny and says, "Are you sure you want pepperoni? Most Americans want salami instead." I explain to her that pepperoni is my favorite.

After a while, she brings our food to the table. Everyone else's pizza looks great, but mine is covered in dark green peppers. My brother laughs when he sees mine. "In Germany, pepperoni is a pepper not a sausage!"

"I forgot!" I reply, but I eat my pepper pizza and find it to be pretty good anyway. Next time, I might get the salami though.



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## PLANE RIDE

Stosh was leaving to visit his brother in Maine, and he was both scared and excited. For the first time ever he was going to fly in an airplane, and he wasn't sure what it would be like to be so far above the ground.

Stosh's parents drove him to the airport at the scheduled time. Unfortunately, the plane was late getting in, so he had to wait at the gate for almost an hour. The additional sitting and waiting gave Stosh more time to think about the hazards of flying and increased his nervousness.

When the plane finally arrived, Stosh picked up his bag, moved forward in the line of people boarding, got his ticket scanned, and walked onto the airplane. He had a window seat, so after fastening his seat belt, he sat and looked out at the terminal. While he sat there, he wondered whether there might still be time for him to get off the plane and not risk flying.

Finally, the plane took off and Stosh felt his stomach leap. It sped down the runway and suddenly they were off the ground. He could feel his ears popping as they rose higher and higher. When he looked down, his hometown appeared to be very small. In another few minutes the plane was soaring above the clouds, and Stosh gazed at them in wonder. Never in his life had he seen a view like this. He decided he was going to enjoy the ride after all.

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## SHOULD I PLAY FOOTBALL?

I started playing football when I was just a kid growing up in our neighborhood. We had a great time playing football. Of course, it was just “touch” football, and we didn’t actually tackle anybody. We did do some blocking, but that only amounted to getting in other people’s way so that they could not touch the person with the ball. No one was allowed to jump at somebody or hit them in the legs the way they do in tackle football.

When I got into sixth grade, I had my first chance to play tackle football where everyone wore football pads and a uniform. I thought I looked great with those huge shoulder pads covered by my football jersey. Once we got out onto the field, though, and had to start blocking and tackling, I wasn’t so sure that I enjoyed playing football.

Instead of taking turns playing as quarterback or pass receiver the way we did in our neighborhood touch football games, I had to play as an inside lineman the entire the time. This meant I had to block someone on every play, and I never got to touch the football. I’m in junior high school now, and I’ve got to be honest with you, I’m not so sure I really want to play football.

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## SOCCKER

Rosa's soccer team, the Eagles, had not played well all season. They had won only seven games in their twenty-game season. Rosa had struggled all season long too, ever since injuring her right ankle in the first week. Several other players had also sustained various injuries.

Now the playoffs were beginning, and expectations were high. The good news was that everyone was healthy. For the first time all season, Rosa could run at full speed, and she didn't feel any pain when she kicked the ball. That was important, because as left striker, her team needed her to make goals.

Their first playoff game was against Oakdale, their biggest rival. The Eagles had lost twice during the regular season. Today would be a different story. Before the game, Rosa and her teammates had a motivational meeting to discuss how they would put forth their strongest team effort. Each of them wanted to have their best showing of the year.

It was a hot, humid day, but everyone gave it their best. The coach substituted players often and told them to drink lots of water. When there were only a few minutes left to play, the game was tied. Rosa's teammate, Kia, intercepted the ball at midfield and sped toward the goal. Rosa sprinted down the left side, hoping to get a pass. Just as the goalie came up to make the stop, Kia made a beautiful pass over to Rosa. Rosa kicked the ball into the open net, and her team led two to one. She was ecstatic.

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## THE DOUGHNUT SHOP

Danny used to work at the local grocery store bagging groceries, and sometimes helping people load them into their cars. One day he made an unfortunate mistake. It just happened to be when he was assisting Mr. Appleby, who was one of the grumpiest men in town, and everyone knew it. People would stay away from Mr. Appleby whenever they could.

Mr. Appleby drove a brand-new sedan with a leather interior. When Danny loaded his groceries onto the seat, one of the bags fell over. It happened to be a bag with a dozen eggs on top, which broke all over Mr. Appleby's leather seat. It was a huge mess that took quite a while to clean up. Anyone else might have forgiven Danny, but not Mr. Appleby, who made sure Danny was fired from the job.

Now that he was starting a new job at the doughnut shop, Danny couldn't imagine that it would be too difficult. There would be no dishes to break, and he wouldn't be going near any new cars, so he was confident that this would be the job to help him earn the money he needed. He was greeted at the door by Mrs. Haney, the owner of the store.

It smelled wonderful in the shop as he looked over the delicious assortment of chocolate-covered, sugar-coated, glazed, sprinkled, and plain cake doughnuts. Danny could tell he was going to like this job! The hardest part would be trying not to eat too many.

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## THE FARM

Going home to visit her parents on the farm where she was raised is always a special trip for my mother. We often make that trip in the winter, but my favorite time to go is early in the summer. That's when the strawberries are ripe, and since my grandfather has such a big strawberry patch, we get to eat all the strawberries we want. We pick the strawberries and eat them with fresh cream from the farm. We eat strawberry shortcake. I really like the shortcake that my grandmother makes. My favorite way to eat strawberries, though, is with homemade ice cream.

Sometimes I watch my mother and grandmother make pork sausage. They take a meat grinder out of the drawer and clamp it to the breadboard, and then they take the chunks of pork, grind them, and fill the sausage casing with the sausage mix. I also like to watch them make homemade bread and biscuits. Aside from cooking together, my mother also likes to sew quilts with my grandmother. They have made several small quilts for the new babies in the family to keep them warm when they sleep.

I hope you can see why going home to the farm is special to my mother, and you can probably tell that going there is very special to me, too. I'll bet going home is special to just about everyone.

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## THE HIKE

Bob and Steve had been planning their weeklong hike for quite a while. It took a long time to prepare for this adventure and the boys were ready. Steve worked at the local grocery store during the winter so that he could save enough money for camping equipment. He was pleased with the new two-person tent and sleeping bag he had bought. Although he thought the sleeping bag cost too much, he was glad that it would be extra warm for cold temperatures.

Bob had also been busy planning. He was in charge of getting the food ready, which was no easy task. Since the boys would be gone for six nights, they had a lot of food to bring along. This worried Bob because it meant they would have too much weight to carry on their six-day hike. Bob solved his problem, though, when he visited a camping store. There he found out that he could buy packages of food that were specially prepared to be lightweight. Best of all, Bob thought, the packages contained some pretty good meals such as beef stew, scrambled eggs, a lot of vegetables, and even popcorn.

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## THE HOT DAY

It was one of those hot, muggy August days that Daniel dreaded. Last night was bad enough, when he couldn't sleep in his family's hot apartment. His mom had opened all the windows because they had no air conditioning, but it didn't help much and only made the city noises louder.

So, Daniel's sleepless night was turning into one of those times when finding a gushing fire hydrant might be the day's main activity. Even the thought of playing basketball down at the square seemed unappealing.

This, of course, was remarkable since Daniel lived to play basketball. Every free moment he had he spent down at the square playing in pick-up games with boys two and three years older. Daniel was proud of the fact that as a seventh grader, he could hold his own in one-on-one games with older kids. When they played teams, he was often one of the first kids picked.

Today Daniel's only thought was on staying cool and swimming seemed like the best choice. He looked around the apartment for his swimming suit. His mom and dad had already gone to work and his older brother had left too, so Daniel was on his own. He was too young to work, but really too old to have someone stay with him. During summer, he was under strict instructions to stay close to home and check in every couple of hours at Mrs. Hardaway's. Mrs. Hardaway was the next-door neighbor on the fourth floor.

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## THE TRUCK

Angelo climbed into his grandpa's old, red pick-up truck. Angelo loved all the sounds the truck made—the gears grinding and the horn blowing. Every time he took a ride in the truck, he thought it would quit running, but it always seemed to get them to wherever they were going. Even though the truck had never failed them on any of their trips, Angelo's grandpa didn't like to take any chances, so he always carried a box full of tools in the back.

On this morning the weather was pretty cool, and the truck didn't start right away. "No problem!" said Angelo's grandpa. "I think it's the fuel pump, and I can fix that right away."

Grandpa got out of the old truck, lifted the hood, and began fiddling with the motor. Angelo tried looking over the fender, but he wasn't tall enough to see the motor. He knew his grandfather would be able to fix the problem and, sure enough, Grandpa had the truck running in just a few minutes.

"She's ready now, Angelo, hop in before she stops," his grandpa said.

Angelo jumped in again, and this time they were off on their way to the river for a fishing expedition. Slowly the truck rumbled along the road. Angelo told himself that someday he'd have a truck just like this one, only his truck would be blue and go much faster. He hoped that he would know as much about his truck as his grandpa did.



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## ANTARCTICA

Thousands of scientists from around the world live in Antarctica part-time. Part of the year, they live, study, and work at several research stations. Tourists also visit the continent in large numbers, thousands each summer. In winter, however, transport to and from Antarctica can become impossible. Antarctica has no permanent residents, and no one is originally from there. Why is it that Antarctica has never had a native human population?

Antarctica is Earth's southernmost continent. It is covered by an immense frozen sheet that is the largest body of ice on the planet. Antarctica is by far the coldest, driest, and windiest continent on Earth. There are very high elevations. During the long winter, temperatures have fallen to as low as almost 136 degrees below zero. Even the warmest summer temperatures rarely rise above forty-eight degrees.

While the ocean surrounding Antarctica is rich with many forms of sea life, there is very little vegetation on land. This is in part because of the ice, but beneath the ice there is only rock or rocky soil. As a result, Antarctica is often called a frozen desert.

Think about the fact that we humans require some basic things in order to survive. We need to be able to grow or gather food and have access to a ready water supply. We also need a climate range that is not too extreme for too much of the year. Antarctica does not provide enough of these resources. That's why it remains a mostly empty world, beautiful yet uninhabited.

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## CAN TREES TALK?

The short answer is no, not really, but the long answer is well, in some ways they can. Scientists are finding that trees are far more complicated than we used to think, and trees do use forms of communication. When talking about communication, it is too easy to compare trees to people. That's not quite fair to trees because trees are obviously very different from humans. They don't think or talk in the way humans do, but they have adapted well to survive.

Groups of trees form networks together through their roots and the fungus that lives on them. They can send signals this way. Different types of trees can even form networks together. Trees can sense changes going on in the forest. They can tell if a deer is chewing on them and send bad-tasting chemicals to their leaves. There is also evidence that trees send signals through the air. Other trees may sense these and react to protect themselves from what is happening in the forest.

Trees can also send food to saplings near them to help them grow. Again, it would be easy to compare trees to people and say that the tree is feeding its children. However, it is unlikely the tree makes a conscious decision to do this. It is a behavior that developed to help trees survive.

Scientists are still learning more about the networks that trees form and how their communication helps them survive.

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## FOLEY ARTISTS

When you watch a movie, it may seem like the sounds happen at the same time as the action. However, a lot of the sounds in movies are added after the action is filmed. Sometimes there are too many other noises during filming to capture good sound. Other times, it is done to make the sounds fit the film just right. The art of replacing sounds or adding sound effects in a movie is called Foley. It is named after Jack Foley who developed methods for syncing sound with film in the late 1920s.

In the early 1920s, there were many live radio shows. People like Foley would create sound effects live while the show was broadcast. The radio actors would stand in front of a microphone, saying their lines. But sound-effects people would be adding sounds at the same time. They might stomp shoes to add the sounds of a character walking into a room. They might use coconuts to make the clip-clop of a horse going by. This helped create excitement in the show and bring it to life for audiences.

When studios began to add sound to films, this created different challenges. They could not record the actors saying their lines and record the sound effects at the same time. Foley and his sound crew recorded the effects afterward. They watched the movie and created the effects as they watched. They had to record these effects live at exactly the right time to sync the sound with the action in the film.

Today Foley artists have more ways to create sounds and sync them with the film. However, the main principles are still the same. They still replace, add effects, and use props to help make a film better.

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## HUMMINGBIRDS

Hummingbirds are small with long, narrow bills. They are named for the lovely “humming” sound their wings make while flying. Male hummingbirds (and sometimes females) usually have shiny, colorful feathers on their throat and upper chest.

Hummingbirds are the smallest of all bird species. The ruby-throated hummingbird usually lays one to two eggs about the size of a garden pea. The nest that holds her tiny eggs is about the size of half a walnut shell and made from plant material and spider webs.

Regardless of their size, hummingbirds are powerful and agile. They can stop flight in midair as well as fly upside down. These graceful, brightly colored birds can also fly backward and spin in loops. Hummingbirds have been known to fly almost thirty miles per hour.

Hummingbirds depend on nectar, small insects, and sap for food. Because they feed mainly on flowers, hummingbirds must migrate to take advantage of flower production. Constantly eating helps hummingbirds maintain their high body temperature. When necessary, hummingbirds can go into a deep, sleeplike state. This allows them to survive cold temperatures for short periods of time.

There are over 300 species of hummingbirds. They can be found from the southernmost tip of South America all the way to southern Alaska. Most species live in the tropics but many areas in the United States have hummingbirds flying through their skies.

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## ROCKET RESCUE

When a rocket is launched, it has a nose cone, or a fairing, that protects it through takeoff. Once the rocket is safely into space, the fairing breaks into halves that fall back to Earth. They often land in the ocean and are destroyed by the damaging saltwater. A leading spacecraft company has created a way to catch the halves of the fairing before they land. Each fairing costs about six million dollars, so reusing it is important.

How does the spacecraft company carry out this rescue of expensive space gear? They catch the fairing pieces in a huge net. The net is suspended by four steel arms atop a boat in the ocean. Its design reminds some people of a giant claw or a giant baseball mitt catching fairings.

In the past, it was difficult to know where the rocket parts would land. Today, the fairing pieces are GPS-equipped. They have steerable parachutes that gently guide them into the net. At first, catching the rocket pieces wasn't always successful. Sometimes the parachutes would get tangled. Sometimes they would miss the net. Several attempts were made in which they came very close. Finally, during a rocket launch in June of 2019, the space company made history by performing its first successful catch of a fairing.

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## WHISPERING GALLERIES

In some structures throughout the world, there exists an interesting sound experience known as a whispering gallery. Someone standing on one side of a structure can hear another person whispering from the opposite side. It seems unbelievable that a person could hear something so quiet from so far away.

Science can explain how a whispering gallery works. A whisper creates a sound wave, just as talking or shouting does. Within these curved structures, the sound waves travel along a surface from one point to another rather than fading out into the air. Some might think that a normal speaking voice would be needed, but it's a whisper's soft qualities that work best with this experience.

In the late 1800s, a scientist researched these sound waves inside the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He was one of the first to explain how they worked. But whispering galleries aren't just in domes. They can occur across arched ceilings as in New York City's Grand Central Station. There is one in the semi-circular Bench of Whispers at a park in Spain. There is another whispering gallery in the circular Echo Wall of China's Temple of Heaven.

Many people enjoy experimenting with whispering galleries. They have a friend or relative walk to another part of the structure and whisper something to them to see if it really works. Perhaps you will visit a whispering gallery one day and try it for yourself.

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## THE OCEAN FLOOR

When people think about mountains, hills, and plains, they usually think of land that they can see. But Earth's longest mountain range and its largest plain are actually under the sea. When you look at the ocean, you can't usually see the seafloor. The ocean is several miles deep in most places.

Near a continent, the ocean is fairly shallow, less than 300 feet deep. This area, called the continental shelf, continues farther out and drops off suddenly. This steep area is called the continental slope and descends about 10,000 feet. At the bottom of this slope, the ocean floor flattens out into plains that cover most of the earth's surface. No light reaches these ocean depths, and the creatures that live there have unusual ways of sustaining life.

The ocean floor is not completely flat. It has hills, valleys, and mountains. Mysterious trenches plunge even deeper than the lightless plains. And tall volcanoes reach above the sea to form islands. In the 1970s, people discovered vents in the deep ocean. Heated water flows from these vents and allows creatures to live in places people didn't think possible. People have only explored a tiny bit of the vast ocean and keep discovering more.

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## THE SEVEN NATURAL WONDERS

Have you ever heard of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World? They are some of the world's most amazing natural places and events.

Asia's Mount Everest stands over 29,000 feet above sea level. It is known as one of the highest places on Earth, and many people climb it each year.

In South America, there is the Harbor of Rio De Janeiro. Majestic granite mountains tower above the city, and a giant statue is on the tip of one pointed peak.

Off the coast of Australia is the Great Barrier Reef. Made up of several smaller coral reefs, it stretches more than 1,600 miles. It can be seen from space.

Africa's wonder is Victoria Falls. The falls are over a mile wide with several ribbons of water plunging 354 feet over rugged cliffs.

Paricutin Volcano is in Mexico. In 1943, it was the first volcano in history to have its original eruption witnessed and recorded by humans.

The US is home to the Grand Canyon, carved over millions of years by the Colorado River. People explore it on foot and on mules, by raft, or from helicopters.

Finally, Aurora Borealis is a colorful light display seen in the night skies at mostly higher latitudes. These lights are caused by solar winds and magnetic fields.