

Colorado National Monument

Environmental Education

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Animal Adaptations: Pre-Field Trip Activity
(4th grade, *An Alcove for an Abode, Desert Dwellers*)

Name _____

List three reasons why it would be hard for you to live in the desert:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

The animals below have **adaptations** that help them survive in the desert.

**Animals
Depend on their
Activities and
Parts
To
Survive**

Adaptation: an activity or physical feature of an animal or plant that helps it survive in its environment.

Who Am I?

Draw a line to match the description with the animal.

I can swoop down at speeds over 250 mph to capture my prey, smaller birds.

I am an excellent jumper and get all the water I need from the plants I eat.

I pant like a dog to keep cool in the heat of the summer.

My big ears release heat to help me stay cool.

My large tail helps me balance as I climb through the trees in search of food at night.



Ringtail



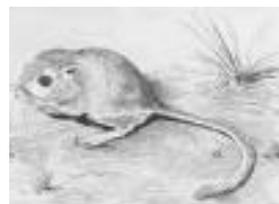
Desert Bighorn Sheep



Desert Cottontail Rabbit



Peregrine Falcon



Kangaroo Rat

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Answer Key

List three reasons why it would be hard for you to live in the desert:

- 1) _____ **It is hot.** _____
- 2) _____ **There is not much to eat.** _____
- 3) _____ **There is not enough water. There is not much shade.** _____ **Etc., etc.** _____

The animals below have **adaptations** that help them survive in the desert.

Animals Depend on their Activities and Parts To Survive

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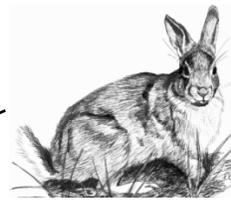
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Desert Bighorn Sheep



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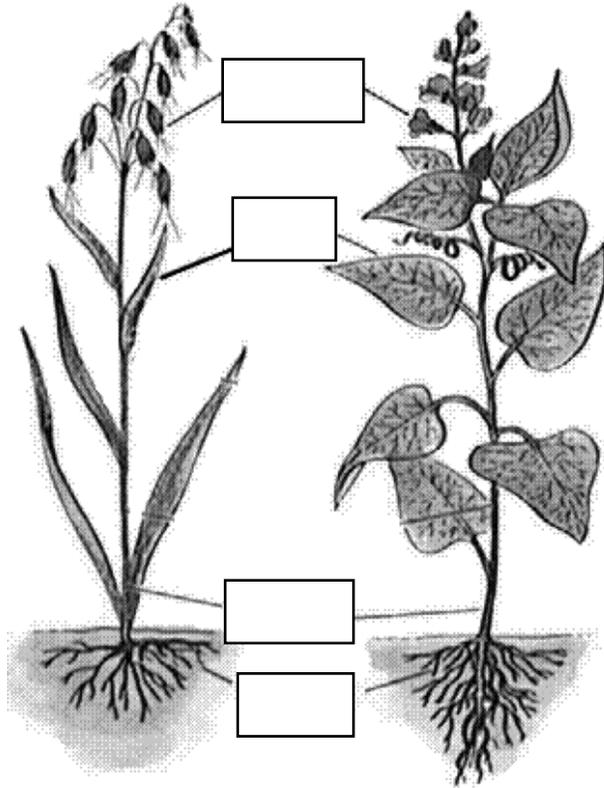
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Plant Adaptations: Pre-Field Trip Activity
(4th grade, *An Alcove for an Abode, Desert Dwellers*)

Name _____



As you will see during your field trip to Colorado National Monument, plants come in all shapes and sizes. Even though they look different, they all have the same parts.

Label the parts of the plant using words from the word bank.

Word Bank

Stems	Leaves
Roots	Flowers

Use the word bank from above.

Write the name of the plant part next to the definition.

Absorbs water and nutrients for the whole plant _____

Moves food and water between the roots and leaves _____

Where pollination takes place and seeds are formed _____

Uses sunlight, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and water (H₂O) to make food _____

Colorado National Monument is a high elevation desert. Hot summertime temperatures, cold winters, and an average rainfall of about 10 inches describe the climate here.

List two reasons living in the desert is a challenge for plants.

1. _____

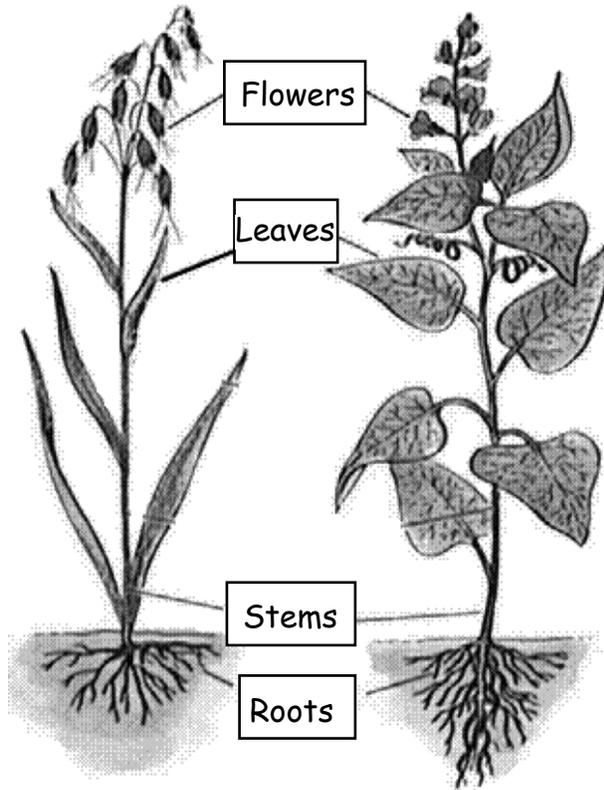
2. _____





Plant Adaptations: Pre-Field Trip Activity
(4th grade, *An Alcove for an Abode, Desert Dwellers*)

Answer Key



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Word Bank

Stems	Leaves
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Use the word bank from above.

Write the name of the plant part next to the definition.

Absorbs water and nutrients for the whole plant _____ Roots

Moves food and water between the roots and leaves _____ Stems

Where pollination takes place and seeds are formed _____ Flowers

Uses sunlight, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and water (H₂O) to make food _____ Leaves

Colorado National Monument is a high elevation desert. Hot summertime temperatures, cold winters, and an average rainfall of about 10 inches describe the climate here.

List two reasons living in the desert is a challenge for plants.

1. _____ Answers will vary. Getting enough water is a challenge.

2. _____ Too much sun, losing water, animals eating plants are all challenges.



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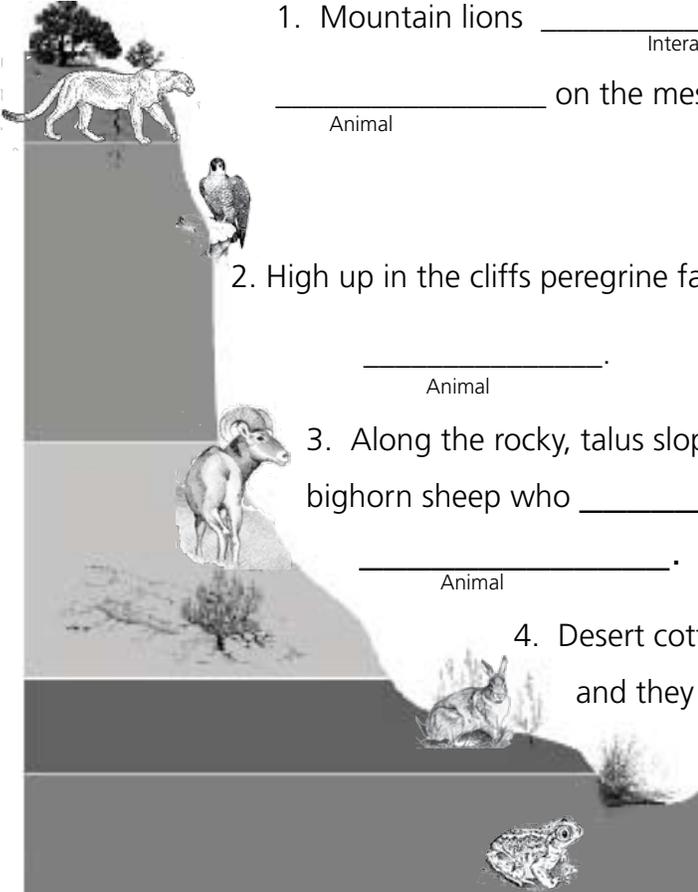
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Animal Adaptations: Post-Field Trip Activity
(4th grade, An Alcove for an Abode, Desert Dwellers)

Name _____

Complete the five sentences below by writing an interaction and an animal that lives in each life zone.
There is more than one correct answer for each sentence.



1. Mountain lions _____
Interaction
_____ on the mesa tops.
Animal

2. High up in the cliffs peregrine falcons _____
Interaction
_____.
Animal

3. Along the rocky, talus slopes you can find desert bighorn sheep who _____
Interaction
_____.
Animal

4. Desert cottontail rabbits are often in the sagebrush meadows and they _____
Interaction _____
Animal

5. If you walk along the dry stream beds in the bottom of the canyons, you may see spadefoot toads who _____
Interaction _____
Animal

Animals that live here:

- midget faded rattlesnakes
- golden eagles
- mule deer
- coyote
- collared lizards
- ringtails
- quails
- swallows
- turkey vultures

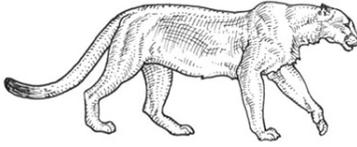
Interactions:

- prey on
- are hunted by
- share the habitat with
- compete for food with



Desert Bighorn Sheep

- Sticky hooves
- Large horns
- Light brown color
- Pants like a dog
- Eyes on the side of the head
- Teeth for grinding



Mountain Lion

- Good jumper
- Good climber
- Stalks prey quietly
- Tan color
- Eyes on the front of the head
- Teeth for tearing

Select either the Desert Bighorn Sheep or the Mountain Lion and choose two adaptations from the list.

Explain how those adaptations help the animal survive.

Example: Teeth for grinding help the desert bighorn sheep survive because it is an herbivore and needs teeth that can grind plants. (Sorry, you may not use this example in your answers.)

1) _____

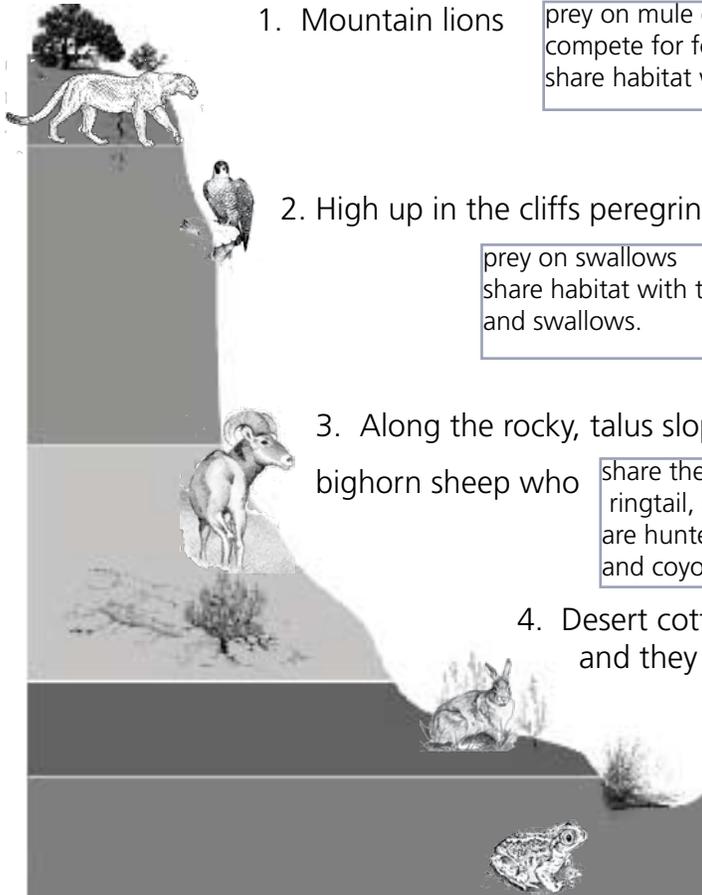
2) _____



Animal Adaptations: Post-Field Trip Activity
(4th grade, An Alcove for an Abode, Desert Dwellers)

Name _____ **Answer Key**

Complete the five sentences below by writing an interaction and an animal that lives in each life zone. There is more than one correct answer for each sentence.



1. Mountain lions prey on mule deer and cottontail rabbits.
compete for food with coyote
share habitat with deer, coyote, rattlesnakes
on the mesa tops.

2. High up in the cliffs peregrine falcons prey on swallows
share habitat with turkey vultures, golden eagles
and swallows.

3. Along the rocky, talus slopes you can find desert bighorn sheep who share the habitat with rattlesnakes,
ringtail, collared lizards, mt. lions
are hunted by mt. lion. golden eagles
and coyote will hunt young sheep.

4. Desert cottontail rabbits are often in the sagebrush meadows and they are hunted by coyote, rattlesnake, golden eagles, mt. lion.
share the habitat with deer, coyote, lizards, quails, mt. lion and
rattlesnakes

5. If you walk along the dry stream beds in the bottom of the canyons, you may see spadefoot toads who are hunted by coyote, ringtails, rattlesnakes
share the habitat with deer, coyote, lizards,
quails, mt. lion compete for food with lizards

Animals that live here:

midget faded rattlesnakes
golden eagles
mule deer
coyote
collared lizards
ringtails
quails
swallows
turkey vultures

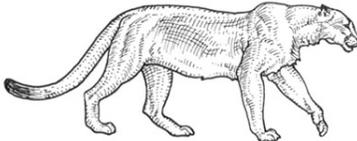
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Example: Teeth for grinding help the desert bighorn sheep survive because it is an herbivore and needs teeth that can grind plants. (Sorry, you may not use this example in your answers.)

Desert Bighorn Sheep

Sticky hooves: helps to climb, avoid predators

Large horns: can fight other males to earn females

Light brown color: helps camaflage from predators

Pants like a dog: Gets rid of heat to survive desert

Eyes on the side: Can see predators all around

Teeth for grinding: Herbavore - see example.

Mountain Lion

Good jumper: surprises prey to eat

Good climber: Helps hide from prey

Can stalk (sneak up) quietly: Helps surprise prey

Tan color: Camoflage from prey

Eyes on the front: Judges distance to attack prey

Teeth for tearing:
Carnivore -sharp teeth for ripping meat.

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Plant Adaptations: Post-Field Trip Activity
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Name _____

Draw a line to match the plant with the adaptation clue.



Juniper Tree

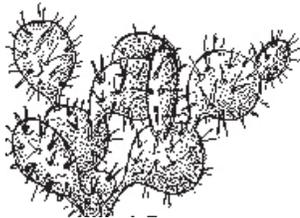
Adaptation Clues

I have hairy leaves which keep moisture inside. I give off a strong smell, which warns animals not to eat me.



Sagebrush

I have deep roots which break apart rocks as I search for water. My scale-like leaves keep moisture inside.



Prickly Pear Cactus

I have shallow roots that absorb water quickly after a storm. I store water in my stem (pads). My spines provide shade and direct rain water down to my roots.

Remember all the parts of a plant? Roots, stems, leaves, and flowers or seeds all have a function that helps the plant. Create a plant that has an adaptation (a tool) that helps it survive in the desert. Maybe it has unique roots for gathering water or maybe the leaves do something special to avoid the heat. Be creative. Imagine a plant that will thrive in the high desert of Colorado National Monument.

Draw a picture of your plant and explain one adaptation it has.

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Answer Key

Draw a line to match the plant with the adaptation clue.



Juniper Tree

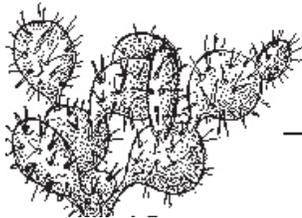
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Draw a picture of your plant and explain one adaptation it has.

Answers will vary.

Encourage students to explain how and why their adaptation helps the plant survive.