

Games of the Southwest

Companion Text: If You See the Moon, by Zia Wells

Subject Area & Grade Level: Social Studies, 3rd Grade

Materials: Items

Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the geography of the American Southwest
- Identify how the environment can be used to meet human needs
- Describe what makes rules fair or unfair

Introduction

Read the story once through without stopping. Return to page 4, and ask “How are the kids feeling?” (Bored) Today we are going to try to help Cirra and Nimbu by making a game for them to play.

Procedure

This lesson will take at least two class periods. In the first, split students into groups, and have each group think of a game Cirra and Nimbu could play with only the items they would have had available in their New Mexican environment. Games should take no more than 10-15 minutes to play. Students can refer to the book for ideas, or research the American Southwest in books or on the Internet. (Some items that could be included are: sand, arrowheads, rocks, sticks, or clay.)

The second day, students should physically create their games with items brought from home or created from construction paper to represent natural objects found in the Southwest. All rules should be written out neatly in clear language.

Discussion

When all games are complete, collect all game materials and rule sheets, and redistribute them to different groups. Allow students 15 minutes to play another group’s game, and then ask them to spend 10 minutes evaluating their classmates’ games for geographical accuracy. Were any objects used that would not have been available to Cirra and Nimbu?

Next, ask students to spend a few minutes discussing whether they thought the rules of the game they played were fair or unfair. Prompt students to explain why certain rules are fair (they don’t favor one or more players) or unfair (they are applied differently to different players). Ask students what the consequence would be if the game had fewer rules, more rules, or no rules (just a pile of materials). Did the rules make the game go faster or slower, and did they make it more or less enjoyable to play? Ask for suggestions to improve the rules of each game, and have the class vote on which game they thought Cirra and Nimbu would have liked the most.

