



1st Grade, Unit 3: Spectacular Saguaros and Humans Lesson Plans

Driving Question: How have humans used the saguaro to help them survive in the Sonoran Desert?

Background: This week, now that students have learned about saguaro survival and how other organisms use the cactus to survive, they will study how humans interact with the saguaro! Students will learn how the Tohono O’odham people* have used the saguaro and its significance to their culture. Students will also learn how humans have used other desert plants to survive.

*refer to Pima County Recorder Gabriella Cázares-Kelly’s social media posts for correct pronunciation.

Standard(s):

- 1.E1U1.5 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the properties of Earth materials and investigate how humans use natural resources in everyday life.

Materials:

- Chart paper
- A treat for the class to “harvest” from a high up location.
- Yard sticks, rulers, tape, etc. to help students “harvest” the treat.
- Desert plant matching cards
- Thriving and Surviving! - Take 2 handout
- Student self assessment (optional)
- Copies of student handouts (optional) for the explain and extension portions

Engage: *Time: 10-15 minutes*

Show students the images of the saguaro harvest and the harvested saguaro fruit. Have students think about what is happening/what they see, and think-pair-share to discuss their ideas.

Discuss students’ ideas and questions as a class and record their thoughts on a chart to return to in later lessons.

Explore: *Time: 20-25 minutes*

1. Place a treat (a box of cookies, homework passes, etc.) up high in the classroom - on top of a bookshelf for

example. Tell students that they can have the treat IF they successfully get it down without using a stool or anything else to stand on. Have students work in groups to brainstorm ideas to get the treat down. Offer up tools they might use as they brainstorm, such as yardsticks, rulers, tape, sticks, etc.

2. Once students have successfully retrieved the treat, discuss how students got the treat down and WHY.

3. Show students the video of a saguaro harvest and then discuss what students observed. Use the slide deck to also discuss that the fruit isn't the only useful part of a saguaro - the ribs and boot are useful, too.

Explain: *Time: 15-20 Minutes*

Use the slide deck to discuss how the Tohono O'odham have used the saguaro and how and why they harvest its fruit.

*Optional: have students write a sentence (or more) explaining how the Tohono O'odham use the saguaro. Invite them to draw a matching picture.

Elaborate: *30 minutes*

Tell students that the saguaro isn't the only plant that the Tohono O'odham or other people in the desert use. Give students plant and object cards. In pairs, have students match each plant to the item they think it is used to make.

After pairs have sorted their cards into matching pairs, use the slide deck to discuss what each plant is and how it is used. Then, have students return to their sorts to see what they correctly matched and what they would need to change.

Evaluate: *Time: 20-30 minutes*

Students have learned a lot about the saguaro and its place in desert life over the last three weeks. Give them a copy of the handout *Surviving and Thriving! - Take 2*. Students should add to the outline of the saguaro, drawing in the parts that help it survive, surroundings (ideal weather, nurse plants, etc.), the organisms that might use the saguaro, and humans interacting with the saguaro. Encourage students to work neatly and add labels to their work.

*Optional- have students compare this drawing to the ones they did at the end of Week 1. How have their drawings changed?

****Optional-** guide students through the self assessment. What changes might they make to improve their work? What questions do they still have, or what might they need to review?

Optional Extensions:

-As a class or as individuals, have students write a story from the point of view of a saguaro. What happens in their day? Who comes to visit? What do they do if it rains? What happens at night? Consider sharing stories with another class or having students create matching illustrations.

-Write a Saguaro acrostic poem! Use the word bank in the slide show, or have students come up with their own. Consider submitting these to the Desert Museum's Earth Day Poetry contest. You can find the link to submit on the Desert Museum website!

https://www.desertmuseum.org/kids/events_poetry.php