A Desert Golf Course: An Oasis for Humans and Wildlife!

Through this lesson students will locate the Sonoran Desert in the southwestern United States and tally wildlife that is attracted to a desert golf course.

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Grade Level
3

Duration
1 class period

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

Arizona Geography Strand 4
CONCEPT 5 Environment and Society
GRADE 3
PO 1 Identify ways in which humans depend upon, adapt to, and impact the earth.

Arizona Math Standard
STRAND 2 Data Analysis Probability
CONCEPT 1 Data Analysis (Statistics)
GRADE 3
PO2 Construct a horizontal bar, vertical bar, pictograph, or tally chart with appropriate labels from organized data.

Overview
The Sonoran Desert is changing due to human migration into the southwestern United States. Many new communities are being built that include outdoor activities such as desert golf courses. They provide not only a popular sport for humans but attract the nearby desert wildlife as well.

Purpose
In this lesson students will locate the Sonoran Desert and tally the wildlife that can be found at a Sonoran Desert golf course.

Materials
- Reading - "A Desert Golf Course--An Oasis for Humans and Wildlife" (may use as an overhead)
- Sonoran Desert Map
- A Sonoran Desert Golf Course Game
- Student Tally Sheet
- Student Tally Sheet Answer Key
- Desert Golf Course Student Assessment
- Desert Golf Course Student Assessment Key
- Pencils

Objectives
The student will be able to:

1. Locate the Sonoran Desert in the southwestern United States.
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2. List one reason why the desert landscape is an ideal location for a desert golf course.

3. List one reason why some people believe that humans should not build communities and outdoor activities in the Sonoran Desert.

4. Tally wildlife that is attracted to a desert golf course.

**Procedures**

Prerequisite - Geography: Students should understand cardinal and intermediate directions. (Mexico is south of Arizona and California; the Sonoran Desert is in the southwestern USA.)

Review Geography terms:
- *Oasis* – fertile spot in the desert where there is water.
- Note: desert golf courses are man-made oases, not natural oases. The desert land is irrigated to get water rather than being located naturally underground.

- *Desert* – a region that receives less than 10” of precipitation per year and has extremes in temperatures.

Prerequisite - Math: Students should have experience with tally marks.

1. Ask students what they know about golf courses.
   For example, does anyone live near a golf course? Do they know someone who plays golf? Have they played golf or miniature golf? Do they know the rules? Why do golfers use golf carts? (The distance between holes may be far and the cart is a convenience.) What kind of animals would they find on a golf course? What would be the difference between a desert golf course and a forest golf course? (The land and plant/animal habitats differ on each one.)

2. Show the map of the Sonoran Desert. This is a desert located in the southwestern USA and in the states of Arizona, California, and country of Mexico.

3. Read handout: "A Desert Golf Course--An Oasis for Humans and Wildlife!" (Can be an overhead.)

4. Handout “Sonoran Desert Golf Course Game.” Have students locate the objects listed at the left side.

   Read directions for the game and have students trace the golf ball to the end.

   (Note: the students will only trace the golf ball through 5 squares (greens). Tell them that the smallest golf green is a 9-hole green.)

5. Do the Student Tally Worksheet. Using the “Sonoran Desert Golf Course Game,” locate and tally the wildlife found on their game and answer the 5 questions at the bottom of the page.

**Assessment**

Choose one or more of the following assessments:

Complete tally worksheet and questions at bottom of page. For math skills, grade the tally. There are 5 squares worth 1 point each = 5 pts. total. Mastery for math is 4 points or higher. For geography concepts, grade the 5 questions at the bottom. Each question will be worth 1
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point each = 5 points total. Mastery for geography is 4 points or higher.

Desert Golf Assessment contains 10 multiple-choice questions:
#1-5 are geographic content
#6-10 are math content
Mastery is considered 80% or higher.

Extensions
Color and cut out the Sonoran Desert Golf Course Game to form a 6-sided cube. Fold on the broken lines, cut on the solid lines. Use when studying geometric shapes.

Desert Golf Course Map can be used as an extension activity to learn locations of desert golf courses in the “valley of the sun”.

Sources
http://www.aaaclipart.com

Photos of a desert golf course taken by the author thanks to the 500 Club Golf Course in Glendale, AZ

Golf information:
• www.azcentral/sports/golf/valleycourses.html - golf maps
• www.golfarizona.com

Wildlife Information:
• www.azgfd.com - Arizona Game and Fish Dept.