

## Printing

### *Death Valley Sailing Rocks*

Directions: Copy the following passages using perfect printing.

- **Shape** – letters formed according to D’Nealian standard.
- **Size** – correct height and width, staying on the line.
- **Spacing** – letters and words demonstrate clarity and flow.
- **Slant** – words slanted slightly and consistently.

*Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh  
Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp  
Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx  
Yy Zz 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9*

How do you slide a boulder across a desert lakebed, leaving no footprints or tire tracks? Mother Nature knows how.

In Death Valley, California, there are scores of rocks that have moved across the desert floor leaving nothing but their trails in dried mud. For 70 years, scientists have wondered how they move. The lakebed is dry and flat, so waves and gravity are not the answer. It must happen slowly over time because no one has ever witnessed movement. The rocks have been known to move about every 2-3 years, and their tracks may last 3-4 years. The heaviest boulder is 700 lb., and they have traveled up to 860 feet. So how does nature move a 700-lb. rock? The investigation begins with the desert climate.



The Racetrack Playa is a dry lake, meaning it receives water periodically and then evaporates. As the shallow lake (3" deep) dries out, it leaves a slippery mud. The Mojave Desert has extreme temperatures, especially Death Valley. This region is typically the hottest place in America during the summer. It also drops below freezing in the winter with high-speed winds. Factor all these conditions together and therein lies the answer.



In 2014, the mystery was solved. Researchers observed and recorded the rocks moving, using volunteers, cameras, and rocks fitted with GPS technology. Rocks move when large ice sheets a few millimeters thick floating in a temporary winter pond start to break up during sunny days. These thin floating ice panels, frozen during cold winter nights, are driven by wind and shove rocks up to 5 m/min.