

Understanding guidebook topos of climbing routes will take practice matching the book to the real thing. The first reality one must understand is that topos are a general guide and are not detailed move by move. It would take much of the adventure and spontaneity out of climbing if we knew too much! Below is a sample topos of a climbing route with the normal features of the rock indicated. Difficulty ratings are also noted at "crux" sections or at the hardest move. We use the Yosemite Decimal System that grades (fifth class) difficulty in an open-ended scale from 5.0 to 5.14 and beyond. There are grade levels of a, b, c and d within each grade from 5.10 and above. Each letter grade is as different as 5.6 is to 5.7. The second reality to be aware of is that depending on an individual's experience, skill, health, attitude and height can make a particular grade seem harder or easier. Think of the numbers as a general guide and have fun just doing the climbing!

