



TEACHER PAGE

THE DESERT BIOME

GRADE LEVEL: 5–8 **SUBJECTS:** Science, Visual Arts **DURATION:** Three 40-minute class periods
NATIONAL STANDARDS: Science, Standard 3: Life science; Visual Arts, Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
MATERIALS: Reference materials about a desert biome, colored paper, scissors, felt-tip markers, other art supplies at the teacher's discretion
Use this lesson to have students divide up tasks to create an informative class bulletin board about the desert biome.

DESCRIPTION

Camp Green Lake is located in a desert biome, home to rattlesnakes, scorpions, and the much-feared (yet fictional) yellow-spotted lizard. Biomes are large areas or environments that share the same general climate, or temperature and rainfall. Desert biomes usually receive less than 10 inches of rain per year. In most deserts, the days are extremely hot and nights are cool – sometimes even freezing. Cacti are typical desert plants. They are succulents – plants that store water in their waxy leaves and stems. Animals in the desert biomes are often nocturnal, active only at night, burrowing deep into the earth during the day to escape the heat and sun.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the scientific term biome
- To demonstrate awareness of the characteristics of a desert
- To work cooperatively on a team project

ADAPTATIONS

Students can also work independently or in small groups, choosing their own topics for research and presentation. While they read about and study deserts, have students fill out a chart that covers the major characteristics of a biome: animals, plants, temperature, rainfall, and deserts of the world.

ASSESSMENT

Design a five-point rubric to assess students on working collaboratively as a team, meeting deadlines, and demonstrating an understanding of key traits of the desert biome by presenting information in a clear and appealing fashion.

EXTENSIONS

Discuss with students the importance of conservation. How can they help in conservation efforts locally and around the world?

PROCEDURES

1. Review the concept of biomes with students. Provide examples of biomes such as tundra, savanna, or tropical rainforest.
2. Students are to work as a class to create an informative desert biome bulletin board. To emphasize working collaboratively, assign a collective class grade, depending on your classroom dynamics. This could serve as an opportunity to demonstrate that collaborative work is needed to solve today's ever more complex conservation issues.
3. Tell students the display is to include information about the following: a descriptive overview, plants, reptiles, spiders, scorpions, mammals, birds, and other deserts of the world.
4. Organize students into teams of three or four.
5. Allow students one full class period to research and plan their portion of the bulletin board and one full class period to build it.
6. Have students present their findings to the class.

USEFUL RESOURCES

DesertUSA includes information and resources about the desert biome: www.desertusa.com

The Living Desert web site has information about plants and animals of the desert: www.livingdesert.org/home.html

The World's Biomes web site has information on the major biomes of the Earth:

www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/glossary/gloss5/biome/index.html