



## Theme: Animals (Grades 3-5)

### Pre-Visit Activity #1

### Desert Adaptations – Match Game

#### Overview:

Students will understand that animals survive in the desert due to their **adaptations**. Just like desert plants, many animals have adapted their bodies and changed their habits to beat the heat or to find food, water, shelter, and protection from predators.

#### Objectives:

- Students will examine animal adaptations in the Mojave Desert.
- Students will be able to explain and demonstrate animal adaptations in the Mojave Desert.

#### Materials:

- Index cards

#### Activity:

1. Assign one Mojave Desert animal per student. Hand out one blank index card to each student. Have the students write the name of the animal or insect on one side of the index card.

#### Some animals that are found at the Springs Preserve:

|                  |                          |               |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Gila Monster     | Desert Tortoise          | Tarantula     |
| Lizard           | Big Horn Sheep           | Scorpion      |
| Gray Fox         | Kangaroo Rat             | Brown Recluse |
| Bobcat           | Cottontail Rabbit        | Black Widow   |
| Sidewinder Snake | Pocket Mouse             | Centipede     |
| Pallid Bats      | Antelope Ground Squirrel | Dragon Fly    |
| Mallard Duck     | Red Tailed Hawk          | Gopher        |

2. The students will do research online or at the library to find two adaptations that their animal has in order to survive in the desert. They are to write the adaptations on the other side of the index card. *Please note they are not to use the animal's name in the explanation of the adaptation.*
3. Have the students turn in their index cards to begin the "Match Game." The goal of the game is to match the adaptation to the animal – you may leave the

list of animals on the board. To make it more challenging, you could include more animals.

4. Divide the class into two groups.
5. Mix the cards up and read out the first adaptation. To prevent groups from yelling out, you could assign one group to go first.
6. Each group may make only one guess per turn. If the first group can match the animal to the adaptation, they get a point. If they can't or are incorrect, the other group may try to make the match and earn a point.
7. The game ends when all of the animals have been matched. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

### **Conclusion:**

Review the animals and their adaptations and why it is so important to be able to adapt in order to survive in our desert with very little water and a great deal of heat.

Conclude with reading the book, *How Jackrabbit Got His Very Long Ears* by Heather Irbinskas.

### **Suggested Reading:**

1. *Alejandro's Gift* by Richard E. Albert. A lonely man living in the desert builds an oasis to attract the desert animals around him. Inspires children's appreciation for the desert's beauty.
2. *Desert Voices* by Byrd Baylor, Peter Parnall. Readers are given messages about the beautiful desert and its animals through text and illustrations.
3. *Draw Desert Animals* by Doug DuBosque. Inspires creative kids to draw animals like the ones they see in Desert Discovery.
4. *How Jackrabbit Got His Very Long Ears* by Heather Irbinskas. Jackrabbit learns about the traits of many different animals in the desert and how they use them
5. *Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children* by Joseph Bruchac, Michael J. Caduto. A rich collection of uplifting Native American stories and creative nature activities.
6. *Listen to the Desert/Oye al Desierto* by Pat Mora. A very simple text, with each line repeated twice in English plus twice in Spanish, becomes a rhythmic, lyrical bilingual chant suggesting the onomatopoeic powers of both tongues.
7. *The Desert Is Theirs* by Byrd Baylor. This beautifully illustrated 1976 Caldecott Honor Book depicts animal life and adaptations in the desert.
8. *Voices from the Wild* by David Bouchard. This winner of a 1997 Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award features poems about how animals use their senses.