



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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It's a Desert Out There!

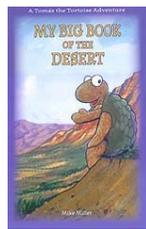
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With spring just around the corner, it's a great time to turn our attention outdoors and enjoy the fact that we are surrounded by the beautiful and fascinating Mojave Desert. The Mojave Desert gives us the perfect opportunity to help our students appreciate their home. The Science CEF for kindergarten has our students: *Identify observable characteristics and behaviors of animals (K) 4.1; sort animals by observable characteristics (K) 4.2; observe and explain that animals have off-spring that are the same kind of animal (K) 4.3; use five senses to investigate the natural world (K) 4.4; and recognize and explain that animals live in different places (K) 4.5.* One of the ELA Benchmarks for literary text is: *Listen to and identify main idea 3.K.3;* and an expository text benchmark is: *Listen to and use information to answer specific*

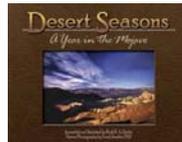
questions 4.K.5. These standards can be addressed within the context that includes a study of desert life, and your students will have the additional benefit of learning about the world around



them, and the wonderful place in which they live.

There are many great fiction and nonfiction books about desert life. One of our local talents is Mike Miller and in his book, *My Big Book of the Desert*. Tomás the Tortoise teaches children about plant and animal life in the desert around Red Rock Canyon. (Mike Miller's other Tomás stories are great too!).

Another local author (and CCSD teacher), Ruth K.A. Devlin



gives us *Desert Seasons: A Year in the Mojave*. The story of the desert is told with poetry, drawings, and photographs.

Why, Oh Why Are Deserts Dry? Offers many answers to questions children may have about desert plant and animal life in the Mojave and other deserts.



As your children are learning about desert life, be sure to check out the Mojave Max website (www.mojavemax.com) and learn more about desert life and how we can protect our beautiful desert. Your students may even want to make a prediction about when Mojave Max might emerge from his cave and enter the *Mojave Max Emergence Contest*. The winner gets some great prizes and his or her teacher and class can benefit too!

www.rpd.net



Bill Hanlon, Director



Thinking it Through

As your students are becoming familiar with life in the desert, it's a perfect time to use Thinking Maps in literature activities that enlist students' background knowledge about the desert and prior knowledge of a familiar story. These activities will certainly



build and promote higher level thinking among your students.

Books: The classic folktale, *The Three Little*



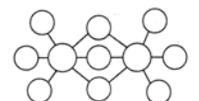
Javelinas by Susan Lowell (which also comes in a bilingual edition).

Flow Map: Sequence each of the stories by having students retell the beginning, middle, and end of each story. After you've read the traditional version, your students will naturally make predic-

tions as you read *The Three Little Javelinas*. **Tree Map:** Your students will love identifying the characters, setting, problem and solution of each story because both tales are very engaging. The desert will come into play as the setting for *The Three Little Javelinas*. Your students will enjoy illustrating each of the story elements. **Double-Bubble Map:** By now, the children are naturally identifying the similarities and differences between the two stories. Re-

cording their thinking on a double-bubble map will cement their thoughts.

Multi-Flow Map: With the story becoming so familiar, your students may even be ready to use the multi-flow map, determining cause and effect within the stories for both the wolf in *The Three Little Pigs* and the coyote in *The Three Little Javelinas*.



There are still seats in the **K-1 Literacy Centers** class being offered at Gray ES on March 5th and 12th. Please email Robyn Markovic for more information. This is the last time this class is being offered this school year.