Reading the Coyote School News

Students learn about the lives of ranchers in Southern Arizona and the many customs Americans have borrowed from Mexico by reading the book *Coyote School News*.

**Author**
Carol Carney Warren

**Grade Level**
4

**Duration**
2 -3 class periods

**National Geography Standards**

**ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS**
1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

**ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS**
6. How culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions.

**Arizona Geography Strand**

**Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms**
Grade 4
PO 7. Locate physical and human features in Arizona using maps, illustrations or images.

**Concept 2: Places and Regions**
PO 1. Describe how the Southwest has distinct physical and cultural characteristics.
PO 2. Describe ways in which Arizona has changed over time from statehood to today.

**Concept 4: Human Systems**
PO 2. Describe how Mexico and Arizona are connected by movement of people, goods, and ideas.
PO 4. Describe the cultural characteristics of Arizona’s diverse population.

**Other Standards**

**Language Arts**
**Reading**
Grade 4 Strand 1: Reading Process
Concept 6: Comprehension Strategies
PO 4. Use graphic organizers in order to clarify the meaning of the text.
PO 6. Use reading strategies (e.g., drawing conclusions, determining cause and effect, making inferences, sequencing) to comprehend text.

**Strand 2: Comprehending Literary Text**
Concept 2: Historical and Cultural Aspects of Literature
PO 1. Describe the historical and cultural aspects found in cross-cultural works of literature.

**Writing**
Grade 4 Strand 3: Writing Applications
Concept 1: Expressive
PO 1. Write a narrative based on imagined or real events, observations, or memories.

**Social Studies**
Strand 1: American History
Concept 10: Contemporary United States
PO 4. Discuss the contributions of diverse populations to Arizona.

**Overview**
Mexican-American ranching families practiced many wonderful and interesting customs from Mexico. Many of those customs are a part of American life today. It is important for students to recognize the many cultural contributions made by Mexican-Americans to the ranching industry and to American life today.

**Purpose**
In this lesson students will practice mapping skills while exploring the legacy of the Mexican culture to the occupation of ranching and to American life today.
Materials

- Coyote School News by Joan Sandin – 1 book per student or small group of students
- Gadsden Purchase Map - 1 per student and teacher projection
- Student worksheets – Arizona and Mexico and Customs from Mexico – 1 per student
- rulers

Objectives
The student will be able to:

1. Locate the Gadsden Purchase on a map of Arizona.
2. Measure distance using a scale on a map of Arizona.
3. List cultural items and customs from Mexico.
4. Describe the events of a roundup in correct sequence.
5. Write a newspaper article about an event at their school.

Procedures

SESSION ONE
1. Anticipatory Set - Ask children to think of examples of life in America today that they believe came from Mexico or the Mexican culture. List examples on the board or chart paper. Explain that they will be reading a story that has examples of cultural ideas borrowed from Mexico that they can compare to their list.
2. Discuss how immigrants to America bring with them many customs from their homelands. They continue to practice these customs after they become American citizens. Through the years, some of these customs (such as the examples they mentioned) have become part of our daily lives in America.
3. Hand out the student worksheet, Arizona and Mexico, and the Gadsden Purchase Map. Explain how Arizona once belonged to Mexico and have students read about how it became a part of the United States.
4. Have students locate the Gadsden Purchase on the map. Tell them they will be reading a story about children who live on ranches in this part of Arizona. The children attend a school that is near the town of Amado, Arizona. Have them locate Amado on the map of Arizona. Using rulers and the map scale, have students answer the three questions on the worksheet. Then have students shade in the Gadsden Purchase area according to the directions on the worksheet.
5. Review with students that these ranch families practiced many customs from Mexico and as they read the story they will identify customs and ideas that come from the Mexican culture.

6. Hand out the student worksheet, Customs from Mexico, and review directions before reading the story. The story can be read together or individually as desired. The story may be read in two segments as your time allows. (1 – 2 class periods as desired by the teacher.)

7. After reading, review with students the many jobs and activities on a ranch which came from ranches in Mexico. The roundup is a very important time on a cattle ranch. Reread pages 38 – 40, which tell about the roundup. Using the Arizona and Mexico worksheet, have students put the events of the roundup in the order in which they occurred in the story. They may refer to the pages as they do the exercise. Collect worksheets for assessment.

8. End the session by reviewing the students’ original list and additional customs from Mexico learned from reading Coyote School News.

SESSION TWO
9. Review what students recall from reading Coyote School News. Be sure they include that the children wrote stories about their school for the “Coyote News.”
10. Have students discuss possible subjects they might write about if they had a class newspaper. List ideas on the board or a chart.
11. Have students choose a subject and write an article about their class for a class newspaper. They could use an idea from the class discussion or another of their own. They should use the 5 steps in the writing process and correct mechanics of writing.
12. Publish the students’ writing in a newspaper format.

Assessment

The students’ map work can be assessed for social studies. 1 point is given for coloring the Gadsden Purchase and 3 points for the map scale exercise. 75% is considered mastery.

Reading can be assessed with the graphic organizer and the sequencing activity. 12 points are possible for the graphic organizer. 5 points are possible for sequencing. 80% is considered mastery.

Writing can be assessed for mechanics using the 6-trait rubric.
**Extensions**

Visit the site [http://cowpuncher.library.arizona.edu/](http://cowpuncher.library.arizona.edu/) for information on the school, the teacher and the newspapers written by children in southern Arizona from 1932 to 1943. Share the information with your students.

Share another Arizona ranching story with students, *The Year of the Ranch*, by Alice McLerran. ISBN 0-670-85131-0 This is the story of a family’s year on a ranch outside of Yuma, AZ. It tells of a town family's ranch experience as Papa tries to make the desert “bloom like a rose.” Although the title states a ranch, it is an agricultural, not a cattle ranch.

Share the childhood story of Sandra Day O’Connor on her family’s ranch in Southeastern Arizona with *Chico*. ISBN 0-525-47452-8

There is information about how ranch children played in the *Arizona Territorial Cookbook: The Food and Lifestyles of a Frontier* by Melissa Ruffner Weiner. ISBN 0-89865-312-6


**Sources**