

FOCUS

Wild Arizona

Key Words:

Expedition: a long journey with a specific goal

Geology: the study of the Earth and its rocks

Gorge: a deep, narrow canyon

Journal: a written record of experiences and observations

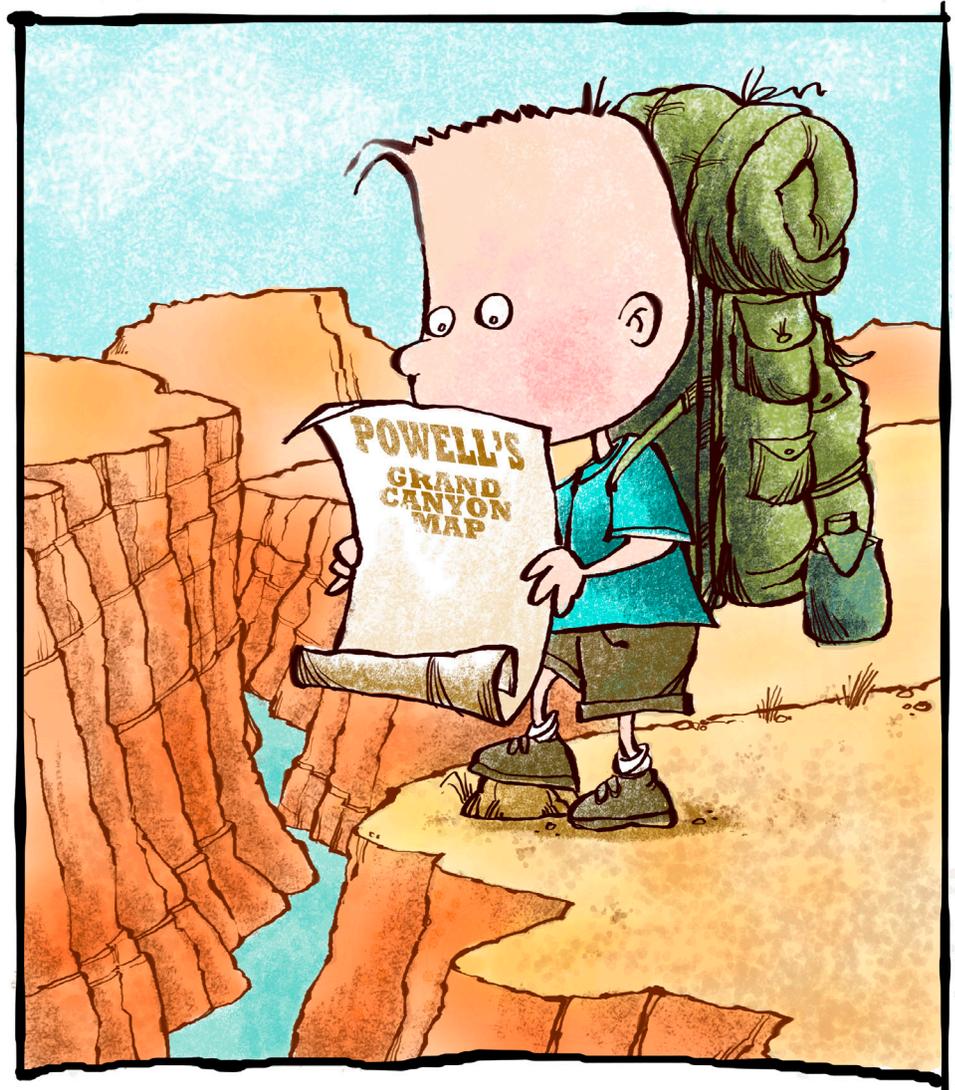
Ration: limit to the amount of food, water or other resource given each day

1869. Four years have passed since the American Civil War ended. The country is rebuilding and a new era of exploration has begun.

John Wesley Powell, a **geology** teacher who lost an arm in a Civil War battle, had become enchanted with the wild rivers of the western United States. Most of the Colorado River had never been explored by boat, and Powell was convinced he could do it. He gathered a crew of nine men and went on an **expedition** to map the river and study its geology.

Geography Fun:

The expedition began at Green River City, Wyo. It ended where the Colorado and Virgin rivers meet. With help from your parents or teacher, get a map, find these two locations and mark them.



How many current states did Powell and his crew visit? _____

About how many miles did they travel on this journey? _____

The expedition lasted about 90 days. If they travelled the same distance every day, how many miles did they move each day? (Hint: Divide the total miles by the number of days.) _____



By Eric Proctor

Why do you think they moved so slowly?

From late May to late August, the crew explored the unknown and undiscovered. It wasn't easy. They survived dangerous river rapids and rock climbs. They **rationed** food to make sure it would last the entire trip. And, four of the people left the expedition. But it was a success. Powell and his crew saw things that had never been seen before. They were the first to travel through the Grand Canyon by boat.

A Look at Language:

Luckily, Powell kept a **journal** throughout his adventure. Every day he described the challenges his crew faced and the beautiful sites they discovered. His journal allows us to

experience the journey through his eyes. Below are some of the entries from Powell's journal.

"August 9. Riding down a short distance, a beautiful view is presented. The river turns sharply to the east, and seems enclosed by a wall, set with a million brilliant gems. What can it mean? Every eye is engaged, every one wonders. On coming nearer, we find fountains bursting from the rocks, high overhead, and the spray in the sunshine forms the gems. ... The rocks below the fountain are covered with mosses, and ferns, and many beautiful flowering plants."

Powell's description is clear. It almost creates a picture in your mind. Grab a piece of paper and try to draw what Powell saw.

"August 14. At daybreak we walk down the bank of the river, on a little sandy beach, to take a view of a new feature in the canyon. ... The river enters the granite! We can see but a little way into the granite gorge, but it looks threatening. After breakfast we enter on the waves. At the very introduction, it inspires awe. The canyon is narrower than we have ever before seen it; the water is swifter."

What emotions were Powell and his crew feeling on this day? How do

you know? As you read this, do you feel the same?

"August 15. Clouds are playing in the canyon today. Sometimes they roll down in great masses, filling the gorge with gloom; sometimes they hang above ... and cover the canyon with a roof of impending storm. ... Then, a gust of wind sweeps down ... and a stream of sunlight pours in. ... Then, baby clouds creep out of side canyons, glide around points, and creep back again, into more distant gorges."

As you read, can you see the clouds moving in your mind? Let's see if you can write like Powell. Step outside and take a few moments to experience the wind: Watch it move the branches, listen to it whistle, feel it blow. Now, describe the wind. Do your words paint a clear picture?

Just for Fun:

Now that you've had some experience with journals, you can be an explorer, just like Powell. With permission from your parent or teacher, take a short walk outside with some paper and a pen or pencil. As you walk, describe what you see, feel, smell and hear. Try to write so your readers can "see" exactly what you see. 🦋

■ This feature is part of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Focus Wild Arizona program, a free

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habitat. Visit our Web site, www.azgfd.gov/focuswild, to find exciting lessons and resources.