

Lesson Plan

Life in the Desert

Book: *Deserts*

Series: Landforms

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice summarizing and identifying key details in a text, including what happened and why.

Supplies

- *Deserts* book
- Whiteboard
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read the *Deserts* book, or assign it to students to read on their own. Write the following questions on the whiteboard:

- What are four ways that plants have adapted to life in the desert? How does each adaptation help the plants survive?
- What are four ways that animals have adapted to life in the desert?

Activity

To start, have students open the *Deserts* book to pages 6 and 7. Ask the following questions:

- What is a desert? (Answer: a very dry place)
- How much rain do deserts receive each year? (Answer: less than 10 inches or 25 cm)
- Are all deserts hot and sandy? (Answer: No, some are cold or have mountains.)

A desert's dry environment is not an easy place to live. But many types of plants and animals make their homes in the desert. These plants and animals have adapted to life in the harsh environment. Have students turn to Chapter 4 ("Life in the Desert"). Students should use the information in this chapter to answer the questions on the whiteboard. Students should write one paragraph about plants and one paragraph about animals. They should use complete sentences in both paragraphs.

Evaluation

Collect students' paragraphs. Use the attached answer key to give students up to 12 points.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 4 (RI 4.3) and writing standards, grade 4 (W 4.2).

Answer Key

What are four ways that plants have adapted to life in the desert? How does each adaptation help the plants survive?

Give students 1 point for each adaptation they list and 1 point for describing how it helps plants survive:

1. Plants can absorb and store water, which helps them live without rain.
2. Plants often have waxy coatings, which keeps water from evaporating from their leaves.
3. Plants often have long roots, which helps them reach water that is deep underground.
4. Plants grow far apart, which means they do not have to compete for water.

What are four ways that animals have adapted to life in the desert?

Give students 1 point for each adaptation they list:

1. They can survive with little water.
2. They get water from the food they eat.
3. They come out only at night when temperatures are cooler.
4. They hide from the sun in the shade or in holes.