

1: Force of Habitat

Based on the Nevada quarter reverse



OBJECTIVE

Students will participate in a guided investigation that explores the survival needs of plants and animals in the desert. Students will understand the characteristics of a habitat and how living things survive there.



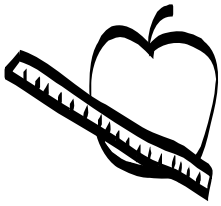
MATERIALS

- 1 overhead projector
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the “Nevada Quarter Reverse” page
- 1 class map of the United States
- Images of the desert
- Locate copies of texts that give information about the desert. In previewing texts, it would be good to pick one that includes horses. Also, it may be necessary to focus on only parts of longer texts. Some titles to explore:
 - *Animal Habitats* by Michael Chinery
 - *Face-To-Face with the Horse* by Valerie Tracqui
 - *Creatures of the Desert World* by the National Geographic Society
 - *Listen to the Desert/Oye Al Desierto* by Pat Mora
 - *Desert Voices* by Byrd Baylor
 - *Deserts* by Gail Gibbons
- 1 overhead transparency of the “Land of the Great Basin” worksheet
- “Land of the Great Basin” worksheet
- Drawing paper
- Crayons



PREPARATIONS

- Locate images of the desert.
- Make copies of the “Land of the Great Basin” worksheet (1 per student)
- Make an overhead transparency of each of the following:
 - “Land of the Great Basin” worksheet
 - “Nevada Quarter Reverse” page
- Locate a text that relates to the desert habitat (see examples under “Materials”).



Force of Habitat



GROUPINGS

- Whole group
- Pairs
- Individual work



CLASS TIME

Two 20- to 30-minute sessions



CONNECTIONS

- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Science



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Precipitation
- Desert
- Attributes
- State
- Habitat



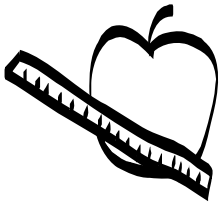
BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of the survival needs of living things.

STEPS

Session 1

1. Describe the 50 State Quarters® Program for background information, if necessary, using the example of your own state, if available. Locate Nevada on a classroom map. Note its position in relation to your school's location.
2. Display the "Nevada Quarter Reverse" overhead transparency or photocopy. Ask the students what they see in the image. Lead a class discussion regarding the image and explain the following to the students:
 - Nevada has the largest wild horse population of any state. These horses run free on public lands.

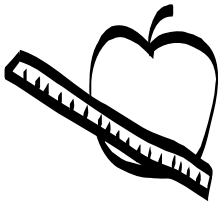


Force of Habitat

- Part of the Sierra Nevada mountain range is located in Nevada.
 - A large desert called “The Great Basin” covers much of Nevada.
 - Sagebrush, which is shown on the coin, is the state flower of Nevada and grows in the desert of the Great Basin.
3. Tell the students that they will learn about the land that makes up the Great Basin’s desert. Tell the students that, while some deserts are very flat and sandy, the Great Basin has many mountains. Remind the students that the Great Basin’s desert covers much of Nevada. Point out the area covered by the Great Basin on the classroom map (Nevada, Utah, and nearby parts of Idaho and Wyoming).
 4. Create a “Deserts” chart on a piece of chart paper, labeling three columns “weather,” “plants,” and “animals.” Show the students images of deserts. Ask the students what they already know about deserts. Fill in information on the chart.
 5. Tell the students that they will read a text about deserts. As a group, preview the text and illustrations to generate observations about what might be occurring at different points in the book.
 6. Read the text aloud with the students, attending to any unfamiliar vocabulary words. Continue to fill in the chart as you read.
 7. Explain to the students that the word “basin” means “bowl” and that the mountains around the Great Basin (the Sierra Nevada and the Rockies) are like the sides of a bowl. Point out the areas where the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains are located on the classroom map. Explain that the large mountain ranges keep the heavy rain clouds out of the basin and this creates the desert.
 8. Display the “Land of the Great Basin” overhead transparency. Show the students the empty place on the overhead transparency where the desert would be. Ask them to think of the plants and animals from the text that live in the desert.
 9. Distribute one “Land of the Great Basin” worksheet to each student. Tell the students to draw a scene based on the text that they have just read. Tell them to include desert plants and animals from the story and from the “Desert” chart. Have the students label their illustrations and put their names on the worksheet.
 10. Allow time for the students to complete the activity. Collect the “Land of the Great Basin” worksheets.

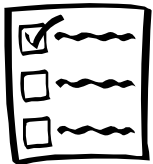
Session 2

1. Ask the students to name any of the desert plants and animals they remember from the text.
2. Display the chart and review the plants and animals listed and the characteristics of a desert habitat from Session 1. Note that horses can live in a desert.



Force of Habitat

3. Display the “Nevada Quarter Reverse” overhead transparency and remind the students that all the items in the picture are found in the Great Basin’s desert.
4. Explain to the students that the desert is a habitat and a habitat has food, water, shelter, and space. Tell the students that all animals have attributes that help them survive in their habitats. Give the students several (non-desert) examples with which they are familiar. For example, the giraffe’s long neck allows it to eat the leaves from tall trees; the polar bear’s fur protects it from the cold.
5. Ask the students to recall what is special about a desert habitat. The students should respond that the desert has very little rain (precipitation). Remind the students that all living things need water. Tell them that the animals that live in the desert are able to live on very little water. That is an attribute that helps them to survive in their habitat.
6. Tell the students that they will choose a desert plant or animal to draw. They will also write a sentence about its attributes and how they help the animal to survive in its habitat. They will tell a partner about their drawing.
7. Allow time for the students to complete the activity and tell about their drawing. Collect and display the finished works.



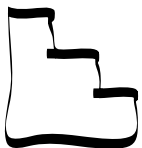
ASSESSMENT

Use the student’s worksheet and drawing to assess the achievement of the lesson objectives.



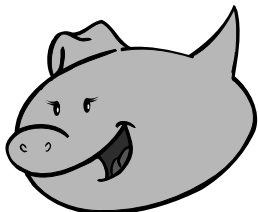
ENRICHMENTS/EXTENSIONS

- Have the students study another habitat.
- Using a world map, introduce the students to other desert environments.
- Have the students investigate precipitation in their local weather. If it rains or snows in your area, have them build gauges to measure precipitation. Have them compare their results with the precipitation reported on the local news.



DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

- Allow students to work in pairs.
- Allow students to dictate their answers.



CONNECTION TO WWW.USMINT.GOV/KIDS

Where can you learn more about habitats? Take a look at the “You Can Depend on Me” lesson plan based on the California quarter in the “Teachers” section of the United States Mint H.I.P. Pocket Change™ Web site at www.usmint.gov/kids/components/50sqLessonPlans/pdf/200523-1.pdf.



Name _____

Land of the Great Basin

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

SIERRA NEVADA





Nevada Quarter Reverse

