



# The Gift of Water: Modifying Our Environment

Students learn important lessons about adaptation and the importance of water, while reinforcing reading and writing skills.

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<b>Grade Level</b>	4-5
<b>Duration</b>	1-2 class periods

## National Geography Standards

### ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS

**4.** The physical and human characteristics of places

### ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

**14.** How human actions modify the physical environment.

**16.** The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources

## Arizona Geography Strand

### Grade 4 Strand 4 Geography Concept 2 Places and Regions

**PO 1** Describe how regions, such as the Southwest, have distinct physical and cultural characteristics

**PO 3** Compare the landform regions of Arizona according to their physical features, plants, and animals

**PO 4** Describe how regions and places have distinct characteristics (e.g., Grand Canyon, Colorado River, Casa Grande Ruin, Walnut Canyon, Montezuma Castle, Canyon de Chelly, Rocky Mountains, Rio Grande River, Yucatan Peninsula).

### Concept 3 Physical Systems

### Concept 5 Environment and Society

**PO 3** Describe the impact of human modifications on the physical environment and ecosystems (e.g., dams, mining, air conditioning, irrigation, agricultural

### Grade 5 Strand 4 Geography Concept 2 Places and

## Other Arizona Standards

### Social Studies

#### Grade 4

### Strand 1 American History Westward Expansion

**PO 4** Describe the impact of Native Americans, Hispanics, and newcomers from the US and the world on the culture of Arizona (art, language architecture, mining, ranching).

### ELA Common Core Standards

#### Reading

#### Literature

#### Key Ideas and Details

**4.RL.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**4.RL.3** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

**5.RL.2** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

#### Craft and Structure

**4.RL.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

#### Writing

#### Text and Types

**4.W.2 and 5.W.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to

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### Regions

**PO 1** Describe how the following regions exemplify the concept of region as an area with unifying human or natural factors:

b. West, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest

aiding comprehension.

- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- c. Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

### Language

#### Conventions of Standard English

**AZ.4.L.1** e. Write and organize one or more paragraphs about a topic.

**AZ.5.L.1** f. Construct one or more paragraphs that contain:

- a topic sentence,
- supporting details,
- relevant information, and concluding sentences.

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

- a. Use correct capitalization.
- b. Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.
- c. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.
- d. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

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

- a. Use punctuation to separate items in a series.
- b. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence.
- c. Use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Steve?).
- d. Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works.
- e. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

## Overview

Water is a natural resource important to people, plants, and animals. How have we used this

natural resource? How have we adapted to our environment? How have we modified the environment to meet our needs?

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## Purpose

Students will learn about adaptation and modification of our desert environment through reading and discussing the book *Alejandro's Gift*.

## Materials

- The book, *Alejandro's Gift* by Richard E. Albert
- Paper, pencil
- Teacher Question/Answers for guided reading
- Graphic Organizer for newspaper story
- Sample news story
- Rubric for scoring the newspaper article
- Vocabulary Sheet

## Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Use strategies such as making inferences and predictions, summarizing, paraphrasing, differentiating fact from opinion and drawing conclusions to comprehend text.
2. Analyze selections of fiction by identifying the plot line, distinguishing the main character, describing relationships between characters, and making inferences about the events, setting, and meaning of the selection.
3. Write a summary that presents information clearly and accurately containing the most significant details using correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage.
4. Describe how people adapt to the environment and can modify the desert environment without causing harm.

## Procedures

*Students should have had experience writing a news story before step #7.*

### SESSION ONE

1. Introduce vocabulary: *natural resources, adaptation, modification, and physical environment.*

2. Read *Alejandro's Gift*.

3. Discuss the story using the focused questions found on *Teacher Question and Answer Sheet*.

4. Brainstorm facts about the desert and water based on the story.

### SESSION TWO

5. Have students write three sentences that are facts related to desert or water or animals or people based on the story, which can be used in a news article.

6. Review the five Ws used in writing a news story.

7. Have students write a story for the school newspaper reporting what Alejandro did to adapt to the desert and to modify the environment.

## Assessment

The students' news articles summarizing *Alejandro's Gift* will be assessed using a rubric that focuses on ideas, conventions, organization and geography content. Mastery will be considered an average of 4 or higher. Reading is informally assessed through discussion questions.

## Extensions

Students can draw a picture or pictures that could be used in the newspaper with the article. They could write captions to accompany the pictures.

Students could compare what Alejandro did for his community to what a person in a town, city, or state might need to do for his or her community.

Use a digital camera to take pictures in the desert that shows how people have modified the environment for people or animals. Write captions for the pictures. Develop a PowerPoint presentation or slide show to share the pictures.

## Sources

Albert, R. E. (1994). *Alejandro's Gift*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. ISBN 0-8118-1342-8