



# The Gift of Water: Modifying Our Environment

**Author** Barbara Post  
**Grade Level** 3-4  
**Duration** 4 class periods

**ELL Adaptation by** Wayne Gorry

## National Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

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

## 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

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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.

utilization of renewable and non-renewable natural resources

SIOP Elements		
<b>Preparation</b> Adapting content Linking to background Linking to past learning Strategies used	<b>Scaffolding</b> Modeling Guided practice Independent practice Comprehensible input	<b>Grouping Option</b> Whole class Small groups Partners Independent
<b>Integrating Processes</b> Reading Writing Speaking Listening	<b>Application</b> Hands on Meaningful Linked to objectives Promotes engagement	<b>Assessment</b> Individual Group Written Oral

### Arizona ELP Standards

#### Grade 3

##### Basic

##### Listening and Reading

Standard 1 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.

B-1: ask and answer questions by using evidence from a text.

B-2: determine the central topic or message.

B-3: identify key details that support the main idea or message.

Standard 2 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.

B-1: determine the meaning of frequently occurring academic and content-specific words and phrases.

##### Speaking and Writing

Standard 3 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can speak and write about grade appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.

B-2: compose written narratives using appropriate conventions that include details to develop a topic.

#### Grade 4

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## Basic

### Listening and Reading

Standard 1 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.

B-1: determine the central idea (in informational text) and theme (in literary text) and explain how they are supported by key details.

B-2: recount a text including specific details and information.

Standard 2 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.

B-1: determine the meaning of frequently occurring academic and content-specific words and phrases.

### Speaking and Writing

Standard 3 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can speak and write about grade appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.

B-2: compose written narratives using appropriate conventions that include details to develop a topic.

B-5: use examples of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary within informative texts.

## 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*. This lesson contains adaptations for diverse learners (ELLs).

## Materials

- The book, *Alejandro's Gift* by Richard E. Albert or project YouTube Video (12.57 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMIU4ITMQ>  
[Lw](#)
- Teacher Question/Answer Sheet for guided reading
- Graphic Organizer for a Newspaper Story
- Sample News Story
- Rubric for a Newspaper Article
- Vocabulary Cards
- The Gift of Water PowerPoint
- Computer and Projection Device

## 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. Project the Gift of Water PowerPoint (all but the last slide) to introduce the vocabulary for the lesson. **(Scaffolding: Comprehensible Input)** Spend some time discussing the photos of different natural resources so students understand how they are used in our society. As vocabulary words are discussed, post the Vocabulary Cards on the Word Wall.
2. After reviewing the vocabulary, assign each student a partner. **(Grouping: Partners)** For slides 7-10 of the PowerPoint, have the students discuss the answers to the questions with their partners. After they have shared with their

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partners, call on a few students to share their answers. **(Scaffolding: Guided Practice, Integration of Listening and Speaking, Application: Meaningful, Linked to objectives, Promotes engagement)**

- Project slides 11-16. At slide 13, describe to the students some of the things you cherish. **(Scaffolding: Modeling)** Ask the partners to share with each other the things they cherish. In the same fashion discuss the other slides (sharing something that might make you hesitate, be lonely, or that you find to be drudgery). **(Preparation: Linking to Background)**
- Project and read the book, *Alejandro's Gift*, to the class. Prior to reading, ask students to listen carefully to learn how Alejandro uses natural resources and how he makes a modification to his environment. **(Application: Promotes Engagement, Grouping: Whole Class)**
- Discuss the story using the focused questions found on the *Teacher Question and Answer Sheet*. Pertinent pages in the book can be shown to the students to help them recall answers to the questions. **(Preparation: Adapting Content)**
- List some of the natural resources mentioned in the story on the whiteboard.

### SESSION TWO

*Prior to Session Two, create a sketch of a desert setting with very few details and an outline of Alejandro on a large piece of butcher paper.*

- Display the butcher paper sketch. Explain that this is the natural environment without many changes or modifications.
- Go over the whiteboard items from Session One about the natural resources that were described in the story. Talk about what other modifications were made by Alejandro. **(Preparation: Linking to Past Learning)**
- Explain that they will be enhancing or adding to the mural. Allow time for the students to gather, cut from magazines, or draw items that were reflective of the story and would make the mural more like the story. These items should be labeled. **(Application: Hands on)**
- As students are adding their enhancements to the mural, have them practice their academic vocabulary. **(Integrating Processes: Speaking)**
  - Where would soil go? Students who have soil would place them on the mural and say "soil."
  - Where would the plants go?
  - Where would Alejandro build his pond?
  - Where would the animals go?
  - What else could we add?

### SESSION THREE

- Begin this session by having different students narrate the mural by having them name and describe the items that have enhanced the mural.
- Review the idea of what is a natural resource and how they can be modified.
- Distribute a blank sheet of paper to each student. Have them fold it in half (Hamburger Fold). Write the words Natural Resource and Modification on the board and ask students to use the words as the captions for the two sides of their paper. Show slide 17 of the power point presentation as an example of what the assessment should look like. **(Scaffolding: Modeling)**
- Instruct them to draw a picture of a natural resource that is found in their community on one side. On the other side ask them to draw an illustration of a modification to the environment where they live. Students can be asked to write a one or two sentence description of their illustration. **(Assessment: Written, Application: Linked to objectives, Assessment: Individual)**

### SESSION FOUR

- Distribute the Graphic Organizer for a Newspaper Story to students. Explain that they are going to write a story like newspaper reporters do and use something called the 5 Ws. Have students partner and work together to answer the 5 Ws about *Alejandro's Gift*. Project and explain the Rubric for a Newspaper Article so students understand how the assignment will be graded. Share the Student Example if you wish. Then, have students individually write a newspaper story.

## Assessment

### ELA and Geography

The news articles can be assessed using the Rubric for a Newspaper Article. Mastery will be considered an average of 3 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

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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