

iCONN Learning Activity

Designing a Desert Environment

Level: Elementary

Task: Students are studying different ecosystems for the purpose of designing murals for the classroom. One small group is responsible for researching and developing a recommended list of plants, animals and general environmental design for an American desert mural. Recommendations must include a brief description and picture of the plant or animal. Murals will be produced in collaboration with art instruction.

Research Question: What kinds of plants, animals and habitat are necessary to support a desert environment?

Content Area: Science, Art

State Content Standard(s):

Science:

Standard 3.2. Matter and Energy in Ecosystems: How do matter and energy flow through ecosystems?

Visual Arts:

Standard 1. Create (imagine, experiment, plan, make, evaluate, refine and present/exhibit) artworks that express concepts, ideas and feelings in each art form.

iCONN Database(s): *Discovering Collection, InfoTrac Junior Edition, InfoTrac Student Edition, Kids InfoBits*

Search Strategy:

1. Go to <http://www.iconn.org/>
2. If the list of databases is not already showing, click on “Select iCONN resources”
3. Click on the *Discovering Collection*
4. Enter *desert* in the subject search box
5. Click *SEARCH*
6. Results are *Reference resources* with the *type of resource* indicated to the right of the citation, and the *reading level* indicated on the left
7. Click on an article title to read that article
8. Click on other *active (highlighted) tabs* for *Primary Documents* and *Multimedia* resources
9. Scan the left column of the page for subjects more relevant to your task (e.g., *Desert Ecology, Desert Plants*)
10. Click on a subject for resources on that topic
11. Click on a title to read/view the resource

Alternate Search Strategy:

1. Go to <http://www.iconn.org/>
2. If the list of databases is not already showing, click on “Select iCONN resources”
3. Open *InfoTrac Junior Edition*
4. Enter *desert* in the subject search box
5. Click *SEARCH* (or hit ENTER)
6. From the *Subjects* list return, click on *View* or *See also* next to topics of interest (e.g., *Desert Ecology*, *Desert Flora* or *Desert Fauna*)
7. Click on a title to view the article

Adaptation for Differentiated Learning:**Search strategy:**

1. Go to <http://www.iconn.org/>
2. If the list of databases is not already showing, click on “Select iCONN resources”
3. Open *InfoTrac Student Edition* and click on *Subject guide*
4. Enter *desert* in the search box
5. Limit the search *to documents with full text* by clicking in the appropriate checkbox (below the search box)
6. Click *SEARCH* (or hit ENTER)
7. Under *Desert Ecology*, click on *subdivisions*
8. Click links to appropriate topics, such as *environmental aspects*
9. Click on a title to read the article

-- OR --

1. Go to <http://www.iconn.org/>
 2. If the list of databases is not already showing, click on “Select iCONN resources”
 3. Open *Kids InfoBits*
 4. Enter *desert* in the search box
 5. Click *SEARCH* (or hit ENTER)
 6. Click on *VIEW* or *SEE ALSO* under topics of interest (e.g., *Desert Animals*, *Desert Ecology* or *Desert Flora*)
 7. Click on the title to read the article
- Note: the reading level of the article is indicated to the left of the citation