

Grand Canyon: Exploring a Natural Wonder

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Grade Level	2
Duration	2-4 class periods

National Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Element 1: 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 2: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places.

AZ Standards

ELA

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

2.W.3 Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events; include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings; use temporal words to signal event order and provide a sense of closure.

Production and Distribution of Writing

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

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

2.W.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
development of main ideas or themes.

Arizona Social Studies Standards

GEOGRAPHY

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

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

Overview

The Grand Canyon is one of the most visited Wonders of the World and is a national park in the United States. One book that shares the beauty of the park is ***Grand Canyon Exploring a Natural Wonder***. From this book, students can learn what distinctive characteristics are found at the Grand Canyon.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will explore the Grand Canyon through the visual diary of the author. They will learn about the habitat of the animals and plants that live there. Then they will make a visual and

written diary of their own as they take a trip around their school.

Materials

- *Grand Canyon: Exploring a Natural Wonder* by Wendell Minor, The Blue Sky Press 1998, ISBN 0- 590-47968-7 Hardcover.
- Clipboards (optional)
- Digital cameras for student use or classroom volunteers with cell phones
- Arizona's Topography and Rivers map

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. create a journal or diary

2. write a story with a beginning, middle and end to describe their school
3. present their diary to the class
4. describe the Grand Canyon

Procedures

Several days prior to doing this lesson, take pictures of ordinary classroom activities. Post or project these for use in Session Two.

For Session Three, it would be nice to have 4-5 classroom volunteers who have cell phones to come to class and use their cell phone cameras to take images for the diaries.

SESSION ONE

1. Project the Arizona's Topography and Rivers map and locate the Colorado River and Grand Canyon. Explain where the Colorado River begins and ends. Show where the Grand Canyon and the national park are located. Ask how many students have been to see the Grand Canyon. Have students share their observations.
2. Read the book *Grand Canyon: Exploring a Natural Wonder* projecting the pictures with the text. Point out that this is a diary or journal of the author's trip with beautiful hand-drawn pictures. Explain that a diary is written in the first person because it is telling what the author did. The author says "I did this" or "I saw this". Explain that the drawings are water-colored sketches that he made while visiting the canyon area.
3. Re-read the book and this time have the students write down words (either from the text or from the pictures) to describe the Grand Canyon. Then have the students write at least 5 descriptions of the Grand Canyon in complete sentences.

SESSION TWO

1. Have students do a gallery walk of the pictures posted or project the images you have taken. Have students share what they remember about that day and the activity. Summarize this as a visual diary of a day in the classroom. Assign different pictures to different groups of students and have them write sentences describing the activity in their image and then post/project these sentences with the image.

SESSION THREE AND FOUR

1. Remind the students of the diary they created as a group. Tell the students that their assignment is to take a trip around the school for fifteen minutes with a digital camera. They are to document their trip as the author did. They will need to take at least 5 pictures of the sights they see and write about these sights on the paper attached to the clipboard.
2. Go over the criteria for the diary. The groups should record: what the picture is and what they were thinking of when they took the picture remembering to write in the first person. Remind the groups that their assignment is to document their trip they took around the school so someone else could repeat the same trip or route as well as understand why the picture was important to be included in the diary. Divide students into groups and assign classroom volunteers to each group or give each group a camera.
3. Return to classroom and print off the pictures.
4. Have students share their diaries to their classmates.

Assessment

The mastery criteria for the **writing** assignment is:

- 5 pictures of sights on the campus (5 pts)
- Complete sentences explaining why each picture meant something to the authors/photographers (5 pts)
- Used "We" in their sentences (5 pts)
- Recounted orally their experience in an organized manner.
- Sentences were grammatically correct.

The sentences about the Grand Canyon or their trip around school can be graded for accuracy and given a **geography** score.

Extensions

Have students research another national park and make a journal of a pretend trip to the park including images with captions.

Sources

Minor, Wendell, *Grand Canyon: Exploring a Natural Wonder*, Blue Sky Press, 1998, ISBN 0-590-47968-7