# Exploring the Rocky Mountains

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## Genre
Nonfiction

## Build Background
- Mountain Ranges
- Mountain Animals and Plants
- Exploring Nature

## Access Content
- Labels
- Photo Captions

## Extend Language
- Adjectives That Compare
Question of the Week
What can we learn about nature by investigating?

Key Comprehension Skill
Graphic Sources

Concept Words
range    hike    environment
temperature    conifers    hooves

Learning Goals:
• The environment of a mountain changes as you go up.
• Plants and animals live in different environments.
• The Rocky Mountains have different environments.
The Rocky Mountains stretch from Canada to New Mexico.

The Rocky Mountain range is in the western part of North America. These mountains are also called “The Rockies.” The Rocky Mountains are tall and long! They are over 3,000 miles long. They stretch from Canada to New Mexico.

Let’s explore the Rocky Mountains! We will hike to the top of a mountain. We will see changes in the environment. The temperature will change. It will get colder as we go up. We will see plants and animals that live in these environments.

- **hike**: to take a long walk
- **environment**: air, water, and land where people, animals, and plants live
- **temperature**: how hot or cold something is
We begin our hike at the bottom. Here, the land is dry like a desert. The temperature can be hot in the summer. A plant called sagebrush grows here.

Look! There are some prairie dogs. Their homes are under the ground.

Let’s hike higher. Do you feel the cool air? Now there are trees everywhere. These trees are called conifers. Conifers have leaves that look like needles.

**conifers:** trees with cones
We are high on the mountain now. It is cold. The forest is below us. Now there are rocks everywhere.

It is too cold and windy for trees to grow, but not for wildflowers. Look at the beautiful colors!

Look up at the rocks above us. There is a mountain goat! It lives in this cold, rocky land.

A mountain goat has hooves that help it jump from rock to rock. Its wool coat keeps it warm.

hooves: the hard parts of feet on some animals
Our hike is over. It is too dangerous to hike any higher. Up there is the peak, or top, of the mountain. Snow and ice cover everything. There is an eagle flying in the air. The eagle can see the whole mountain range. What a view!

**Talk About It**

1. Why don’t trees grow at the top of the Rocky Mountains?
2. How can goats live in the Rockies?

**Write About It**

3. Draw a picture of a tall mountain with snow on top. At the bottom, draw a plant and an animal you can find there. Near the top, draw a plant and an animal you can find there. Write their names on your paper.

**Extend Language**

You can add -er to some words to compare two things. *This mountain is high. That mountain is higher.*

Add -er to these words to compare two things:

4. The milk is cold. The ice is ________
5. The sun was low. Now the sun is ________

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