When is a Desert Not a Desert? The Varying Landscapes of Arizona

Students learn about the varying landscapes in Arizona. They learn that Arizona is not just a desert.

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Grade Level
4-5
Duration
Two class periods

National Geography Standards
ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS
4. The physical and human characteristics of places.

Arizona Geography Strand 4
CONCEPT 1
World in Spatial Terms
GRADE 4
PO 4 Construct charts and graphs to display geographic information.
GRADE 5
PO 6 Construct maps, charts, and graphs to display geographic information.

CONCEPT 2
Places and Regions
GRADE 4
PO 3 Compare the landform regions of Arizona according to their physical features, plants, and animals.

Arizona Math Standard
STRAND 2 Data Analysis, Probability, and Discrete Mathematics:
CONCEPT 1 Data Analysis:
GRADE 4
PO2 Construct a single-bar graph, line graph or two-set Venn diagram with appropriate labels and title from organized data.
PO3 Interpret graphical representations and data displays including single-bar graph, circle graphs, two-set Venn diagrams, and line graphs that display continuous data.
GRADE 5
PO2 Construct a double-bar graph, line plot, frequency table, or three-set Venn diagram with appropriate labels and title from organized data.

CONCEPT 2 Probability:
GRADE 4
PO2 Describe the probability of events as being more likely, less likely, equally likely, unlikely, certain, impossible, fair or unfair.

Overview
The students will review and analyze charts describing the different biomes of Arizona. They will complete a mapping activity and a Venn diagram comparing the regions of Arizona. The students will then determine the likelihood of events happening.

Purpose
In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of the varying landscapes of Arizona and the locations of the landscapes. The students will compare the three regions according to plant life. The students will also determine the likelihood of an event happening.
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Materials
- When Is A Desert Not A Desert? reading (one copy per student or pair of students)
- When Is A Desert Not A Desert? charts (one copy per student or pair of students)
- Landform Regions of Arizona map (one per student or group of students)
- Arizona Biomes map (one per student or group of students)
- Arizona Biomes and Elevation map (one per student or group of students)
- Colored pencils
- Activity Sheet (one per student)
- Assessment Sheet (one per student)
- Rubric for the Venn diagram
- Rubric for the mapping activity

Objectives
The students will:
1. Compare the three regions of Arizona by their plant life.
2. Analyze the charts of the different biomes and answer questions about them.
3. Decide the likelihood of certain events happening.
4. Label a map with the deserts and forests found in Arizona and make comparisons about the area they cover.
5. Create a map key that labels certain plant life in the different regions.

Procedures
1. Distribute reading and chart packets. Read as a class or individually.
2. Read the charts on the different plants that are found in each biome and discuss the information. Ask questions that will encourage the students to compare the different regions and plants that each region has in common and plants that are different and why.
3. When students have finished reading, give each student or group of students a copy of the Landform Regions of Arizona map, the Arizona Biomes map, and the Activity Sheet. Have them label the specified deserts and forest, color the biomes, and locate where certain plants are found. A map key is required. The teacher should model the first part of each activity on an overhead.
4. Distribute the Assessment Sheet and have the students work individually to answer the questions.

Assessment
Rubrics for grading the mapping activity and the Venn diagram are included. The mapping activity will reflect their knowledge of geography and the Venn diagram will measure the math skills. A score of 3 or higher will be considered mastery.

On the assessment questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 will measure geography skills and questions 5-9 measures the math.

Sources