

# Wallace Women Discovery Kit

## Susan's Travels

Best for Grades 7-11

**Goal: Comprehend writing read aloud and translate words into an image.**

Susan painted pictures with words about the traveling she did with her husband Lew.

Read an excerpt of her writing and have students depict the scene she describes.

Needed supplies: art supplies such as paper, markers, pencils; 40 minutes

- 1) Read aloud an excerpt from The Land of the Pueblos by Susan Wallace. Have students listen carefully. (5 minutes)
- 2) Have students use art supplies to draw the scene they heard described. Read the selection again while they're working. (20 minutes)
- 3) When they finish (or when time is up), discuss some of the descriptions they heard and how they showed them in their pictures. Use student examples. What is Susan describing? Where is it? What country is she traveling through? (15 minutes)

“Sometimes the mesa shapes into a rose-red wall, with fluted columns that uphold the sky. Again it is a group of gray pyramids, a thousand or twelve hundred feet high; or an isolated, broken dome, worn smooth by the weather, picturesque in the extreme.

Nothing affords such changes of coloring as the variegated marls, lying in regular bands of red, orange, green blue, of rainbow hue, striped and interstratified with belts of purple, bluish white, and mottled veins of exceeding richness.

Strangely enough, the traveler occasionally finds himself riding above these singular formations, and looking down on the “Painted Rocks.”

The sheer sides of a mesa of gray limestone, mixed with blue clay and capped with a rim of pillared basalt, are singularly like fabrics of hewn stone. I have seen low walls of even height reaching long distances, precisely like field-walls laid by skillful masons. These, in the neighborhood of stately facades, with the fair finish at the top, explain how an explorer, afraid to make near approach, should go away and give accounts of vast cities, with gallant banners on the walls enclosed in heavy outworks.”

-Susan E. Wallace, The Land of the Pueblos, pp.62-3

### English/Language Arts Standards

- **1. Reading Word Recognition, Fluency, and Vocabulary Development**
- **3. Reading Literary Response and Analysis.**
- **7. Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies, and Applications**

### Social Studies Standards

- **3. Geography: Physical Systems**

### Art Standards

- **7. Creating Art: Production**
- **14. Integrated Studies**

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## *Land of the Pueblos Excerpt*

The Santa Fe Mountains round about us are part of the great Rocky Mountain system, connecting on the north with the Spanish Peaks and the Raton Mountains, including many whose summits are silvered with perpetual snow. A series of high, picturesque chains, in the morning-glow robed with a transparent purple haze, of such exquisite tint one can hardly realize those airy pyramids in a fair border-land between us and heaven are, indeed, upheavals of earth, veined with quartz and based on coarse red granite.

The faintest violet, the softest heliotrope are coarse and hard beside the dreamy, poetic color, which appeals to the eye as dim Aeolian soundings touch the ear, charming the fancy with vague ideas of a viewless beauty within the floating veil.

I cannot make you understand. Come and see the transfiguration which makes rock-ribbed hills appear like tents of light, lovely enough for angels to rest in on their upward flight.

The plain was smooth as a prairie, and our road free of stone. The reader must not imagine it lay among Alpine scenery, with huge peaks towering to the sky, forbidding our advance, yielding at last to reveal smiling valleys and hidden hamlets, nestling close to the hillsides in narrow glens. Here all is on the same magnificent scale. The plains are broad as the summits are high; the refined atmosphere so intensely clear the light is like a reflection from snow. No such extensive views are in Europe or any country where the air holds moisture, and sometimes the landscapes seem absolutely limitless.

The Sierras are short, uneven spurs from the main line. They have disturbed the overlying strata in the shape of mesas (tables) of solid rock, which are a distinguishing feature of Rocky Mountain scenery, giving it a grotesque, fantastic beauty. The process of erosion has formed in colossal size copies of the grandest structures of man's art, and towering columns, temples with sharp pinnacles, scattered pillars rise abruptly from the centre of plains desolate and forsaken as the wilderness of Engedi—strange and solemn sights. In the Painted Desert are show-white mesas, the craie blanche composition of the chalk cliffs on the south coast of England, which dazzle the eye, reflecting the sunlight like palaces of alabaster or of ice. The stone corridors of Karnak and Philae are the work of Pigmies compared with this noble architecture, wrought by slow processes in secret places, "Made by Nature for herself."

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