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

Through body movements and riddles, students learn about basic landforms and bodies of water.

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Grade Level: 1-2
Duration: 2 class periods

National Geography Standards
ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS
4. The physical and human characteristics of places.

ELEMENT THREE: PHYSICAL SYSTEMS
7. The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth’s surface.

Arizona Geography Strand
Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms
Grade 1
PO 4 Recognize characteristics of human and physical features:
   a. physical (i.e., continent, ocean, river, lake, mountains, islands)

Grade 2
PO 5 Recognize characteristics of human and physical features:
   a. physical (i.e., ocean, continent, river, lake, mountain range, coast, sea, desert)

Concept 2 Places and Regions
Grade 1
PO 2 Discuss physical features in the world (e.g., mountains, rivers, deserts)

Grade 2
PO 3 Discuss physical features in the world (e.g., mountains, rivers, deserts)

Other Arizona Standards
ELA Common Core Standards
Writing
Production and Distribution of Writing
1.W.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
2.W.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

Language
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.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
1.L.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).
2.L.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe (e.g., When other kids are happy that makes me happy).
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Overview

Young children need to 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 (places and regions and physical systems). This lesson integrates body movements with drawing and writing while building on the children's growing linguistic abilities.

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

Materials

- 45 slips of paper - 5 slips for each term: mountain, hill, plateau, plain, river valley, island, ocean, lake, river (See student files that accompany this lesson)
- Writing paper
- Riddle Checklist (See student files that accompany this lesson)
- Physical Features Assessment (See student files that accompany this lesson)
- Be prepared to make simple sketches of the landforms and bodies of water. See the student sample for ideas. You could also gather magazine or calendar pictures of the geographic features.

Objectives

The student will be able to:

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

Procedures

SESSION ONE – 30-45 minutes

Prepare in advance:
- Large sketch paper and markers
- Chart paper or chalkboard space for writing riddle
- Container labeled LANDFORMS with landform paper slips inside
- Container labeled BODIES OF WATER with water paper slips inside
- Copies of Riddle Checklist for each child

1. Say, “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. Say, "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 in our geography studies, we'll all understand exactly what we mean."

3. Say, “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, you show what it looks like.” (Name one feature at a time. Point to your labeled sketches as you name. 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 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

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

LAKE – several children link hands and form smaller body of water; children can move to form round or long lake shapes
RIVER – move hand and arm in flowing path; lay down and move whole body in flowing motion

4. Say, “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)

5. Say, “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).

6. Say, “You can use this Riddle Checklist to help you remember what to include as you write your riddles.” (Distribute and review the Riddle Checklist).

7. Say, “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. When children complete one riddle, have them pick a second slip of paper from the container labeled BODIES OF WATER).

8. 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.

9. Allow necessary time for children to complete two riddles each. One idea: have children complete their riddles during your next scheduled writing time.

SESSION TWO – 30 minutes

Prepare in advance:
• Two riddles (written by children) for each landform and body of water, separated into two complete sets

Physical Features Assessment

1. Say, “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. Say, “Now you will show me in another way that you understand what these landforms and bodies of water are.” (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).

Assessment

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

Students will have punctuation and capitalization correctly done. Mastery will be considered 100%.

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

More advanced writers/readers can complete riddles for other landforms and bodies of water generated by students during sketching activity, for example: canyon, peninsula, stream, or gulf.

They can read each other’s riddles and sketch the landform or body of water.

During computer lab session, children can use a basic software drawing program (Kid Pix, McPaint) to sketch landscape and label physical features.
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


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

ENCHANTED LEARNING's site presents a series of activities to reinforce knowledge of landforms and bodies of water. Go to: [http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/landforms/glossary.shtml](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/landforms/glossary.shtml)