

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Mesa Verde

Mesa Verde National Park is a small park in southwest Colorado. The land was set aside by Congress to preserve the numerous cave dwellings built by the Anasazi people over 700 years ago. The Anasazi are the ancestors of the modern Pueblo people of Arizona and New Mexico.

This image shows the northern edge of an eroded mesa. A mesa is a small flat area that is higher than its surroundings. Most of the Anasazi cave dwellings are located to the south of here along the walls of the canyons that have formed on top of the mesa. The north rim of the mesa is visible along the left edge of this view from B31 to H1.

1. Why was the park road built with so many curves between C30 and F12? _____

2. A water tower is located at the end of a short road at H7. Why was this site chosen as the location for the water tank that supplies the visitor center at M6?

3. In which direction does the mesa tilt? _____ How can you tell? _____

4. In which direction will the north rim of the mesa migrate in the future? _____

Explain your reasoning. _____

5. School Section Canyon cuts across the mesa from E22 to T21. How has the shape and length of the canyon changed over time? _____

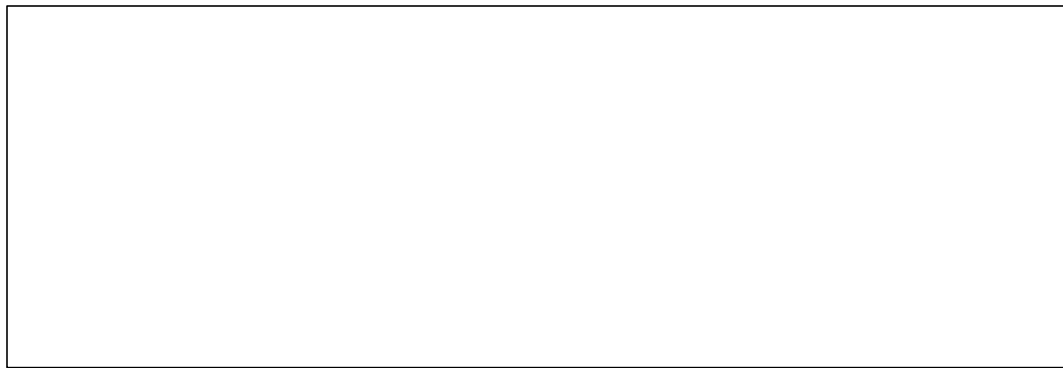
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6. Where in this image is the drainage divide that separates the water that flows to the north from the water that flows towards the south? _____

7. The mesa is composed of shale topped by a layer of sandstone. Why would it be unlikely for the opposite arrangement to exist, a mesa composed of sandstone topped by a layer of shale? _____

8. Find out the definition of the geologic term “cuesta.” Why might Mesa Verde be more accurately called a cuesta, rather than a mesa? _____

9. Draw a simplified geologic cross section from A8 to T8.



A8

T8