



* Science

Deserts as My Habitat

A desert serves as the setting and home environment best known by Aladdin and Jasmine, characters from *Disney's Aladdin, Jr.*

Characteristics of a desert habitat is that of being very hot and dry, having little vegetation, little rainfall, and the possible presence of burrowing animals. Its ecosystems, habitats, and climate make for a unique environment that many call home.

Kentucky Science Standards

Patterns, Systems, Scale and Models, Constancy, and Change Over Time
(2.2-2.6) Grades K-3

Academic Expectations:

2.3 Students identify and analyze systems and the ways their components work together or affect each other.

Ohio Science Standards: Life Sciences

Diversity and Interdependence of Life

Benchmarks Grades K-2

B. Explain how organisms function and interact with their physical environment.

Grades 3

B. Analyze plant and animal structures and functions needed for survival and describe the flow of energy through a system that all organisms use to survive.

Objective:

Students will:

- Describe and create a list of characteristics of their local environment/habitat and the possible organisms that live there.
- Describe and identify the characteristics of a desert environment/habitat and the possible organisms that live there.
- Compare the characteristics of their local environment with the desert environment to understand how each habitat is unique in supporting particular needs.

Assessment:

Students will be able to:

- Identify the various systems within each environment/habitat that are available to support the needs of the living things within it.
- Identify how needs of the characters in the production of *Aladdin, Jr.*, are represented and met in the play.

Sample selected response items to gauge student understanding:

1. Explain what is a habitat?

*Answer: The place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows. **Kid language** may look like—A place that has living things.*

2. Which of these characteristics best describes the desert environment in which the story of *Disney's Aladdin, Jr.*, takes place?

- a. dry
- b. flat
- c. hot
- d. none of these
- e. all of these

Answer: E, all of the above

3. Describe one characteristic of a desert and how it differs from environment and habitat of Ohio, Kentucky or Indiana.

Answer: Dry, very little rain when locally we get rain periodically; Hot, temperature very high without much change in seasons when we have many changes and seasons; Immense, large area of flat, with few plants, when we have hills, mountains, and other areas with lots of plants.

Vocabulary:

- Biome
- Environment
- Habitat
- Organisms
- Characteristics

Materials:

- Books about temperate forests, grasslands and deserts
- Pictures of organisms/living things found in the above environments/habitats
- 2 hula hoops
- Chart paper
- White board or bulletin board for visual displays
- Cards with labels of organisms, generic and specific for each environment/habitat
- Blank cards for additional words suggested by students

Activity

There's No Place Like Home or Habitat

Teacher will:

1. Introduce the concepts of environments, biomes and habitats through the use of visuals, models, etc., and explain that every living creature and person lives in some kind of environment and habitat of which there are many.
2. Facilitate student discussion and sharing about their local environment and habitat. Ask students to describe their environment-- human built structures, plants, animals, the air they breathe, the landscape, and water sources, etc.
3. Record student responses on chart paper under the heading of Local Environment. Make known that the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana region has characteristics of temperate forest and grassland habitats.
4. Provide example of temperate forests and grasslands through picture and informational books.

5. Introduce a collection of books, visuals, etc., to illustrate desert environments and habitats. Recall with students that a desert is the setting of the production, *Disney's Aladdin, Jr.*
6. Assist students in creating a list of the characteristics of desert environments. Record responses on chart paper as previous recording. Keep both charts posted throughout the activity.
7. Have students collect and prepare a visual display for both the local environment and desert environment. Emphasize the inclusion of the four elements/rules that make for and is required for any habitat— food, water, shelter, and a place to raise young. Also include people, animals, and plants distinctive to each environment.
8. Facilitate students' comparison of the two environments. Place two hula hoops on the floor to form a physical Venn diagram. Label one with a card saying "local" and the other "desert". Have students place descriptive word cards for characteristics of each environment including those for people, animals and plants into the correct circle of the diagram. Add a card labeled "both" for the overlapping section of the Venn diagram.
9. Have students explain their reasoning for position of the word cards. (Students may refer back to the charts created earlier as a word banks and references for deciding placement of the pictures.)
10. Facilitate student examination of the commonality of needs for the living things within each environment. Have students conclude how those needs are met.
11. Have students reflect on the production of *Disney's Aladdin, Jr.*, to identify how needs of the characters were met within their desert environment. Have student discuss, write about or draw how these needs were represented and met in the play.