



WHO AM I?

Grade Level: K- 3rd Grade (can be adapted for older students)

Duration: Two to three hours

Purpose: In this lesson, students will learn about many different animals that live in [deserts](#). They will learn what the animals look like and about characteristics that enable them to live in the harsh environment of desert habitats.

Objectives: Students will be able to identify desert animals and the characteristics that enable them to adapt to the harsh environment; Students will be able to draw and/or color pictures of desert animals in their habitats and create riddles from information about their animals.

Nevada State Department of Education Standards:

Organisms and Their Environment (Life Science Unifying Concept C): A variety of ecosystems and communities exist on Earth. Ecosystems are dynamic interactions of organisms and their environment. Ecosystems have distinct characteristics and components that allow certain organisms to thrive. Change in one or more components can affect the entire ecosystem.

Materials:

Computer with Internet access
Writing and drawing materials

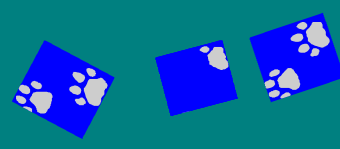
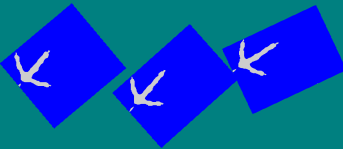
Anticipatory Set: Tell students that you will be talking about animals that live in a very harsh environment called a [desert](#). Ask students what they already know about deserts and make a list of their answers. Write down any questions they have about deserts.

Developing the Lesson: Ask students what they think we need to live every day; write their answers on the board or overhead. They should mention food, water, and shelter. Explain that animals that live in the desert sometimes have a hard time finding these things. List the characteristics of desert habitats that make them difficult places to live.

Have students look at the desert animals on the animal cards found in this educational kit. Other animals can be found on the internet on such websites as www.enchantedlearning.com (desert animal printouts) or www.eNature.com (type "desert" in the search box)

Read aloud some of the descriptions of the animals you see, paraphrasing the advanced language as necessary. Discuss with the class the different ways these animals get food, water, and shelter in the desert habitat.

Have each student choose one of the animals and draw its picture; younger students can color a



[printout](#). The animal should be shown in its desert surroundings, including the types of things it eats and drinks, and where it finds shelter.

Conclusion: Remind the students about the list of questions they had at the beginning of the lesson, before they learned about the desert habitat and the animals that live there. Have all their questions been answered? Add the new facts that students have learned to the list of known facts made at the beginning of the lesson.

Extension: Have the students create riddles from descriptive words on the pictures of the animal they chose. Older students can write out their riddles, while younger ones may use their drawings to help them ask their riddles out loud. For example:

I am an animal that lives in the desert.

- *I have a bulky body.*
- *I have short brown, black, and gray bristly fur.*
- *I have small ears.*
- *I have small eyes.*
- *I have a flat snout.*
- *I have long canine teeth.*
- *I have hooved feet.*

I have short legs.

Who am I?

Display all the animal pictures the students have colored. Have each student read his/her riddle and allow other students to guess which animal the riddle matches.

Other Suggestions for Extending the Lesson:

- Have students create vocabulary lists from their own and other students' riddles.
- Create a desert animal book from all the pictures by making a cover and laminating the printouts. Put it in the classroom library.
- Have students write stories about their animals.

Use a map to locate the Great Basin Desert and other deserts throughout the world.

Evaluation: Evaluate students by their ability to identify desert animals and the characteristics that enable them to adapt to the harsh environment. Formally assess students by their ability to draw and/or color pictures of desert animals in their habitats and by the riddles they create from information about their animals. Informally assess students by their participation in class and contributions to class discussions.

Source: Adapted from a lesson by Cathy Kiffe of Lafayette Parish School Board in Lafayette, LA