

TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

TEACHING CURRICULUM FOR HOME AND THE CLASSROOM



Way Out in the Desert

by T.J. MARSH & JENNIFER WARD

illustrated by KENNETH J. SPENGLER

This toe-tapping text will have you singing along with the lovable creatures of the desert in no time! Filled with vibrant illustrations of many of the charming plants and animals that call the Sonoran Desert home, *Way Out in the Desert* is also a wonderful teaching tool that takes you on a trip down memory lane.

For new readers, the text's rhyming repetition reinforces emerging reading skills. Pre-schoolers and kindergartners also will love finding the numerals hidden in every illustration.

For older children, this is a whole-language science book, complete with a glossary and filled with fascinating facts about the Sonoran Desert.

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Identify rhyming words.
2. Identify all the action words, or verbs, on each page.
3. Identify as many nouns as possible on each page.
4. Alphabetize the desert animals in the book.
5. Alphabetize the desert plants in the book.
6. Create your own *Way Out* story by replacing the author's characters and character actions with your own. You might work in groups of two or three with each group creating one story page, then compile all the pages into one class book.

MATH

1. Locate the hidden number on each page and match it with the number word.
2. Figure out the total number of mother and baby animals there are in the book. This may be done by counting tally marks or drawings or by using addition.
3. Figure out the total number of the following animal parts on each page. Count tally marks or drawings, or use multiplication.

How many horned toad eyes?

How many hummingbird wings?

How many javelina snouts?

How many rattlesnake rattles?

How many Gila monster tails?

How many roadrunner beaks?

How many jackrabbit ears?

How many scorpion claws?

How many coyote paws?

How many tarantula legs?

4. See how many different combinations you can come up with to make 10 using the numbers in the book.

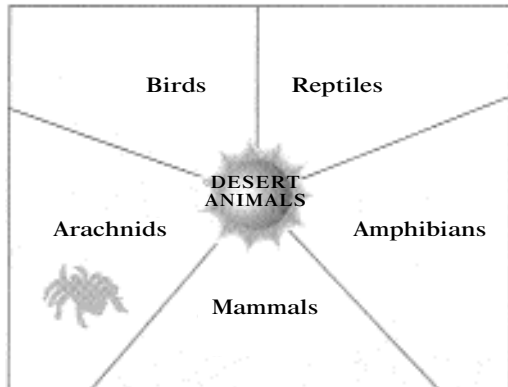
Photocopy for classroom use
see back page for
further information.



rising moon

SCIENCE

1. As a group, create an animal classification web for the animals in the book. Using a large piece of butcher paper, create a web format with areas for reptiles, birds, mammals, amphibians, and arachnids surrounding a center that says "Desert Animals."



Each student should draw one of the animals from the book on a piece of paper and cut it out. Then each student should place his or her cutout on the web in its correct category. Study more desert animals and add them to the web.

2. As a group, research **nocturnal** and **diurnal**. Create a nocturnal/diurnal scene in one of the following ways:
 - a) Divide a bulletin board in half, one half representing a nocturnal setting and the other half representing a diurnal setting. Place cut-out drawings of the animals from the book in their appropriate settings.

- b) Divide a large piece of construction paper in half as above. Draw the animals from the book in their appropriate settings. Research individual animals to see how they have adapted to day or night preferences and write brief descriptions of nocturnal and diurnal characteristics next to the pictures of the animals, such as:
 - "Nocturnal animals are active at night to avoid the heat of the day."
 - "Nocturnal animals may have a better opportunity for hunting at night due to an abundance of active prey."
 - "Diurnal animals, such as the jackrabbit, have adapted over time to withstand the extreme heat. Their large ears help to cool their bodies."

3. Do an experiment to demonstrate how the jackrabbit's ears help it keep cool in the desert.

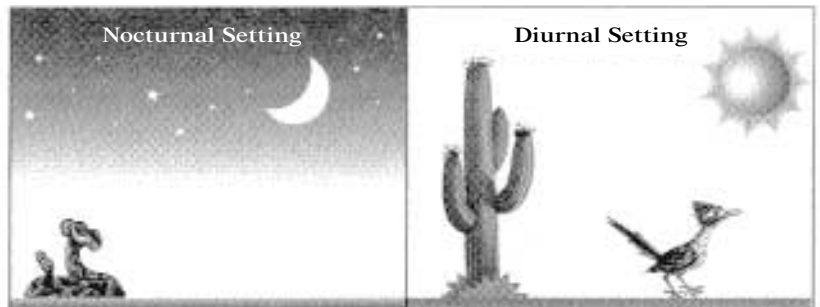
Start with two cups of hot (not boiling) water. Measure the temperature and document it. Pour one cup of the water into a mug, and the other onto a plate with a lip high enough to hold it. Let the water sit at room temperature for ten minutes, then re-measure the temperature in both containers.

(The jackrabbit's ears work in much the same way as the plate of water. It has more surface area exposed to the air, so more heat is able to escape, causing the overall temperature of the water to be cooler faster than the water in the mug, which has less surface area exposed.)

4. Do an experiment to demonstrate how plants conserve water in the desert.

Moisten two sponges. Cover one with vaseline or seal it in a plastic bag and then place both in an area where they will be undisturbed. After a few days, check to see which sponge is still moist.

(In much the same way as the vaseline or the plastic bag keeps the sponge moist, the waxy coating on many cacti keeps the plant moist by not allowing moisture to escape, or evaporate, into the air.)



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