



# I Am a Rock, I Am an Island: Describing Landforms and Bodies of Water

**Author** Julie Letofsky  
**Grade Level** 1-2  
**Duration** 2 class periods

## National Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

#### Element 2: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places.

#### Element 3: Physical Systems

7. The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface.

## AZ Standards

### ELA

#### Writing

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

1.W.4 and 2.W.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

#### Language

#### Conventions of Standard English

1.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- a. Capitalize dates and names of people.
- b. Use end punctuation for sentences.

2.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- a. Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names.

## Arizona Social Science Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

#### The use of geographic representations and tools helps individuals understand their world.

1.G1.1 Use, explore and construct maps, graphs, and other geographical representations to support content focus. Key concepts include but are not limited to physical features (rivers, lakes, mountains, landforms, desert) and human features (dams, cities, parks, hospitals, schools, railroad tracks, farms, factories, houses).

2.G1.1 Use and construct maps, graphs, and other geographic representations of familiar and unfamiliar places in the world; and locate physical and human features. Key physical features include but are not limited to seven continents, oceans, lakes, rivers, mountain ranges, coasts, seas, and deserts. Key human features include but are not limited to equator, hemispheres, North and South Pole, cities, states, countries, regions, and landmarks

2.G1.2 Use maps, globes, and other simple geographic models to identify and explain cultural and environmental characteristics of places in the world based on stories shared.

## Overview

Young children should develop their knowledge of the Earth's physical features. With a full understanding of basic landforms and bodies of water, they will be well prepared for further geography study.

## Purpose

In this lesson, students will identify and describe basic landforms (mountain, hill, plateau, plain, river valley, island) and bodies of water (ocean, lake, river) through use of body movements and write

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simple riddles to demonstrate their understanding of the unique characteristics of these physical features.

### Materials

- Paper Slips for Riddle Activity
- Two containers--labeled Water Bodies and Landforms
- Writing paper
- Riddle Checklist
- Physical Features Riddles Assessment
- Learning Physical Features Grades 1-2 PowerPoint
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### Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. identify common landforms and bodies of water from descriptions of distinguishing features.
2. write riddles using correct capitalization and punctuation.

### Procedures

#### SESSION ONE

*Prepare in advance:*

- *Decide to draw the physical features on whiteboard or chart paper or project the Learning Physical Features PowerPoint*
- *Two Containers labeled--LANDFORMS with landform paper slips inside and BODIES OF WATER with water paper slips inside*
- *Print up the images in the PowerPoint for Word Wall*

1. Introduce the lesson by saying, "Think of all the different kinds of land and water you've seen in Arizona." (As children share their responses, sketch and label the physical features. Accept all reasonable responses). "Think of other kinds of land and water you've seen in books, on TV, or on trips you've taken." (As children share their responses, sketch and label the physical features. Accept all reasonable responses).
2. "It's important to be able to name and describe landforms and bodies of water. As we learn about and compare other places in the world during our study of geography, we'll all understand exactly what we mean if we have a picture in our minds of what these landforms and water bodies look like."
3. "Since we don't have these physical features right here in our room to look at, we'll use other ways to describe and understand them. First, we will use our bodies to show what these features look like. Move

into your own personal space. As I name a feature, I will show what it looks like." Point to your labeled sketches or show images on the Learning Physical Features PowerPoint. Also post the printed copy of the image on the Word Wall.

4. Model body movements yourself! Children will be naturally creative and expressive; be sure to point out unique examples. Use geography-descriptive words as you give feedback to children. Possible body movement examples are listed below.

- **mountain** – stand up high on your toes, reach hands up to form a peak
- **mountain range**– several children connected in the same manner as mountain
- **hill** – round your back as you stretch over and touch hands to the ground
- **plateau** – two children face each other, meet outstretched arms into flat-topped hill
- **plain** – move arms around yourself to cover a broad, flat expanse
- **river** – move hand and arm in flowing path; lay down and move whole body in flowing motion
- **river valley** – two children sit facing each other, knees up, feet meeting to form v-shaped valley
- **island** – one child stands in middle, several other children surround with hands connected to form body of water
- **ocean** – make wave-like motions with arms all around body; whole class links hands and makes wave-like motions to define largest expanse of water
- **lake** – several children link hands and form smaller body of water; children can move to form round or long lake shapes

5. "Now we will play a riddle game to describe these features. Here is a riddle I wrote. I am a landform. I can be in a river or in an ocean. I am fully surrounded by water. What am I?" (Island) "My riddle has three describing sentences and one asking sentence. This is what it looks like written down."

(Write this riddle on chart paper or chalkboard. Make two or three errors in punctuation and capitalization, like this: I am a landform i can be in a river or in an ocean. I am fully surrounded by water. What am I)

6. "Since other children will be reading the riddles we write, it is important that we use correct capitalization and punctuation. Can you find the punctuation and capitalization mistakes I made in my riddle?" (Reread riddle sentence by sentence. Have children identify and correct the mistakes).

7. "You can use this Riddle Checklist to help you remember what to include as you write your riddles." Distribute and review the Riddle Checklist.

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8. "You will write two riddles, one for a landform and one for a body of water. When I come around, you will pick a slip of paper from the container labeled LANDFORMS. Don't show anyone your word. Think of your riddle and begin writing. Raise your hand if you need help." (Go around and have children pick slips. Assist as needed. Allow students to visit the Word Wall to remind themselves on what the physical feature looks like. When children complete one riddle, have them pick a second slip of paper from the container labeled BODIES OF WATER).

9. Assist beginning writers by recording riddles as they dictate. Make a couple of errors in punctuation and capitalization. Ask child to find and correct the errors. Guide them through checklist as needed.

### SESSION TWO

*Prepare in advance:*

- *Student riddles divided into two piles: landforms and water bodies*

1. Introduce this session by saying, "Today we will use your riddles to play the riddle game. As we play the game, we will review the names and descriptions of landforms and bodies of water. Move into your own personal spaces. Instead of calling out the riddle answers, show the answer with a body movement." (Read riddle. Look around to check children's responses and give visual feedback – a thumb up, a nod, etc.). "Right, I am a hill...a river...a plateau." (Continue through riddles for 6 landforms and 3 bodies of water).

2. Have children return to seats and distribute Physical Features Assessment. "When I read a riddle, you will mark your answer in the appropriate box. You can write the name of the landform or body of water, or you can sketch a picture to show your answer. Remember to think of the answer to yourself, and then record your answer. Point to box #1." (Read first riddle. Move about to see if any children need assistance. Continue with the rest of riddles). Students can use the Word Wall for visual clues.

### Assessment

#### Geography

Student will correctly identify 7 of 9 physical features from descriptions of distinguishing features using the Physical Features Assessment.

#### ELA

Students will have punctuation and capitalization correctly done. Mastery will be considered 1 or 0 errors.

### Extensions

Children can enjoy additional sessions of body movement activities through book sharing. Read *Earthdance* by Joanne Ryder and encourage children to act out physical features, weather systems, and animal/human movement. ISBN 0805062319

Add more human and physical features as the year progresses. A whole set of maps are available on Human and Physical Features at <https://geoalliance.asu.edu/maps-1-4-human-physical-features> The set of maps for Grades 1-4 includes b/w and color versions of maps as well as a test version.

- Human Features include: North and South Poles, equator, state, country, Southern and Northern Hemispheres, city, road, territory, harbor, dam, and railroad.
- Physical Features include: continent, mountain, island, lake, river, ocean, mountain range, coast, desert, valley, volcano, strait, sea, gulf, bay, peninsula, plain, dune, mesa, plateau, isthmus, and oasis.

Enjoy favorite songs that name landforms and bodies of water. "America the Beautiful" names mountains, sea, plains ("amber waves of grain" and "fruited plain"). The complete verses of "This Land is Your Land" name specific landforms and bodies of water across our country. There are many extension possibilities for locating specific places on a USA map.

### Sources

*America the Beautiful* illustrated by Neil Waldman, 1993, Atheneum ISBN 0689318618

*This Land is Your Land* illustrated by Kathy Jakobsen, 1998, Scholastic ISBN 0316065641