When is a Desert Not a Desert? The Varying Landscapes of Arizona

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Grade Level: 3
Duration: 1-2 class periods

National Standards
GEOGRAPHY Element One: The World in Spatial Terms
1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information
Element Two: Places and Regions
4. The physical and human characteristics of places
5. People create regions to interpret Earth's complexity
Element Three: Physical Systems:
8. The characteristics and distribution of ecosystems and biomes on Earth's surface

Overview
Arizona has a variety of landscapes. Unfortunately, many people think Arizona is just one huge desert. In fact, Arizona has six different biomes, so one can explore woodlands, grasslands, deserts and even tundra.

Purpose
In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of the varying landscapes of Arizona by creating a biomes map.

Materials
- When Is A Desert Not A Desert? reading
- Biomes Summary of Arizona Chart
- Region Charts
  - Desert
  - Chaparral
  - Grassland
  - Woodland
  - Forest
  - Tundra
- Arizona Biomes Map Work
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- Arizona Biomes Assessment and Answer Key
- Landform Regions of Arizona map (labeled)
- Arizona Biomes map (labeled and unlabeled)
- Colored pencils
- Scoring Guide for Map Work

Objectives

The students will be able to:

1. Identify the three landform regions of Arizona.
2. Identify the six biomes found in Arizona.
3. Analyze charts to gain geographic information.
4. Create a map that locates and identifies the six biomes found in Arizona.
5. Create a map that locates and identifies the three landform regions of Arizona.
6. Spell words correctly when copying them from other sources.

Procedures

1. Distribute the Landform Regions of Arizona map [http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/az-lndfrm-blank.pdf] and colored pencils to students. Introduce the lesson by having students discuss their favorite part of Arizona with a partner. They should name the place and locate it on the map (if they can) and then state why they like this place. Have a few students share their responses with the whole class.
2. Project the When Is A Desert Not A Desert? Reading. Read as a class or individually.
3. Project the Landform Regions of Arizona map that has the three deserts located and labeled (in red). Distribute the Arizona Biomes Map Work worksheet. Instruct students to complete activity 1 by using a red colored pencil to write the three deserts on their copies of the Landform Regions of Arizona map. Allow students to see the projected version of the same map so they can locate the deserts and spell the names correctly.
4. Now project the Biomes Chart on Desert Region. Discuss the plants that would be found there, what the climate is like, and elevation for these three deserts.
5. Continue to project, read, and discuss the Biomes Charts for Chaparral, Grassland, and Woodland regions.
6. Project the map found at [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUME](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUME)

Assessment

Geography and ELA

The Arizona Biomes Assessment can be graded for reading comprehension, spelling, and geography knowledge. Mastery will be considered 80% or higher.

Geography

The Landform Regions of Arizona map and the Arizona Biomes map can be graded using the Scoring Guide for Map Work. A score of 40 points or higher will be seen as mastery.

Sources

