



Theme: Animals (Grades K-2)

Pre-Visit Activity #2 Animal Powers

Overview:

The students will learn about desert animal adaptations.

Objectives:

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

Materials:

- Clothespins
- Pieces of tan felt
- A few wooden spoons or dowels
- A hand rake
- A sun visor with two large googly eyes glued to it
- A swimmer's nose plug
- Small sponges

Activity:

1. Have a student come up to the front of the class as a volunteer.
2. Take each item out of the "Desert Box" one at a time and explain and do the following:
 - Tan felt represents camouflage in a desert animal. Desert animals are often a subdued color such as tan because the color helps them blend in with many of the desert shrubs. Using a clothespin, attach the piece of tan felt to a child's clothing.
 - Long limbs enable animals to keep their bodies off hot surfaces. Hand a wooden spoon or dowel to a child to hold to represent these long limbs.
 - Many desert animals use their sharp claws to help them burrow underground to get away from the scorching heat. Hand a child the hand rake.
 - Many desert animals are nocturnal and have large eyes to help them see at night. Have a child wear the visor with the large googly eyes.

- Many desert creatures have modified physical structures to help keep sand out of their nose, mouth, eyes and ears. Have a child wear the swimmer's nose plug.
 - Desert animals have to store water in their bodies so that they don't dehydrate in the hot desert climate. Attach a sponge to a child's clothing to represent water conservation and storage.
3. You may choose to do inquiry based questions throughout the activity.
 4. At the end of the activity you may choose to have students draw a picture of an animal with adaptations.

Suggested Reading:

1. ***A Tomas the Tortoise Adventure—One Hot Day*** by Mike Miller. Readers join Tomas the Tortoise as he travels from Red Rock to Lake Mead, meeting many of his desert friends along the way.
2. ***Meet the Wild Southwest*** by Susan J. Tweit. Provides many different facts about plants and animals of the Southwest.
3. ***Kissing Coyotes*** by Marcia Vaughan, Kenneth J. Spence. Readers get a glimpse of different desert animals as Jackrabbit brags about his bravery.
4. ***My Five Senses*** by Aliki. Learn more about how you use your own senses.
5. ***The Magic School Bus: All Dried Up*** by Joanna Cole. Mrs. Frizzle's class learns about desert animals.
6. ***Animal Senses*** by Janine Scott. Readers learn about how animals use their senses.
7. ***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.
8. ***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.
9. ***The Desert Is Theirs*** by Byrd Baylor. This beautifully illustrated 1976 Caldecott Honor Book depicts animal life and adaptations in the desert.
10. ***Draw Desert Animals*** by Doug DuBosque. Inspires creative kids to draw animals like the ones they see in Desert Discovery.