



# *The Desert is Theirs:* Adapting to Our Environment

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**Grade Level** 3  
**Duration** 3 class periods

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## 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.  
15. How physical systems affect human systems.

## AZ Standards

### ELA

#### Reading

#### Key Ideas and Details

**3.RI.2** Determine the main idea of a text; recount and paraphrase the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

**3.RI.7** Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

#### 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

## 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.

**Global interconnections and spatial patterns are a necessary part of geographical reasoning.**

**3.G4.1** Describe how Arizona has changed over time.

### 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.

**Economic, political, and religious ideas and institutions have influenced history and continue to shape the modern world.**

**3.H3.2** Use primary and secondary sources to analyze the changes that have taken place in Arizona which could include the use of current events.

## The Desert is Theirs: Adapting to Our Environment

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

Arizona ELP Standards
<b>Grade 3</b> <b>Basic</b> <b>Listening and Reading</b> 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. <b>Speaking and Writing</b> 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-4: produce writing with appropriate organization on a variety of topics, experiences, or events using sentence frames.

### Overview

Using the book, *The Desert is Theirs* by Byrd Baylor, students will come to understand how humans and animals, both ancient and modern, adapt to their environments.

### Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn that where we live influences how we live. This lesson included adaptations for diverse learners (ELLs).

### Key Vocabulary

**desert** – an area that gets less than 10 inches of rain a year

**adapt** – to fit with or work with environment

**ancient people** – people who lived long ago

**descriptive words** – words that describe something to make it visual

**habitat** – the natural environment that encompasses all of the elements needed to survive

### Materials

- Images of Cliff Dwellings
- Images of Hohokam Irrigation
- Images of Adobe
- *The Desert is Theirs* by Byrd Baylor
- Drawing paper and crayons/colored pencils
- Story Checklist

### Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Determine how environment affects the way people live.
- Analyze locations for a home.

# The Desert is Theirs: Adapting to Our Environment

## Procedures

*Prerequisite learning: Students know that Arizona has various landscapes (mountains, desert, plateaus). This could be a culminating lesson after studying the ancient people of Arizona.*

1. Begin the lesson by projecting the images of cliff dwellings, Hohokam Irrigation and Adobe. For each image have students identify what resources are being used in the environment. **(Preparation: Linking to past learning)**

2. Review the lesson's vocabulary words by projecting and discussing the Vocabulary Cards. Give students who may need them a copy of the cards.

3. Spend a little extra time reviewing descriptive words. Give an example of an apple, pencil, the sun etc., and have them call out words that describe them. Go through the five senses to make sure they see how many different descriptors will help create a visual picture.

4. Create a chart as they list the words under the five categories (touch, sight, hearing, taste, smell). As you read the story continue to add to the list of descriptive words so they have a word bank that they will then use later. **(Preparation: Linking to background, Scaffolding: Comprehensible input; Grouping: Whole class)**

5. Project and read the story *The Desert is Theirs* by Byrd Baylor. Be sure to also project the illustrations as well. **(Integrating Processes: Listening, Scaffolding: Comprehensible input)**

6. Ask these questions about the story:

- Why do you think Byrd Baylor wrote this book?
- What words does the author use to describe the desert?
- Do you think people still make decisions about where they live because of what is around them?
- Can you tell what the author thinks about the desert by what she writes?
- Thinking back to what we have learned about the ancient people of Arizona, how did they use their environment to build houses?
- What kinds of things do you think are different between the way people live today from the way people lived in the past?

**(Application: Promotes engagement, Linked to Objectives)**

7. Have students think about what it would take in terms of natural resources and make them feel to live in one of the following Arizona environments.

- If I lived in the mountain area of Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I lived by a lake in Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I lived in a cave in Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I lived far from other people in Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I lived in the center of a city in Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I lived in a tree in Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I lived in the desert area of Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If I lived in the plateau area of Arizona, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ETC
8. Have the students select one Arizona landscape and illustrate a detailed picture of them living there. Include the environment, their home and adaptations to the environment. **(Application: Meaningful, Linked to objectives; Grouping: Independent)**
9. Have students write a narrative about their picture. They should describe the area in detail using words from the word bank and/or additional descriptive words they come up with. They should check their work by using the student checklist to make sure this is their best effort. **(Integrating Processes: Writing; Application: Linked to objectives, Assessment: Written, Individual)**
10. Share or display students' stories and pictures.

## Assessment

### ELA and Social Science

The drawing and narrative can be scored using the six-trait writing rubric for voice, conventions, and ideas/content. Mastery will be considered a score of 4 or higher on the rubric.

## Extensions

Students can pretend to be a child from one of the ancient tribes and write a poem or story describing their environment or landscape around them.

Students can locate their home on a map of Arizona's Topography and Rivers.

<https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZTOPO.PDF>

## Sources

Baylor, B. (1981). *The Desert is Theirs*. New York: Simon and Schuster. ISBN 06897110