Which Way is Up? The Tree of Life in Africa
Students learn important lessons about the interdependency of plants and animals through the use of an engaging children’s book.

<table>
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<th>National Geography Standards</th>
<th>Arizona Geography Standards</th>
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<td><strong>ELEMENT TWO PLACES AND REGIONS</strong> 4. The physical and human characteristics of places <strong>ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY</strong> 16. The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources</td>
<td><strong>Grade 2</strong> <strong>Strand 4 Geography</strong> <strong>Concept 2 Places and Regions</strong> PO 3 Discuss physical features in the world (e.g., mountains, rivers, deserts) <strong>Concept 5 Environment and Society</strong> PO 1 Identify ways in which humans depend upon, adapt to, and impact the earth (e.g., agriculture, structures, roads)</td>
<td><strong>ELA Common Core Standards</strong> <strong>Reading</strong> <strong>Literature</strong> <strong>Key Ideas and Details</strong> 2.RL.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. 2.RL.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. 2.RL.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. 3.RL.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. 3.RL.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text. 3.RL.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. <strong>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</strong> 2.RL.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot. 3.RL.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting). <strong>Writing</strong> <strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
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Overview

*This is the Tree* by Miriam Moss is a story about how the wildlife of Africa depend on the ancient baobab tree. Virtually every part of the baobab tree is important to animals, birds, insects, or humans. This unique tree provides shelter, food, and medicine, and many other things.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn about the interdependency between plants and animals.
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This understanding of the importance of natural resources is a valuable lesson in conservation.

Materials

- *This is the Tree* by Miriam Ross
- Chart paper
- Story paper or drawing and writing paper
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- World map
- Map of Africa

*Materials for use in Extension Activities:*
- Brown butcher paper cut into the rough shape of a baobab tree (approximately six feet high) to affix to a bulletin board or wall
- Outlines of parts of baobab tree

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Name the parts of the baobab tree that are useful to humans and wildlife (as described in the book).

- Illustrate one part of the baobab tree and describe a use.

- Draw a picture depicting his or her choice of the part of the baobab tree that he or she feels is most important.

- Write a paragraph explaining why it is his or her choice.

- Recall facts about at least one part of the baobab tree.

Procedures

SESSION ONE
1. Discuss the cover of the book.
2. Ask students to name the animals on the cover.
3. Ask students where they think the story takes place. Point out Africa on the map.
4. Ask students if they have ever seen a tree like the one on the cover.
5. Ask for descriptive words to describe what the tree looks like.
6. Read the book.
7. Record on chart paper the parts of the tree and its uses. (Use one page of chart paper for each part of the tree: Leaves, flowers, fruit, trunks, roots, bark, wood).

SESSION TWO
1. Review chart items.
2. Have students choose one part of the baobab tree that they feel is the most important.
3. Tell students to pretend that they are in Africa to study the baobab tree and help in its conservation. They are each going to draw a picture to aid in this attempt. Each picture must illustrate what he/she considers to be the most important part of the tree. They must also write a paragraph explaining why the student feels that this is the most important part.
4. When finished, have students share their paragraphs with the class.

Assessment

*Assessment Scoring Guide:* Student must achieve 80% accuracy.

Did the student:

- Draw a picture depicting his or her choice of the most important part of the baobab tree? (2 points)

- Write a paragraph about the drawing explaining why he or she feels that it is the most important part of the tree? It should include an introductory statement, two descriptive statements, and a concluding statement. (4 points - one for each part)

- Write in complete sentences using proper punctuation, capitalization, word usage, and good penmanship? (5 points)

- Describe the uses of the illustrated part of the tree? (2 points)

Extensions

Divide students into teams with each team given one of the chart pages listing the parts of the baobab tree (as described in Procedure #7). Have each team act out the use of the tree as described in their assigned chart. The class should try to guess which part of the tree each group is acting out. Each group could also cut out an outline shape of their part of the tree describing its uses then affix it to the large tree.

Using string, children measure the diameter of the limbs and foliage of the baobab tree.

List all of the creatures of the animal world that make the baobab tree its home. Students use large drawing paper to illustrate the tree with its inhabitants.

Sources

ARIZONA GEOPHYSICAL ALLIANCE
Which Way is Up? The Tree of Life in Africa
Moss, M. This is the Tree. La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller Book Publishers. ISBN 0-916291-98