

## LESSON 2

# AN APACHE WAY OF LEARNING



**Through participation in one or more activities, students will gain a personal relationship to their environment while learning about how the historical Apache people related to their natural environment.**





## LESSON OVERVIEW

Through participation in one or more activities, students will gain a personal relationship to their environment while learning about how the historical Apache people related to their natural environment.

### Subjects

Science and  
Social Studies

### Science Standards

History and Nature of  
Science  
Personal and Social  
Perspectives in Science

### Objectives

Students will:

1. Discover how an intimate relationship with nature influenced the Apache culture.
2. Summarize thoughts and feelings about a personal experience.

### Preparation

Read individual activities on *Pages 3.2-3.3* and select appropriate sites for chosen activities.

### Time

One or more 50-minute sessions.

# AN APACHE WAY OF LEARNING

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Apaches' relationship with their environment was intimate. As nomadic hunters and gatherers, they relied on nature for their food, clothing and shelter. An in-depth knowledge of their environment, therefore, was essential. From a very young age, Apache boys and girls started learning the different plants and animals and their uses as they worked alongside their mothers gathering and preparing food and doing daily camp chores. At about age seven or eight the boys were separated from the girls to learn different things.

The girls continued to work with and learn from their mothers and other women. The identification and uses of plants were particularly important in order to survive. Edible and non-edible plants needed to be distinguished and they had to learn to prepare each plant for consumption and storage.

Basket weaving required that they become knowledgeable in the different reeds and grasses, as well as plants used for dyes and paints. Plants were of utmost importance for medicinal uses. Many young women would become herbalists and healers.

Boys started learning how to hunt and become warriors at age eight. Their training was based on survival in nature. They needed to be able to identify plants, learn the habits and characteristics of animals, and study the cycles of nature. Often they needed to observe nature or stalk animals for hours. Becoming a warrior also meant that they become masters of hiding and escape, for which an intimate knowledge of the local geography was needed — so much so that they learned the location and names for specific trees, rocks, caves and geographical features of the landscape.

## LESSON 3 - AN APACHE WAY OF LEARNING

*The following environmental education activities emphasize and encourage intimacy with nature. They are intended to give students an adventure similar to what a young Apache growing up in the 1800s may have experienced. They are not historical Apache activities, however, similar activities may have been used.*

1. Using the background information, discuss the Apache lifestyle and the importance of developing an intimate relationship with nature. Explain that the students will have the opportunity to develop the same skills that the Apaches did when they were growing up.
2. Do one or more of the described activities with your students.
3. Ask students to describe their experience through either writing or drawing .
4. Discuss how their experience helps to understand the Apaches' relationship with their environment.



### MAGIC SPOT

*Setting: Magic Spot can be done just about anywhere there is nature. A lawn or ornamental shrubs or trees around the school work fine. If you have a large class with limited space, send only a few students at a time, extending the activity.*

1. Take your students out to a natural area. It may be a nearby park or forest, or it might be on the school grounds. Select and assign a place where each student can sit and observe nature, far enough away from other students so that each can remain alone and quiet. Have students sit for at least five minutes, observing the area. After a specific period of time, recall students.
2. Have students draw a picture or write a poem about their magic spot.
3. Discuss and share individual experiences.

### SOUNDS / COLORS

*Setting: A place where you and your students can sit quietly, free from artificial sounds.*

1. Either individually or as a group, sit quietly in a place where natural sounds can be heard, as free from man-made sounds as possible. Ask students to close their eyes and listen for natural sounds, counting each new sound on their fingers. How many different sounds were heard?
2. Repeat this process with eyes open (mouths shut) and count colors. How many true colors can they find? How many shades of green? Blue?

### STILL HUNTING

*Setting: A natural area (similar to, or the same as, Magic Spot) where each student can sit alone.*

1. If you happen to be in or near an area where you can observe animals, expand on the Magic Spot activity by asking students to observe an animal as closely as possible (spider, ant, bird, squirrel, rabbit, etc.) without it running away. Domestic animals could also be used, such as dogs or cats.

As a homework assignment,  
ask students to observe their pets'  
habits and characteristics.

## **SOLO WALKING**

*Setting: A natural area where students can walk alone for a short period of time. This could be a quiet natural area with a path or road, or else along the fence-line around your school or playground. Two adults are needed with a larger group. (Consider doing this activity with smaller groups.)*

1. Take your students to a natural area and have them line up single file. At a designated point of your choice, stop the group and send the other adult to a second point up to a quarter mile up the trail or road to wait for, and gather the students.

**Adult # 1:** Explain to your students that they will be walking alone for a short period of time and try to eliminate all fear, assuring them that the trail is clear and that the other adult is waiting for them. The students should walk as quietly as possible while observing the environment around them.

2. Start the students on their solo walk, one at a time, with a sufficient amount of distance between each student. Ideally, they should not be able to see the next student in front as they are walking. (Depending on the number of students, consider telling a story or discussing something to the waiting group as individual students are sent on their way).

**Adult # 2:** At the designated stopping place, try to sit close to the path or trail, partially hidden so that students could walk by without seeing you. As students get close to you, use a voiced call such as that of an owl to get their attention. Ask them to sit next to you quietly or in silence until the next student arrives. Repeat until all of the students are quietly sitting together. Adult # 1 will be the last person to join the group.

3. Discuss and share experiences.



## **MAPPING**

*Setting: Any natural area*

1. Assign each student, or group of students, to study and map a specific area. Have them locate and name all key features within their designated area. Can they memorize the landmarks?

2. When all maps are completed, experiment by having an individual or a group direct another to a specific spot within their assigned area.

## **Enrichment**

- The selected activities are primarily from the work of Joseph Cornell, author of Sharing Nature With Children and other books. However, the activities are also found in a variety of other published teachers' guides, just a few of the myriad games and activities dealing with learning about, observing and appreciating nature. See References and Resources for a list of some of the many excellent guides available.

# APACHE COUNTRY 1700-1900

