



Desert Explorations Through Poetry

DESERT INDOORS®

Environmental Education Activities for Students at Home

(This activity was created in accordance with shelter-in-place. Remember to practice social distancing and stay local.)

Module: *I Can Imagine and Share: Desert Poetry for Grades 6-8*

Topic: English Language Arts and the desert

Objective/Learning Goal: Children will be able to bring a poem to life through descriptive language by creating a personal narrative poem. They will be able to remember their experience in the desert by bringing those sensory experiences to paper.

Glossary:

- **Alliteration** – The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning or adjacent of closely connected words, rhyming words.
- **Ecosystem** – The surroundings (both living and non-living) of a geographical area in which species live.
- **Habitat** – The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
- **Personal Narrative** – The writer shares a true story from their own life.
- **Transitions** – The words or phrases that connect elements of a story in time, place, or emphasizes important details.

Materials: *Graphic organizer, poem, paper, pencil, access to the internet.*

Indoor Activity:

Build Background Knowledge - Ask your kids what they already know about poetry? Have they ever read a poem that utilizes *alliteration*? What about an acrostic poem? How about a limerick? What do they already know about the Mojave Desert, its' vistas, open *plains*, the *habitat*, *ecosystem*?

Have your kids use the poem written below as a mentor text. What did they notice about the poem? You can have them fill out the graphic organizer to help remember what they felt or thought about their desert experience. If they have never been able to visit the

desert in person, they can look up more information about the Mojave Desert through a simple web search or on **mdlt.org**. Students can then use the graphic organizer to write down more information about what they learned.

After they have done research, students can create their own personal narrative in poem form. Remind students to use transitions (first, then, most importantly, etc.) to hook the reader, making an immersive experience for the reader through student poetry.

Follow-up/ Discussion - *What did you learn? How do you feel about using your creativity to sensory poems about the desert? Do you feel like it would have been easier to write a fictional narrative or perhaps an informational one? What was the most interesting thing you learned about the desert?*

Kids can then take time to draw or illustrate their poem, using any medium of their choosing.

We would love to hear how your creative writing project went and to have you share your own poems with mary@mdlt.org. We invite students to share their voice and creativity through poetry which we will display at MDLT's Fall Desert Discovery Field Studies and Desert Indoors Showcase.

Your work may also be selected to appear in Cholla Needles magazine. If your work is selected, you will receive a free contributor's copy of the magazine.

Springtime in the Mojave

I went to visit the desert.

In the spring it was warm,

And smelled of spring blooms.



The valleys and hills were a mix of greens and yellows.

The cactus flowers were covered in fuchsia flowers,

Which the insects were pollinating in a fevered pace.

The touch of creosote left that feeling and smell,

Of desert on my hands and in my nose.

I love the Mojave in the spring.

It is my secret happy place to be.



Poetry Using Sensory Details

Adding details to your poem will help readers connect with your poetry.

What did you see?

What did you touch?

What did you hear?

What did you taste?

What did you smell?