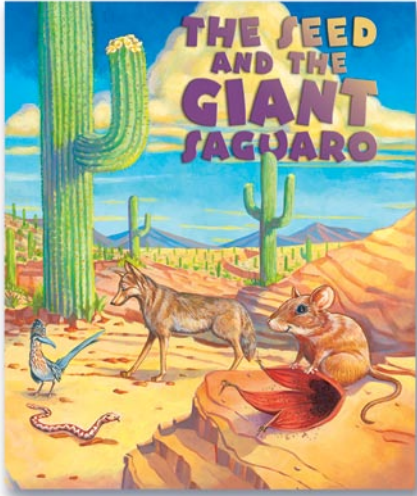


TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

TEACHING CURRICULUM FOR HOME AND THE CLASSROOM



By Jennifer Ward
Illustrated by Mike Rangner
Rising Moon

The Seed and the Giant Saguaro

The Seed and the Giant Saguaro is a wonderful read-aloud that will spark children's curiosity in the desert and the creatures that live there. Written in playful rhyme, this cyclical story puts a Southwest twist on the familiar poem, "The House that Jack Built," and brings the wild desert to life for kids of all ages. Readers will discover how a packrat, a rattlesnake, a roadrunner, a coyote, and even the clouds above all play a role in helping a small seed grow into a giant saguaro cactus.

Incorporate this book into your unit on desert biomes, plants, life-cycles and study of the Six+1 Traits!

Activity #1: Create your own class cumulative story!

Book Connection: Jennifer Ward used an organization technique when writing *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro*, placing the text in a specific pattern. The text is organized in a cumulative fashion, where each page introduces a new sentence while repeating the previous sentences. This organization format can be found in various children's works, including *The House that Jack Built* (1700's).

MATERIALS NEEDED: A copy of *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro*, butcher paper, markers, paper, and pencil.

First, read the book aloud. Following the story, discuss the organization of the text, reviewing how it began with one sentence then continued to build and grow (two sentences, three sentences. . .) by introducing one new sentence per page and repeating the previous.

As a class, brainstorm your own story formatted the same way. Choose an object or setting. (The author used a saguaro.) Your class might use a tree, a cafeteria, a classroom, a playground, or a garden. Write the object or setting of choice on butcher paper. Discuss possible actions (sentences) that can follow the first sentence. For example: *This is the classroom. These are the children that work in the classroom. This is the teacher who teaches the children that work in the classroom.* Be creative and watch your story GROW! Finally, transfer each set of sentences onto paper (the first page will have one sentence, the second page will have two sentences, etc.). Divide students into groups to illustrate each page. Allow each group to read/tell their page and share it with the class.

Photocopy for classroom use
see back page for
further information.

Activity #2: Demonstrate the sequence of events in *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro*

Book Connection: *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* is a circular story, ending back at the beginning.

MATERIALS NEEDED: A hula hoop, a copy of the book, enlarged paper cut outs (2 saguaros, 1 fruit, 1 packrat, 1 snake, 1 roadrunner, 1 coyote, 1 cloud, 1 seed), tape.

- Show students the cover of the book. Allow them to make predictions based on the book's cover. List predictions.
- Read the story aloud. Make a new list of events based on the actual story. Compare the two lists.
- Note that the story ended back at the beginning; a circular organization.
- Prop the hula hoop on the ledge of the chalkboard, noting its circular shape.
- Visually, retell the story in sequence using the cut-outs and the hula hoop. At the top of the hula hoop, place one saguaro. What comes next? (the fruit). What follows the fruit? (the packrat). What follows the packrat? (the snake), etc.
- Continue sequencing the story until it ends back at the top of the hula hoop with a new saguaro. Allow students the opportunity to sequence and tell the story independently using the props.

Activity #3: Create rain sticks with your students!

Book Connection: In the story, the desert rain causes the animals to retreat. This causes the packrat to drop the fruit, which spills the seeds, allowing one to take root and grow to a new saguaro (cause and effect).

MATERIALS NEEDED: cardboard tubes (wrapping paper or paper towel, one for each student), a bag of corn kernels, colored yarn (pre-cut into 1' sections), paint or markers, construction paper (pre-cut into 4 x 4 inch squares), tape (optional), colored feathers (optional)

The rain stick is a musical instrument that originates from Chile, South America. Traditionally, they are created using the wooden skeleton of a cactus. The thorns are removed and pushed back into the cactus, poking through on the inside. Once the cactus is dried, it is filled with small pebbles and the ends are sealed. Tribesmen used rain sticks in ceremonies in hopes of bringing rain. When a rain stick is tilted, the rocks gently travel down the inside of the cactus, hitting the thorns and creating the sound of rain.

- Read the story aloud. Discuss how the rain fell on the desert, helping a new cactus to grow. Explain that deserts are dry places that get little rain. Rain is important in the desert!
- Distribute to each student 1 tube, several pieces of yarn, and two construction paper squares.
- Demonstrate closing off one end of the tube by placing a construction paper square over the end, securing it by wrapping and tying yarn around it. (Tape may be used in lieu of yarn for younger students.)
- Allow students to decorate their tube using markers or paint and by wrapping additional sections of yarn closely around the tube.
- Give each student a spoonful or small baggie of corn kernels. Tell them to place the kernels inside their tube and then seal off the other end of their tube.
- Embellish with a few colored feathers.

Activity #4: Create a K-W-L chart about the desert

Book Connection: North America has four major deserts: The Great Basin, Mohave, Chihuahuan, and Sonoran. *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* takes place in the Sonoran Desert, a very large desert teeming with plant and animal life. The Sonoran Desert is located in southwestern Arizona, southeastern California, most of the Baja California peninsula and the western half of Sonora, Mexico.

MATERIALS: Non-fiction and fiction books or videos about the Sonoran Desert, chart paper, pens, large map

Locate the Sonoran Desert on the map. Create a K-W-L chart about the desert: K—What I *Know* About the Desert; W—What I *Want* to Know About the Desert, L—What I've *Learned* About the Desert.

Begin by charting what students already know about the Sonoran Desert.

Follow this by charting what children would like to learn about the desert (How hot does it get? What types of animals live there? What types of plants grow there? How do plants and animals survive there?)

Spend several class periods sharing information and resources with children about the Sonoran Desert.

Follow up with the last section of the K-W-L chart: What I've Learned About the Desert.

K: What I <i>Know</i>	W: What I <i>Want</i> to Know	L: What I've <i>Learned</i>

Additional resources for Sonoran Desert information: <http://www.desertmuseum.org/desert/sonora.html>

http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/na/na1310_full.html

<http://www.co.pima.az.us/cmo/sdcp/kids/>

Activity #5: How does the saguaro cactus survive the hot, dry desert?

Book Connection: *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* tells how a packrat, a snake, a bird, a coyote, and even the clouds above help a new saguaro cactus come to life. The saguaro is the world's largest cactus. It grows over a long period of time from a very tiny seed. The saguaro is able to live in such a dry place by storing water.

MATERIALS: A copy of the book, green construction paper, two large plastic bowls, stapler, water

Read *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro*. Share the saguaro timeline and facts at the back of the book.

Take a piece of green construction paper and accordion fold it. Staple it into a cylinder shape. Explain that the folds in a saguaro work the same way as the folds in the paper; they can expand. When it rains in the desert, the saguaro's shallow roots, which grow far and wide, absorb the rainfall quickly. This water is absorbed and stored in the cactus, causing it to swell. Demonstrate how the paper folds can also swell or shrink by placing your hand in the paper cylinder, creating the cylinder to expand or contract.

Activity #6: Why is the saguaro so heavy?

The saguaro cactus can weigh as much as seven bathtubs full of water. Why is it so heavy? Let's do an experiment to find out why.

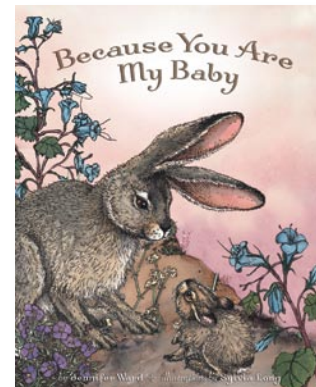
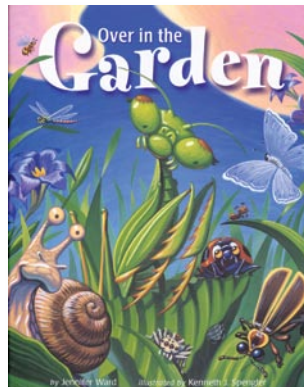
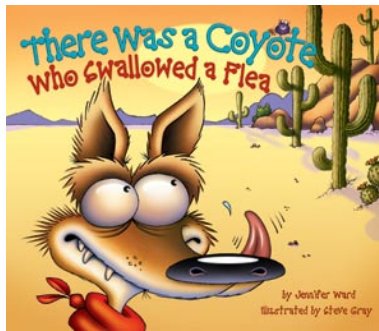
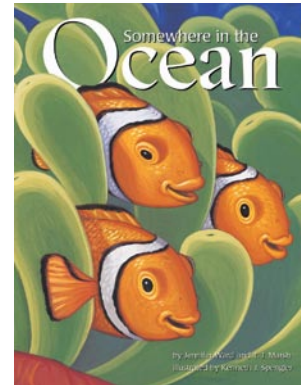
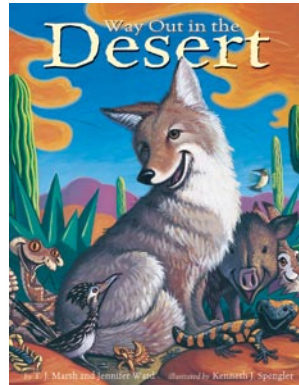
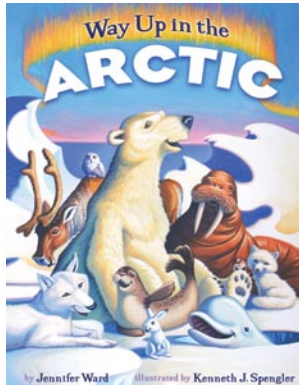
Share the saguaro facts at the back of The Seed and the Giant Saguaro, noting reference to the weight of the saguaro. Present two large plastic bowls. Pour water into one bowl, leaving the second empty. Allow students to lift each bowl, comparing the weight difference. The saguaro cactus is so heavy because of the stored water inside! Water is heavy.

Further Activities

- Have students identify rhymes within the text (hurry/worry, sound/ground, dashed/flushed, down/brown).
- Have students identify action words, or verbs, within the text (ran, carried, trailed, slid, raced).

If you like *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* try other great Rising Moon books by Jennifer Ward:

Way Up in the Arctic
Way Out in the Desert
Somewhere in the Ocean
Over in the Garden
Because You Are My Baby
There Was a Coyote Who Swallowed a Flea



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