



The Gift of Water: Modifying Our Environment

Author
Grade Level
Duration

Barbara Post
3-4
1-2 class periods

National Standards

Element 2: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places

Element 5: 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

AZ Standards

ELA

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

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.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

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).

Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing

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

4.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

3.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

j. Write one or more paragraphs that explain a main idea within a topic and support it with details and conclusions/closure.

4.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

h. Write and organize one or more paragraphs that contain: a topic sentence,

Arizona Social Science Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Human-environment interactions are essential aspects of human life in all societies.

3.G2.1 Explain how people modify and adapt to the Arizona environment. Key concepts include but are not limited to modification and adaptation of the environment by Paleo-Indians, Prehistoric-Indians, explorers, settlers, farmers, immigrants, migrants, and the 22 Arizona Indian Nations, and the use of Arizona's natural resources.

Human-environment interactions are essential aspects of human life in all societies.

4.G2.1 Compare the diverse ways people or groups of people have impacted, modified, or adapted to the environment of the Americas. Key concepts include but are not limited to disease, farming, family structure, housing, cultural assimilation, cultural amalgamation, climate, transportation, domestication of animals, clothing, recreation, and utilization of renewable and non-renewable natural resources

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supporting details, and a conclusion that is appropriate to the writing task.

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

a. Capitalize appropriate words in titles.

c. Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.

d. Form and use possessives.

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.

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?

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
- Teacher Question/Answer Sheet for guided reading
- Graphic Organizer for Newspaper Story
- Sample News Story
- Rubric for 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

Prerequisite Knowledge: Students should have had experience writing a newspaper article 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/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

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based on the story, which can be used in a newspaper 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

ELA and Geography

The students' news articles summarizing *Alejandro's Gift* will be assessed using the Rubric for Newspaper Article that focuses on ideas, conventions, organization and geography content. Mastery will be considered an average of 4 or higher.

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.

Have students bring or take pictures in the desert that show how people have modified the environment for people or animals. Instruct the students to write captions for the pictures.

Have students create a mural illustrating the waterhole and its desert creatures.

Sources

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