



1st Grade, Unit 2: Spectacular Saguaros and Desert Dwellers Lesson Plans

Driving Question: How do organisms use saguaros to help them survive?

Background: Now that students know and understand how saguaros themselves survive in the desert, Week 2 will focus on how saguaros help other organisms survive! Students will learn about a variety of animals and insects that depend on the saguaro for food and shelter. Students will construct explanations by helping make a class book about the organisms they've learned about. They'll also play Saguaro Charades to demonstrate their learning!

Standard(s):

- 1.L2U2.7 Develop and use models about how living things use resources to grow and survive; design and evaluate habitats for organisms using earth materials.
- 1.L2U1.8 Construct an explanation describing how organisms obtain resources from the environment

- including materials that are used again by other organisms.

Materials:

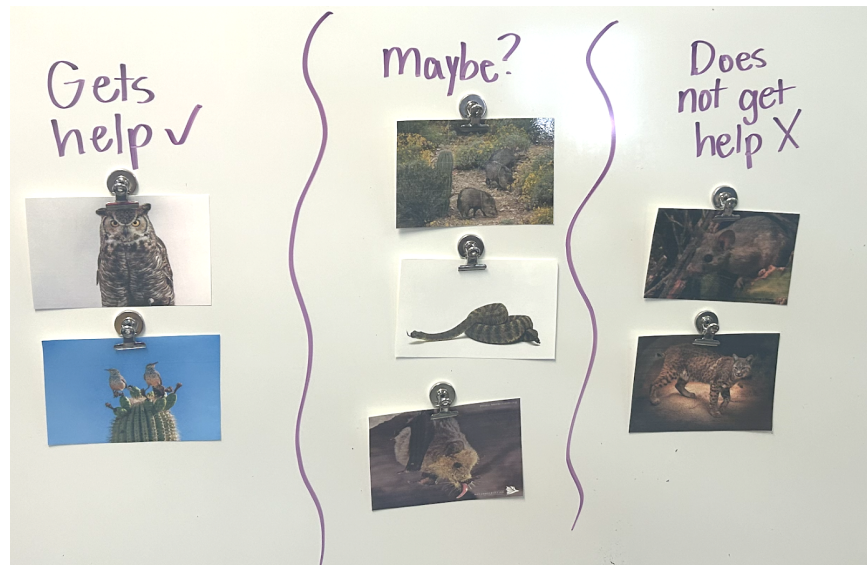
- Chart paper
- Copies of animal cards for probe (consider laminating for future use)
- Organism Fact Cards for research/jigsaw activity
- Copies of Week 2 Explore Handout
- Printed copy of animal charade cards (optional) for an anchor chart
- Charade cards for student game (consider laminating for future use)
- Copies of student book pages
- Copy of *The Night Flower* by Lara Hawthorne (optional, but a great resource)
- Vocabulary cards
- *Optional- Copy of *The Little Saguaro* by Shannon Young and supplies for a watercolor activity

Probe: *Time: 10-15 minutes*

Use the slidedeck to introduce students to the driving question for the week and the vocabulary word “organism.”

As a class, show students the organism picture cards. Discuss together which organisms they think might rely on a saguaro. Sort them into groups (use saguaros, does not use saguaros, unsure). Consider taping these to a chart to revisit during the week as students' learning changes their thoughts!

Use Saguaros	?	Does Not Use Saguaros



Engage: *Time: 10-15 minutes*

Using the teacher slide deck, show students videos of animals interacting with saguaros. (There are many animals shown, but not all in relation to saguaros. Caution

students to pay attention to those who interact with the cacti).

After students have seen each video, discuss what they notice and what they wonder. Consider making a list of the animals they saw, or record students' noticings and wonderings on chart paper/ a Wonder Wall.

Explore: *Time: Two sessions of 20-25 minutes*

1. To learn about the organisms that interact with saguaros, students will be taking part in a jigsaw activity. Have students work in groups to study their organism using an organism fact card. Students should be able to name their organism, tell how it uses the saguaro, and if it uses a live or dead saguaro. Use the explore handout for students to take notes on the organism they are studying.

***We have provided information cards for a number of organisms (9). Choose however many organisms you feel are do-able for your students in a jigsaw. You can always discuss the others during the “explain” lesson.

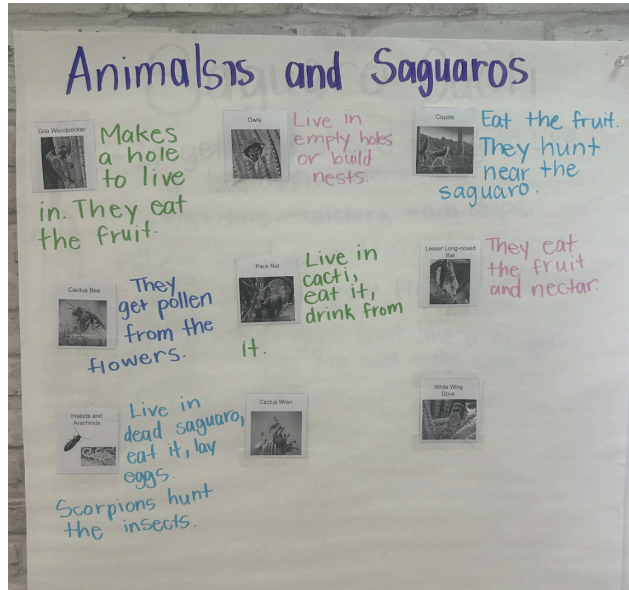
2. Split experts for each organism into different groups. Have students take turns sharing about their organisms in their groups. Another option is to have each expert group present their organism to the whole class.

***Additionally, if a jigsaw feels difficult for your class, consider reading a few cards at a time as a class and having students choose one animal they learned about to complete the “explore” handout. Make this work for your classroom and your students, they will love learning about the animals however you go about it!

Explain: *Time: 30 minutes*

Using the slidedeck, read with students about different organisms that rely on the saguaro (some slides have additional information than is listed on the student fact cards). If you omitted any organisms for the jigsaw activity, make sure to discuss them now. You may want to have students help create a class chart about each organism to refer back to for the Elaborate and Evaluate lessons.

Organism	Photo	How it uses a saguaro



Elaborate: 20-25 minutes

If possible, read aloud *The Night Flower*. Discuss with students which organisms they see interacting with the saguaro in the text. Are there any you hadn't discussed?

Next, students will use what they've learned to play Saguaro Charades. In groups or as a class, students will take turns pulling a card that shows one of the organisms discussed in the previous lessons. Students will act out (without words) how that organism uses a saguaro. Other students in the group/class should guess what organism the student was *and tell how they know/why they think so*. To help, the slideshow includes a picture word bank of all the organisms discussed in the unit!

For example: A student who pulls an owl may pretend to fly and then crouch down in a cactus. Students guessing might say “They flew so I know it’s a bird. They acted like they would climb inside, so I think they’re an owl.”

Make sure to address any misconceptions that may arise, as well. For example, if a student acting as a coyote tries to jump onto the cactus for food, remind the student that the coyote would actually eat fruit that had fallen nearby or hunt smaller organisms near the saguaro.

Evaluate: *Time: 20-30 minutes*

Tell students that today they will help make a class book about the organisms they’ve learned about. Assign or have each student choose an organism. Then, using the evaluate handout, have students complete the sentence “A saguaro is perfect for a _____ because _____.” Students should illustrate their page as well, showing how their organism uses a saguaro.

Optional Extensions:

-Read the book *The Little Saguaro* from the Desert Museum Press. Discuss what organisms they see in the story!

Using the extension slides, lead students in a directed drawing and painting of a saguaro.