



# So That the Desert Can Blossom Like a Rose: Agriculture in the Desert

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**Grade Level** 3  
**Duration** 1 class period

## National Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

#### Element 4: Human Systems

9. The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human population on Earth's surface.

12. The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

#### Element 5; Environment and Society

14. How human actions modify the physical environment.

## AZ Standards

### ELA

#### Reading

##### 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.

##### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

3.RI.10 B By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 3.

#### Writing

##### Language

##### Conventions of Standard English

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

- Capitalize appropriate words in titles.
- Use commas in addresses.
- Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.
- Form and use possessives.

## Arizona Social Science Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

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

3.G1.1 Use and construct maps and graphs to represent changes in Arizona over time. Key concepts include but are not limited to locating physical features including the Grand Canyon, Mogollon Rim, Colorado River, Salt River, Gila River. Key concepts include but are not limited to locating human features including major cities, counties, Hoover Dam, Roosevelt Dam, and state capital. Key concepts include but are not limited to distinct physical and cultural characteristics of Arizona including landforms, the 5C's, climate zones, elevations, plants, animals, Arizona's 22 Indian Nations, diverse ethnic, racial, and religious cultures.

**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.

**Examining human population and movement helps individuals understand past, present, and future conditions on Earth's surface.**

3.G3.1 Describe the movement of people in and out of Arizona over time. Key concepts include but are not limited to factors contributing to settlement, economic development, growth of major cities, major economic activities, and land use patterns.

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### HISTORY

The development of civilizations, societies, cultures, and innovations have influenced history and continue to impact the modern world.

3.H1.1 Utilize a variety of sources to construct a historical narrative exploring Arizona's cultures, civilizations, and innovations.

Key concepts include but are not limited to impact of prehistoric peoples, Native Americans, Latinx, African Americans, Asian Americans, and newcomers from the United States and world on art, language, architecture, mining, agriculture, and innovations Influential individuals and groups in the history and development of Arizona

### Overview

By reading the story, *The Year of the Ranch*, students will understand that some families moved to the desert around Yuma, Arizona to farm the land. They will learn that these farmers modified their environment by using the waters of the Colorado and Gila Rivers to irrigate their crops.

### Purpose

Students will learn about one reason for historical migration into Arizona by summarizing the story of a family's year on a ranch.

### Materials

- *The Year of the Ranch* by Alice McLerran. Viking, Penguin Groups, New York, 1996. ISBN 0-670-85131-0
- Arizona Topography map
- Teacher Guided Questions sheet
- The Year of the Ranch Student Assessment and Answer Key

### Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Identify a reason for migration to Yuma, Arizona.
- Explain how farmers around Yuma modified a natural resource to water their crops.
- Locate the city of Yuma and the Colorado and Gila Rivers on a map of Arizona.
- Summarize information from a story read to them.

### Procedures

1. Read the story *The Year of the Ranch* aloud to the students.
2. As you read, ask the questions on the Teacher Guided Questions Sheet to develop the geographic concepts.
3. Show students the location of the Gila River, Colorado River, and Yuma on a map of Arizona.
4. Give students the assessment.

### Assessment

**Reading** can be assessed using Items 2, 3, and 4 on the student assessment.

**Geography** can be assessed using Items 1 and 5 on the student assessment.

**Writing** can be assessed by the questions needing sentences for answers.

Mastery will be considered 80% or higher on the reading and geography assessment questions. Sentences can be graded for fluency and conventions,

### Extensions

Students can identify other locations in Arizona that were settled for reasons of agriculture.

Include identifying the source of water for the agriculture. Is it irrigated from a river?

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Students research if agriculture is still an important industry in Yuma today and identify the types of crops that are raised there.

Papa was busy trying to get Arizona to set aside money for education and colleges. The author's note mentions Arizona Western College is now near where the ranch was located. Students can research

the history of Arizona Western College at <http://www.azwestern.edu/>

### Sources

*The Year of the Ranch* by Alice McLerran. Viking, Penguin Groups, New York, 1996. ISBN 0-670-85131-0