Desert Ecosystems Lesson Plan

Objectives: By the end of this lesson the students will be able to list the main ecological factors that make a desert the ecosystem it. The students will be able to describe the main physical adaptations that desert animals are equipped with to survive in a desert. The students will be able to list the different types of deserts found on the planet.

Grades: K-8 (With Adaptions for High School Students)

Materials:

1. Bottle of Sand
2. Paper and Markers or Crayons
3. Animals from the Deserts Unit list.

Introduction:

The educator will ask the students draw what they think the desert looks like during the day and what it looks like at night. Then the educator will talk to the students about what they think a desert is like normally. The educator will then pour out some of the sand and talk about how this is what think deserts look like.

Lesson:

Now the educator will talk with the students about ecological factors that compose a desert, focusing on annual precipitation, absence of plant life, effects of wind on the ecosystem. Then the educators will talk about the common adaptations animals that live in deserts have to be equipped with. These include small sizes, being able to go long periods without water and food, and being mostly nocturnal. After this the educator will bring out the animals in which they have for this unit and discuss how each one built specifically to survive in a desert ecosystem.

Wrap Up:

Ask the students the students to think about why these large open ecosystems serve a purpose for the rest the planet? Then talk about the roles deserts actually play for the planet.