

Introduction to Community Conservation

Within the Mojave Desert exists an “eclectic” metropolis called Las Vegas. With a current population of more than 1.2 million, the greater Las Vegas area still continues to grow at the rate of 6,090 people monthly. With this staggering population growth comes many concerns, including education facilities, housing, business and crime. Of main concern, however, should be the supply of water. Water is the foundation that supports the complex ecosystem of all living and non-living organisms. Water is most often taken for granted, yet without this valuable resource, life in the desert would cease to exist.

Opposition is present in all aspects of life. This fact is especially evident when discussing the issue of water conservation. For example, government, business, agriculture and individuals all have different interpretations of what the appropriate allocation of water should be according to their own needs.

Education provides the awareness needed for a unified conservation effort. A thorough knowledge of what water sources are available, where water allocation is needed and the many ways in which water can be efficiently utilized are factors that can “empower” the individual to take action. This individual student knowledge will enable them, as future citizens within the community, to make informed decisions. The informed decisions of each citizen will benefit the community as a whole, as opposed to their own individual needs.

Objectives:

Upon completion of these cross-curricular lessons, students will be able to:

- identify the geographic features of Nevada.
- identify available water sources for Nevada.
- outline events that have occurred in Nevada’s history since 1829.
- work cooperatively to develop a public awareness campaign on conservation.

Social Studies Lesson One

Mapping Our Resources

For students to understand the uniqueness of Nevada, they must first be introduced to the geography of Nevada. With this lesson students will have a hands-on opportunity to explore the geography of Nevada.

Objectives:

1. Understand that the state of Nevada has special features that make it different than any other place.
2. Understand that people interact with their environments and change them to make them more comfortable.
3. Produce three different maps of the state of Nevada that will highlight the following:
 - Map A: All water sources within the state of Nevada
 - Map B: All 17 counties within the state of Nevada
 - Map C: The five largest populated cities of Nevada
4. Analyze the physical and cultural characteristics that make a location attractive for settlement.

NEVADA GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS 1, 2, 3

Materials: atlases, almanacs, map of Nevada, overhead, overhead outline map of state other than Nevada, overhead overlay of outline map depicting additional features, overhead outline map of the state of Nevada, library books, Internet access (if possible), construction paper, rulers, colored pencils

Time: One or two class periods

Procedures:

1. Begin with an opening activity that will introduce the unit theme. For example, in the opening activity, the instructor may choose any outline map of a state within the United States of America other than the state of Nevada. Tell students they are selecting a place to live within the state of the outline. Because students do not know where cities, freeways, markets or even the state is located, they must rely only on the information given on the outline map (boundary lines, rivers, oceans, mountains). To help students choose their desired location, remind them (or brainstorm) of the important geographic features that must exist for an individual to survive in any location.
2. After students have chosen their location, have them give their cities a name. They also should provide a short paragraph of reasoning for their selection
3. Provide an overlay of the state with city locations, vegetation, elevation, etc.

4. Have students discuss the location of their city. Is there a city located in the same area as your city? What do you suppose attracted settlers to that city? Why were you attracted to this location?
5. Place overhead outline map of Nevada up for display. What are some of the features of this state? (List features during discussion).
6. Brainstorm with class the reasons why Nevada has become an attractive place to live. (List reasons during discussion.)
7. Introduce extension activity: (may be completed in class or at home) Students will be asked to create a map booklet of Nevada. Within their map booklet they will have three different colored maps drawn to scale.
 - Map A: Map of Nevada's water sources. All water sources should be named and colored blue. Land (non-water areas) should be colored in brown.
 - Map B: Map of Nevada's 17 counties. Each county should be drawn in appropriate shape. Each county should be represented by a different color.
 - Map C: Map of Nevada's five largest populated cities. Students should identify absolute place of cities. Population statistics should be placed next to the city's location or in a key on the map.