

3: Desert Dwellers

Based on the Arizona quarter reverse



OBJECTIVE

Students will identify common plants and animals of the desert. Students will explain physical and behavioral characteristics of desert plants and animals. Students will use voice, expressive language, and interesting vocabulary in their writing.



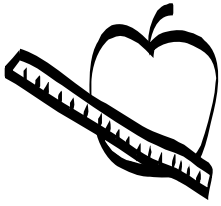
MATERIALS

- 1 overhead projector (optional)
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the “Arizona Quarter Reverse” page
- “Arizona 3-2-1” worksheet
- 1 class map of the United States
- 1 copy of a text that gives information about the state of Arizona. For example:
 - *G is for Grand Canyon: An Arizona Alphabet* by Barbara Gowan
 - *Arizona (America the Beautiful Series)* by Jean F. Blashfield
 - *Arizona (Rookie Read-About Geography)* by Millie Miller and Cyndi Nelson
- 1 copy of a text that gives information about the Sonoran Desert. For example:
 - *A Desert Scrapbook: Dawn to Dusk in the Sonoran Desert* by Virginia Wright-Frierson
 - *Here is the Southwestern Desert* by Madeleine Dunphy
 - *Saguaro Moon: A Desert Journal* by Kristin Joy Pratt-Serafini
 - *Cactus Hotel* by Brenda Z. Guiberson
- Chart paper
- Markers

PREPARATIONS

- Make an overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the “Arizona Quarter Reverse” page.
- Make copies of the “Arizona 3-2-1” worksheet (1 per student).
- Locate a text that gives information about the state of Arizona (see examples under “Materials”).
- Locate a text that gives information about the Sonoran Desert (see examples under “Materials”).
- Create a chart with the alphabet listed vertically down the left side.





Desert Dwellers



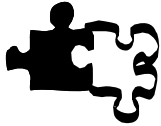
GROUPINGS

- Whole group
- Pairs
- Individual work



CLASS TIME

Two 30- to 45-minute sessions



CONNECTIONS

- Science
- Language Arts



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Quarter
- Obverse (front)
- Reverse (back)
- Riddle



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

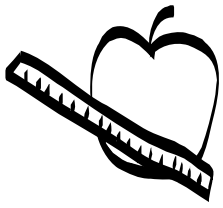
- The writing process
- Plants and animals



STEPS

Session 1

1. Describe the 50 State Quarters® Program for background information, if necessary, using the example of your own state, if available. Then display the transparency or photocopy of the Arizona quarter reverse. Locate Arizona on a classroom map. Note its position in relation to your school's location.
2. Ask the students to examine the Arizona quarter and tell you what they know about the image. Explain to the students that the image represents the Grand Canyon and the Saguaro cactus. Ask the students to share what they already know about these two things. Note their responses on chart paper.



Desert Dwellers

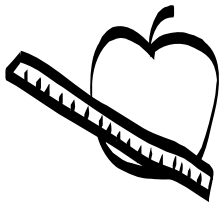
3. Ask the students to think of reasons why these items might be in the quarter design.
4. Display the “Arizona 3-2-1” worksheet. Briefly review the directions so that the students will be prepared to complete the worksheet after listening to the selected text.
5. Introduce the students to the selected text about Arizona. As a group, preview the text. During the reading, add to the chart information about Arizona as it is presented. Pay special attention to text that relates to the Saguaro cactus and the Sonoran desert. Attend to unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts.
6. After finishing the selected text, review the charted information about Arizona. Distribute an “Arizona 3-2-1” worksheet to each student. Explain the directions to the students and allow time for them to finish the work.
7. Afterward, encourage the students in pairs to share their work with each other.

Session 2

1. Display the transparency of the “Arizona Quarter Reverse” page. Review with the students the material covered in the previous session. Ask the students to discuss information they heard about the Sonoran desert, home of the Saguaro cactus shown on the Arizona quarter.
2. Introduce the students to the selected text about the Sonoran desert. As a group, preview the text. Display a two-column chart labeled “Desert Plants” and “Desert Animals.” During the reading, list desert living things on the chart. Attend to unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts.
3. Explain to the students that they will each be creating a riddle about a desert plant or animal. Define “riddle” as a description that someone presents so that others can guess what’s being described. Share the example below or create one based on the selected text.

What am I? I am a small mammal that lives in the desert. You will find me sleeping in my burrow during the heat of the day. Like many desert animals, I am nocturnal. I have huge ears that help me keep cool in the hot sun. I come out at night to hunt for food, and I have very good vision at night. I look a bit like a small dog to some people. I can make a barking sound, but usually I am shy and run away from people. What am I? (Answer: a fennec fox)

4. To model the process, create a class riddle on chart paper about the famous Saguaro cactus. Guide the students to include both physical and behavioral characteristics in the riddle. Also focus on using expressive language and interesting vocabulary. Demonstrate sentence variation, as students will be tempted to begin every sentence with “I.” Each riddle should begin and end with “What am I?”



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5. Each student will choose one of the plants or animals noted on the chart created during the reading about the Sonoran desert. Distribute a “Desert Riddles” worksheet to each student. Direct the students to work independently to create their riddles.
6. Allow time for the students to complete their riddles.
7. Ask the students to individually share their work with the class and allow the rest of the class to guess the answers.
8. Display the riddles in the classroom.



ASSESSMENT

Use the students’ class participation, worksheets, and final riddles to evaluate whether they have met the lesson objectives.



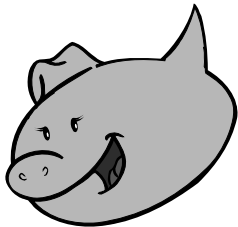
ENRICHMENTS/EXTENSIONS

- Have students create additional riddles about other desert plants and animals.
- Create a class book of desert riddles.
- Have students research other environments and create riddles about the plants and animals that live there.
- Have students gather other quarters and create riddles based on their designs.



DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

- Allow students to work in pairs to write their riddles.
- Provide various texts on desert plants and animals for students to use in writing their riddles.
- Provide a framed paragraph (for example: I live in _____. I have _____. You can find me _____.)
- Allow students to dictate their written responses.



CONNECTION TO WWW.USMINT.GOV/KIDS

- Have students learn more about needs of living things by visiting the 2005 Kansas quarter lesson plan for grades K and 1 found at www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/50sq/2005/_k01-4.pdf.
- Have students learn more about plants and animals encountered during the Lewis and Clark expedition by visiting the 2004 Westward Journey (keelboat) nickel lesson plan for grade 2 found at www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/wjns/2004/02-keelboat.pdf.



Name _____

Arizona 3-2-1

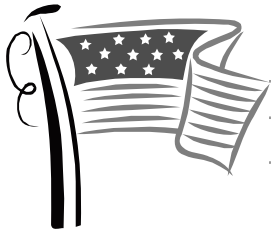
Directions: Listen carefully to the book about the state of Arizona. Then, in the boxes below, write 3 things you learned, 2 things that surprised you, and 1 question you still have about Arizona. Illustrate a fact about Arizona in the last box.



3 LEARNED

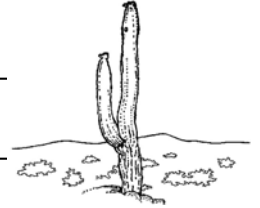
2 SURPRISES

1 QUESTION



Name _____

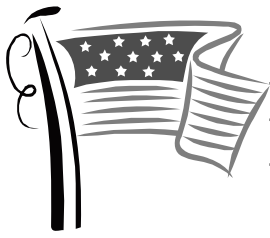
Desert Riddles



A series of horizontal lines for writing answers to the riddles.



Additional horizontal lines for writing answers to the riddles.



Arizona Quarter Reverse

