

MESA VERDE: FOOTPRINTS

PRESENTED BY

COLORFUL
HISTORY

STORY & ART BY
ARIGON STARR

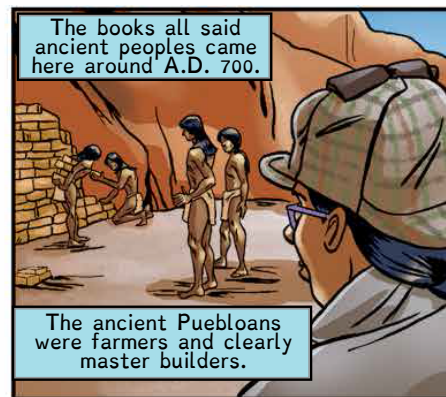
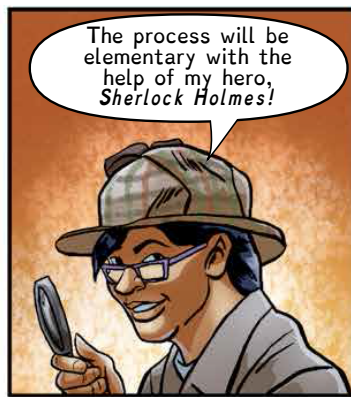
CONSULTANT
DR. DEBBIE REESE
(NAMBE PUEBLO)

When mom and dad said we were going to Mesa Verde for vacation, I knew this would be my ticket to a new tablet.

My writing will win the school contest for sure.

Hundreds of years ago, those old buildings were home to thousands of villagers.

I know if I can crack the mystery of why those indigenous people left, my essay will win the prize.



Present day -- Rain and her family finally visit Mesa Verde.

Rain, your hat is goofy. Sherlock Holmes is not real.

Welcome to Mesa Verde. I'm Anita and I'm from Jemez Pueblo.

Before we visit Cliff Palace, are there any questions?

Dear brother, it is my business to know what other people don't know.

I am a student of the literary sleuth, Sherlock Holmes.

My powers of observation have revealed to me that the people who lived here did so without the benefit of metal, wheels or written language.

What forces would compel people to move from the surfaces of these mesas into caves?

Isn't it likely they were from *outer space*?

What caused these ancient people to disappear *without a trace*?

To quote one of my favorites, Dr. Joe Sando...

"Conditions for change, whether of a positive or a negative nature, involve the choices of the people, as well as the external circumstances with which they are faced."

These are the footprints of my people. My ancestors' spirits have *never* left, and we always treat this land with respect.



Sherlock says, "the world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes."

The ancient Puebloans didn't *disappear*.

They adapted.

Mesa Verde lives on in the hearts of today's Pueblo people.

That spirit carries on through the generations.

And so...we shall remain.

FOOTPRINTS
My Mesa Verde Adventure



Teacher Guide



Mesa Verde: Footprints

Story and Art: Arigon Starr

Teacher Guide: Tim Smyth

Discussion Questions

Elementary

*Show pictures of the dwellings (or videos from the National Park Service, as found at <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=4814CE74-1DD8-B71B-0B3C190C010AD068>), particularly Cliff Palace and ask – why would people choose to live in this dwelling? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of dwelling?

*How do you think these types of dwellings were built, given that they did not have metal, wheels, or a written language?

MS/HS

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*How do you think these types of dwellings were built, given that they did not have metal, wheels, or a written language?

*In panel 2.4, the narrator says, “Sherlock says the world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes.” What does this mean and do you think it holds true?

*In panel 2.3, Dr. Joe Sando, a Pueblo Historian, is quoted as saying, “conditions for change, whether of a positive or negative nature, involve the choices of the people, as well as the external circumstances with which they are faced.” In which ways has your local community or the nation been faced with an important turning point that forced challenging decisions?

Lesson Ideas by Content Area

Social Studies

*<https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=FF5C3901-155D-451F-67834E810684AF7A> – students can use these photos by the National Park Service to become historians/archaeologists. When analyzing the photos, students can write down their guesses on the uses of each of the structures and rooms. There is also a photo of a petroglyph and students can attempt to decipher the artists’ meaning.



Teacher Guide



*<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/27> – using this UNESCO site, students can learn about how this is a site of world importance and can compare to other sites around the world.

*Using panels 1.5 and 1.6 as a starting point, students can conduct research to determine the reasons for building in such a difficult area and how they were built.

*Using panel 2.5, students can fill in the empty laptop screen after researching modern contributions of today's Pueblo people.

STEAM

*Students can design their own city in the hills or caves and make up their own buildings based on several factors: defense, usability, function, and comfort. How were these structures built without the use of metal or the wheel? Students can be teamed up to create tools that they believe would be needed for construction. This could become a larger project and used to compare to the construction of the Egyptian Pyramids.

<https://www.livescience.com/27360-mesa-verde.html> - excellent STEM resource.

*<https://www.nps.gov/meve/learn/nature/dustmonitoring.htm> – students can analyze the information on this National Park Service site to learn about air quality monitoring at the site and in the surrounding states. (This could be connected to the social studies classroom to discuss the Dust Bowl and the importance of monitoring the amount of dust in the air today).

*<https://www.npr.org/2016/07/26/486792360/to-protect-history-a-national-park-preps-for-climate-change> – using this NPR source, complete with podcast, students can understand the fragility of the site in terms of wildfires and ecological damage due to climate change.

Language Arts

*Discuss the allusion to Sherlock Holmes in panels 1.3 and 2.2 and why she would choose this character as a persona. In panel 1.2, the narrator discusses deduction and in panel 2.2 using the powers of observation. The teacher can share excerpts from Sherlock Holmes and then have students apply his methods to analyzing photos and webcams of the site.

*<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/Literature/Literature-idx?type=article&did=Literature.Lindner2.i0018&id=Literature.Lindner2&isize=M&pview=hide> – this is a copy of the poem, *Night Sky Over Mesa Verde* by Carl Lindner. Students can compare this poem to pictures of the site and then compose their own by incorporating the words in panel 2.4 “Mesa Verde lives on in the hearts of today’s Pueblo people.” Students can pair their poetry with photographs of the park or the dwellings.

Further Resources



Teacher Guide



*<https://www.nps.gov/meve/index.htm> – National Park Service website. This great resource includes videos, maps, pictures, and even webcams of the site.

*http://cather.unl.edu/cs001_mesaverde.html – this site discusses the significance of Mesa Verde as a setting as well as some of its early settlers. As told by Willa Cather, a famous American novelist.

Pop Culture Classroom

TITLE: "MESA VERDE: FOOTPRINTS"

Log Line:

In preparation for a family visit to Colorado, a young Native American girl, Rain, turns amateur sleuth as she tries to find answers to the mysterious disappearance of the inhabitants of Mesa Verde. As she wonders at the amazing engineering and artistic accomplishments of the Ancient Puebloans, easy solutions to why the people left behind these dazzling dwellings hard to find.

Storyline:

PAGE ONE

Rain lies on her bed in her contemporary teenage bedroom. She is reading an iPad/tablet and is surrounded by books. In the background, we see an image of Mesa Verde and one of the so-called 'ruins.' Rain is a young, studious Native American girl from the Muscogee Creek Tribe. She wears glasses and looks very nerdy.

In a voice-over, she tells us that her family is taking a trip to Colorado and it's the longest car trip she's ever taken. The furthest from home she's been is Oklahoma City and she's looking forward to seeing something new. We learn her school is giving away a brand-new tablet for the student who writes the most compelling travel narrative, and Rain wants that new toy badly.

The highlight of the trip will be to visit the Mesa Verde National Park. Rain has decided to write her travelogue in the style of Arthur Conan Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes." She dons her deerstalker hat and imagines what her trip to Mesa Verde will be like, without actually having seen the place.

The images she sees are of the various sites in Mesa Verde, including the buildings, mesa tops and pottery shards. She imagines she's behind the walls, watching an ancient family have dinner together. We see her watching the Indian folk tending their fields and carrying water back to the village. We see them climbing the steep canyon walls. We see Indian men building

the structures, one or two of them as overseeing engineers. It's clear that the people are the architects of their society.

In the last image on the page, we see flames and people fighting in silhouette. "Some say that the people had disagreements, that there was drought. Then, they all mysteriously disappeared."

PAGE TWO

We see a contemporary view of Mesa Verde, with cars and tourists. Rain and her family assemble for a guided tour. Rain still wears her deerstalker hat and has a notepad and pencil. She needs answers! Anita, a young woman from Jemez Pueblo is their guide. She introduces herself and asks right away if anyone has questions.

Rain quickly raises her hand and asks as many questions as she can. "Did those people really build these buildings? Could they have been Aztecs from Mexico? Were they really a Lost Tribe? Where did they go? Why are they forgotten people? Were they Anazazi or Ancient Puebloans?"

The Jemez Tour guide calmly explains. "We are still here. Everything you see here are the footprints of my people. My ancestors' spirits have never left and we always treat this land with respect."

We see Rain writing her story on a computer, with the deerstalker hat sitting next to her computer. She realizes that the Pueblo people are as contemporary as her own tribe.

We see the computer screen with the title of the article: "Footprints."

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Pop Culture Classroom Logo

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MESA VERDE: FOOTPRINTS



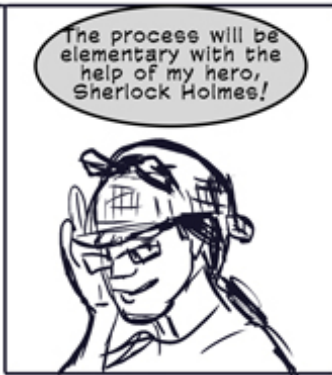
Story & Art by ARIGON STARR
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COVER LOGO AREA

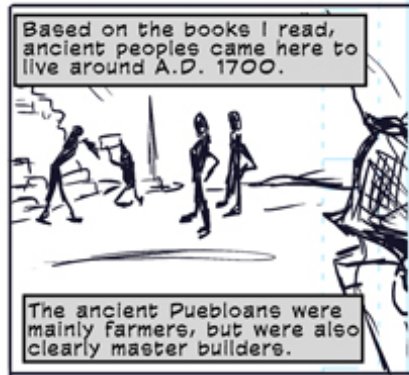
COVER LOGO AREA



What better way to solve this mystery than with my Cheyenne-Arapaho powers of deduction.



The process will be elementary with the help of my hero, Sherlock Holmes!



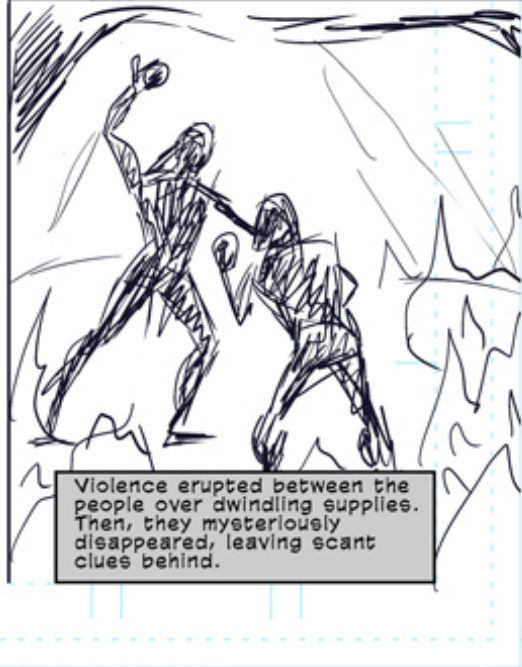
Based on the books I read, ancient peoples came here to live around A.D. 1700.

The ancient Puebloans were mainly farmers, but were also clearly master builders.



These ancient peoples had all things great civilizations have. Technology, government, the arts, religion, trade...

From 1276 through 1299, rainfall was below normal. Crops failed, wild food and game disappeared.



Violence erupted between the people over dwindling supplies. Then, they mysteriously disappeared, leaving scant clues behind.

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FOOTPRINTS

END.