

Saguaro

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Saguaro National Park



SUNNY THE SAGUARO AND FRIENDS BECOME JUNIOR RANGERS



Welcome!

Here's how to become a Junior Ranger at Saguaro National Park.

Complete all the activities for your age group in this book and hand it in to a ranger in order to become a Junior Ranger. This activity book should take about 2 hours to complete.

If you're younger than 8 years old, please do at least all of the activities with the



label.

If you're 8 or older, please do all activities with the



and



labels.

There are two locations of Saguaro National Park and this activity book can be completed at either park location. You don't need to visit both park locations to finish all the activities.

Completed Junior Ranger activity books should be returned to park staff at the visitor center of either park location before 4:30 PM.

If you don't finish the activities before leaving, you may send your completed book to:

Junior Ranger Program
Saguaro National Park
3693 S Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85730

My name is _____ My age is _____

1. Safety First



&

Sunny the Saguaro and his friends want to become Junior Rangers—help them out! Junior Rangers teach others about staying safe. Teach Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina about safety in the Sonoran Desert. Put an **X** on top of the unsafe choices and put a **✓** over the smart choices.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



Complete these five safety rules using the words below:

1. "Drink plenty of _____."
2. "In the national park you should always hike with an _____."
3. "Don't put your _____ and _____ under rocks or bushes."
4. "Treat all _____ and _____ with respect."
5. "Watch out for sharp _____ and _____."

Word bank:

animals
water

adult
plants

spines
hands

feet
thorns

2. Scavenger Hunt



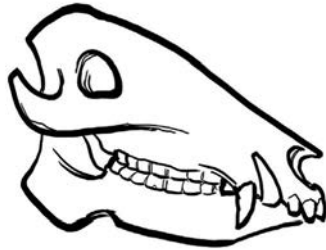
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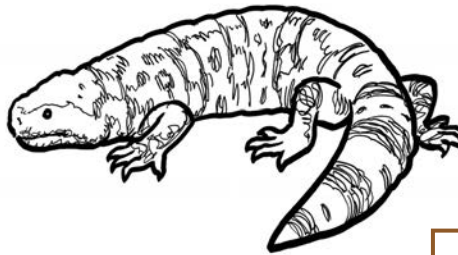
Before hitting the trails, Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina decide to take a look around the exhibits in the visitor center. As you explore the exhibits, try to find as many of these items as you can. Check off the items you find. Not all of these things are found at both of our visitor centers.



☐ *Arizona's state bird*



☐ *Animal skull*



☐ *Venomous lizard*



☐ *Cactus skeleton*



☐ *Bird with a topknot*



☐ *Picture on a rock*



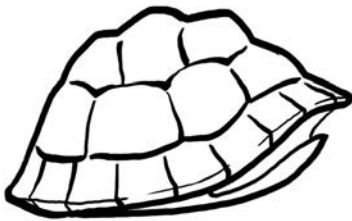
☐ *Native American basket*



☐ *Ranger's hat*



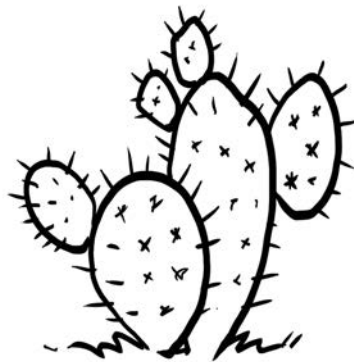
☐ *Animal track*



☐ *Animal shell*



☐ *Stick for harvesting saguaro fruit*



☐ *Cactus pads*

How many did you find? _____

1-4: Your sight is as good as a javelina's.

5-8: You've got a mountain lion's vision.

9-12: You have eyes like a hawk!

3. Parts of the Saguaro



&

"Wow, what's that?!" asks Thelma the Tortoise. That's a saguaro!

A saguaro cactus grows and changes just like a Junior Ranger and looks different throughout its lifetime. Observe a saguaro in the park and draw a picture of it in the space below.

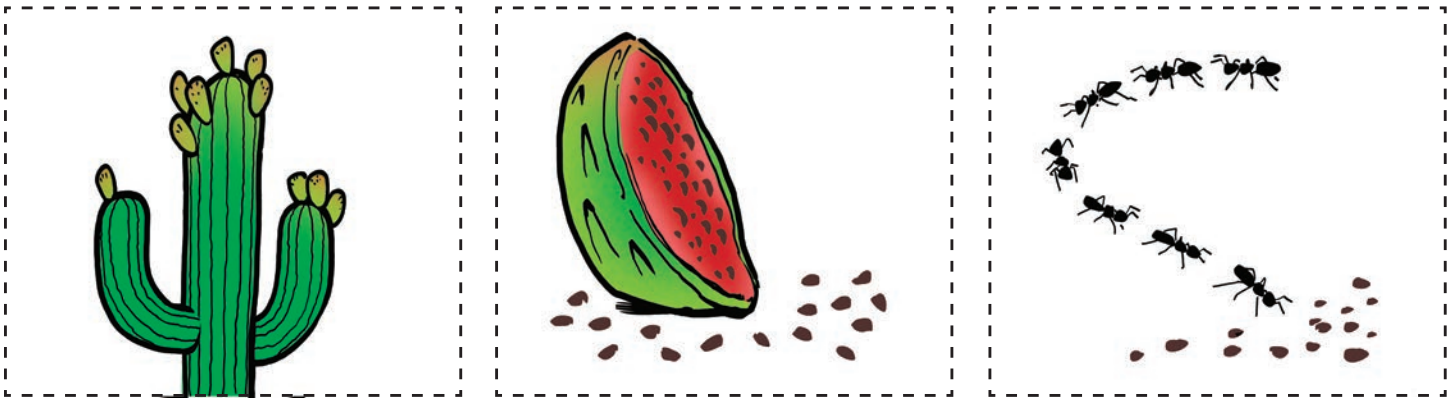
*Hint from Sunny:
Not sure what
saguaro flowers or
fruit look like? Look for
flowers and fruit in the
visitor center exhibit.*



Saguaros first grow flowers at age 30. Draw flowers on your cactus. If pollinated by bats, bees, or birds, saguaro flowers turn into fruit! Draw fruit on your cactus. Saguaros get their first arms at about 60–75 years old. Draw an extra arm on your cactus. How old do you think your cactus is? _____

4. How Many Seeds?

"Yum, my favorite!" cries Harry the Javelina. He's found many fruits scattered on the ground. In every ripened fruit of the saguaro there are about 3,500 small, black seeds which provide moisture and nourishment for many animals. Only a few of these precious seeds will ever become a towering saguaro.



How many fruits are on the saguaro? _____

How many seeds fell out of this fruit? _____

How many ants are eating these seeds? _____



Do the Math

If there are 3,500 seeds in one fruit, how many are in 10 fruits? _____

If a coyote eats half of the 10 fruits, how many seeds are left? _____

If Harry eats 3 of the remaining fruits, how many seeds are left? _____

If ants eat 5,000 of these seeds, how many are left? _____

Now if 1,999 seeds dry up, how many are left to grow? _____

5. Sonoran Desert Communities

“Oh, look, that bird is eating the plant,” says Thelma the Tortoise.
“Now I’m hungry, too...”

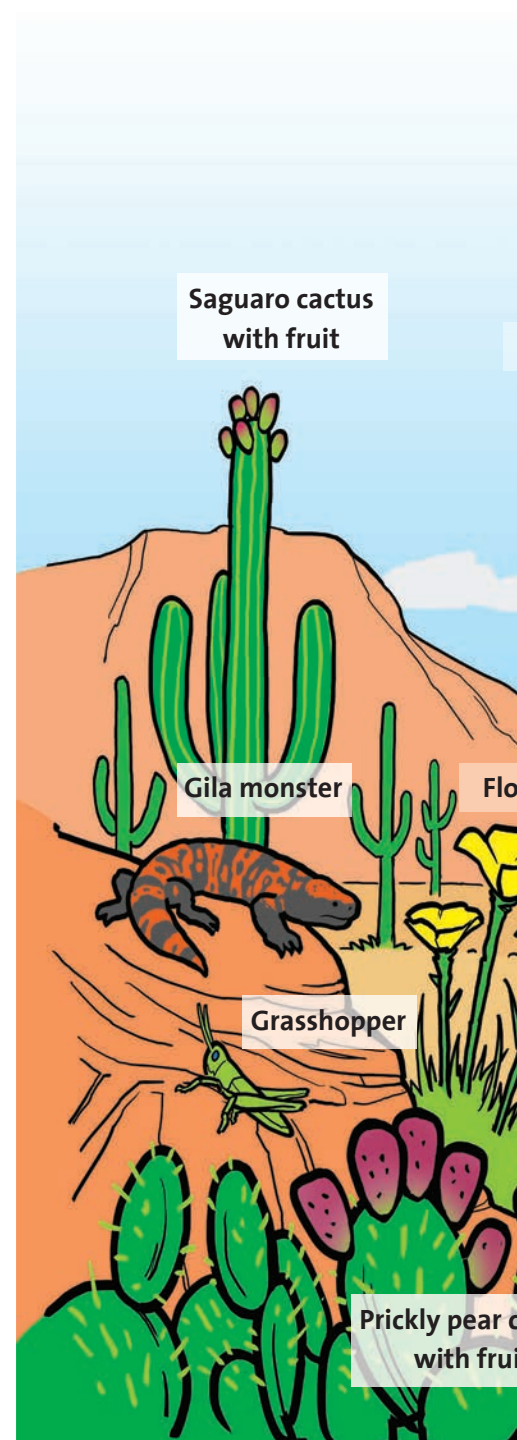
Saguaro National Park is home to many plants and animals which depend on each other to live in this hot, dry place. Together they make up our Sonoran Desert Community. Within this community, the plants and animals can be connected by food chains. For example:

The grasshopper eats the grass. The spiny lizard eats the grasshopper. The roadrunner eats the spiny lizard. The Gila monster eats the roadrunner’s eggs.

Grass ► Grasshopper ► Spiny lizard ► Roadrunner ► Roadrunner eggs ► Gila monster



Draw a line connecting your own, different food chain! Circle the plants and animals in your food chain. When you are done, you will have created a Desert Community Food Web!





&



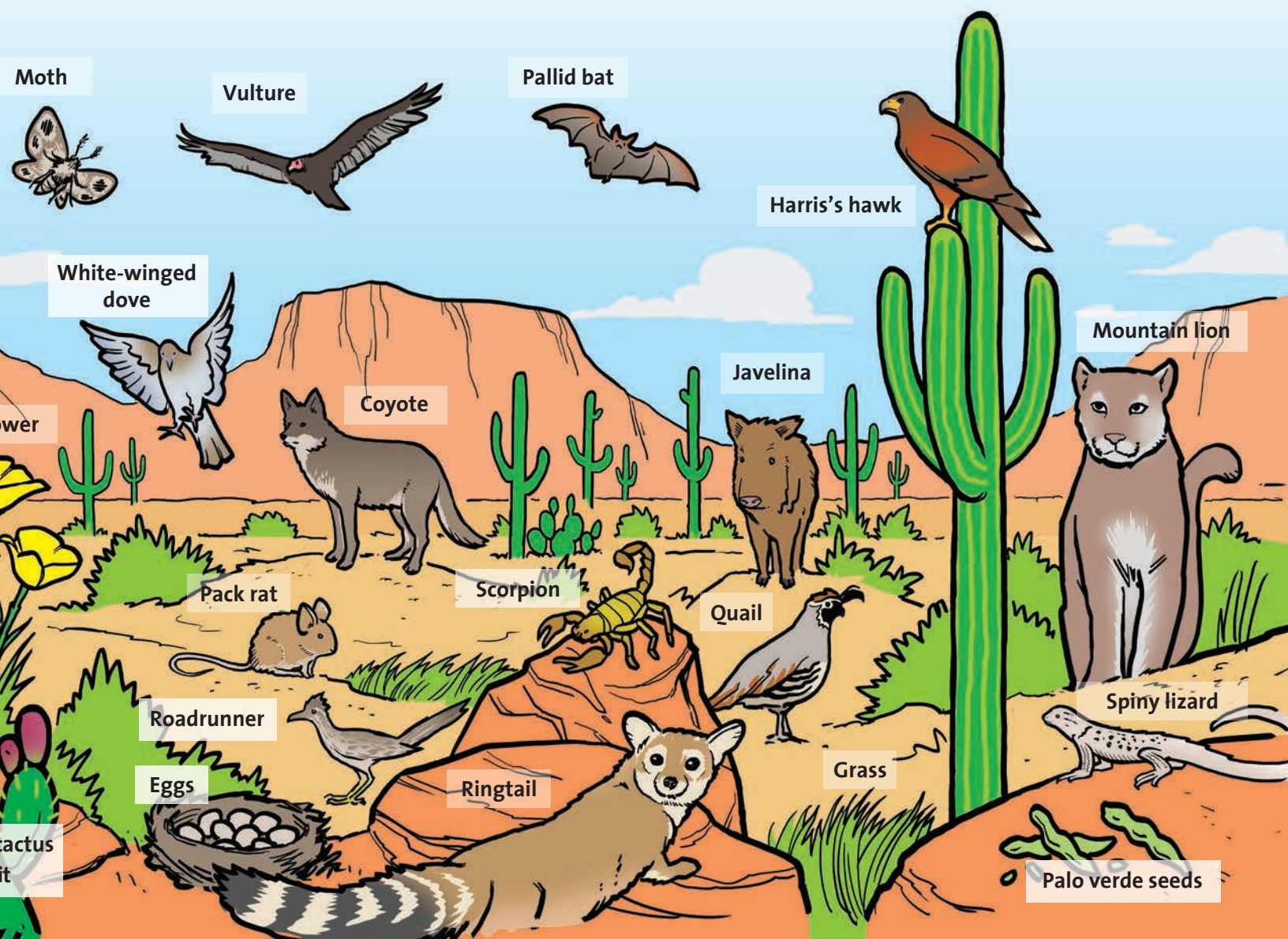
Draw a line on the picture to connect the animals and plants in each of these food chains.

Flower nectar ► Moth ► Scorpion ► Pallid bat ► Harris's hawk

Prickly pear cactus ► Pack rat ► Ringtail ► Mountain lion ► Vulture

Palo verde seeds ► Quail ► Quail eggs ► Gila monster

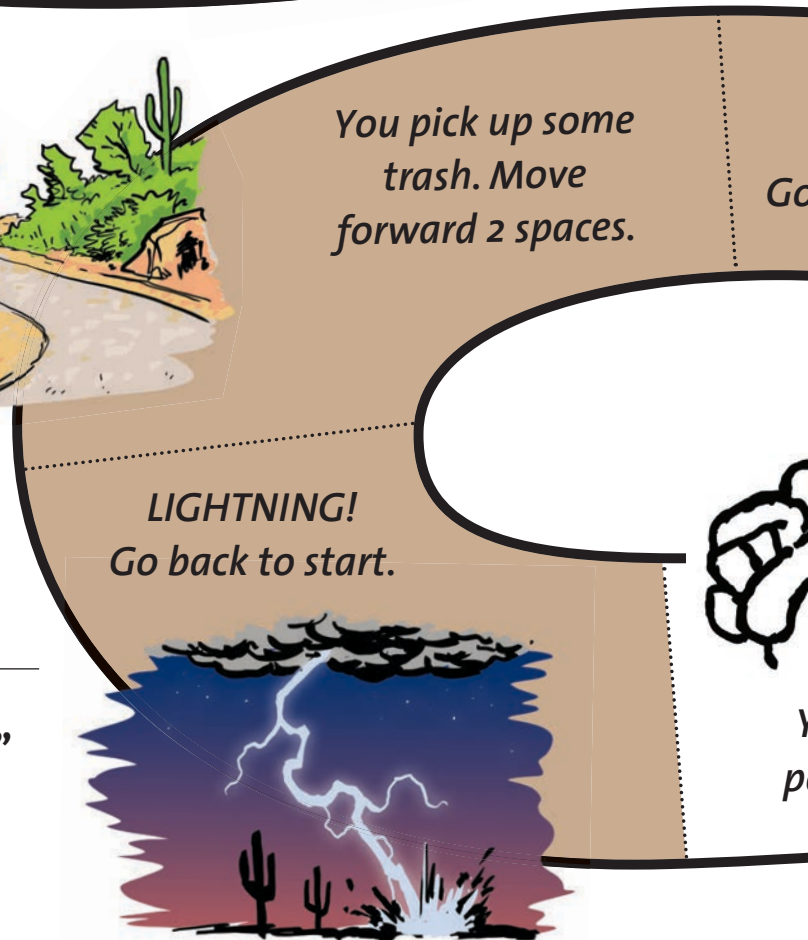
Saguaro fruit ► White-winged dove ► Harris's hawk



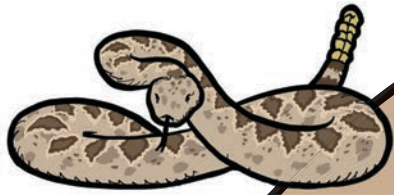
6. Find Your Way Through the Desert



& “Let’s keep exploring,” says Sunny the Saguaro. “There’s so much to see here!” With a friend or family member, play the game to find your way to the visitor center! Use any small objects as markers. Find a coin. On their turn, the player will flip the coin one time. If it lands on “heads,” move 1 space; if it lands on “tails,” move 2 spaces. If you land on a brown space, follow the instructions to move along the path. The first player to reach the visitor center wins!



“I played the game with _____
and _____ won the game!”



Rattlesnake ahead!
Go back 1 space.



You hike to Pink Hill.

You have a picnic.

Too hot for hiking!
Lose 1 turn.



You made it to the top of
Hugh Norris Ridge!
Move forward 2 spaces.



You ran out of water.
Go back to start.



You find a petroglyph.



FLASH FLOOD! Lose 1 turn.

You meet a ranger.

Visitor Center
Go get your badge!

7. A Walk in the Cactus Garden



&



“Let’s go outside now!” says Sunny the Saguaro. *“I want to keep exploring.”* As you walk through the cactus garden outside the visitor center, draw pictures of 3 of your favorite desert plants. Read the signs that identify and describe these beautiful desert dwellers and write the name of the plant by your picture.

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Plant
Name: _____

Plant
Name: _____

Plant
Name: _____



Share an interesting fact you know or read about each of your plants.

Facts: _____

Facts: _____

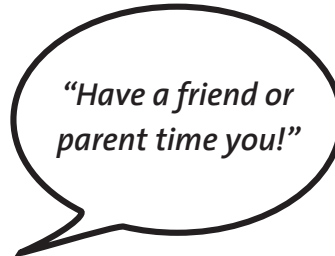
Facts: _____

8. A Sense of Where You Are

*“Everyone experiences the desert differently!” says Harry the Javelina. “I really like to use my nose to **smell!**” Thelma the Tortoise replies, “**Reptiles like me keep in touch with the ground.**”*

Sunny the Saguaro says *“My friends the bats use their **hearing** to find their way to my flowers, and they love the **taste** of my nectar.”*

*“And aren’t we all a **sight** to see?”* laughs Harry.



&



Take 60 seconds (use your *sense of time*) to connect with your surroundings using some of your human senses.

Write, draw, or explain three things you noticed. But be careful so you will not use your *sense of pain!*

Which would you still notice if you were in the middle of a large city like Tucson?

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SENSE OF _____

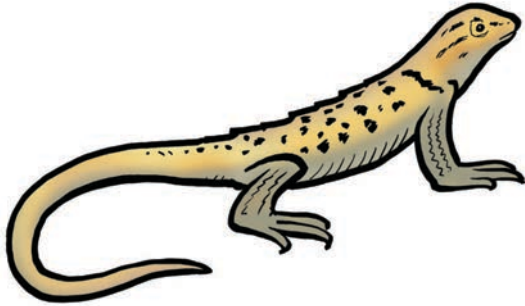
SENSE OF _____

SENSE OF _____

9. Create Your Own Reptile

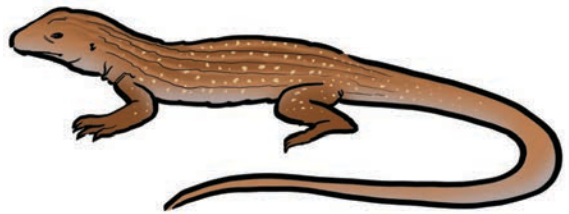
Suddenly, Harry the Javelina spots something out of the corner of his eye—a flash of bright orange! “*What is that?*” he asks. Can you guess what he saw?

Study the pictures and facts about these colorful reptiles who live in our desert.



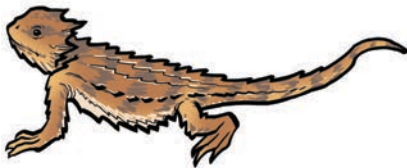
Desert spiny lizard

Eats insects, flowers, leaves; lives on the desert floor



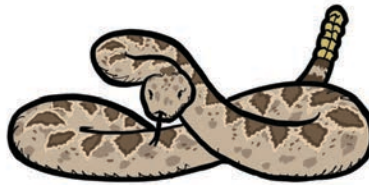
Western whiptail

Eats insects, scorpions, spiders; lives on the desert floor



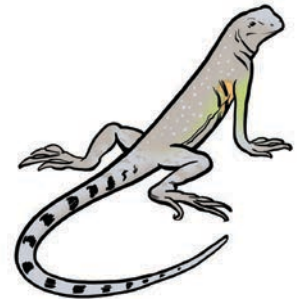
Horned lizard

Eats insects, especially ants; lives from the desert floor to mountain forests



Diamondback rattlesnake

Eats rodents such as pack rats, kangaroo rats, cactus mice; lives on the desert floor



Zebra-tailed lizard

Eats insects, especially ants; lives from the desert floor to mountain forests



Desert tortoise

Eats plants, including cactus pads and fruit; lives on the desert floor in a deep hole in the ground.



Gila monster

Eats eggs and small animals; lives on the desert floor but stays underground most of the year



&



Create your own reptile by putting together parts of at least 3 of the reptiles featured on the previous page. Draw your creation in the box below and give it a new name!

My reptile's name is _____



How does your reptile live with heat and dryness?

Where in the desert does it live?

What does it eat?

10. Petroglyphs



&

“Is this graffiti?” asks Harry the Javelina, pointing at a design on a nearby rock. “No, Harry,” explains Sunny the Saguaro. “That’s a *petroglyph*.” In Greek, *petroglyph* means “rock carving.” The trail to Signal Hill at Saguaro West is the best place to see petroglyphs. Only the people who made the pictures long ago knew what they meant, but you can say what these shapes mean to you.



= _____



= _____



= _____



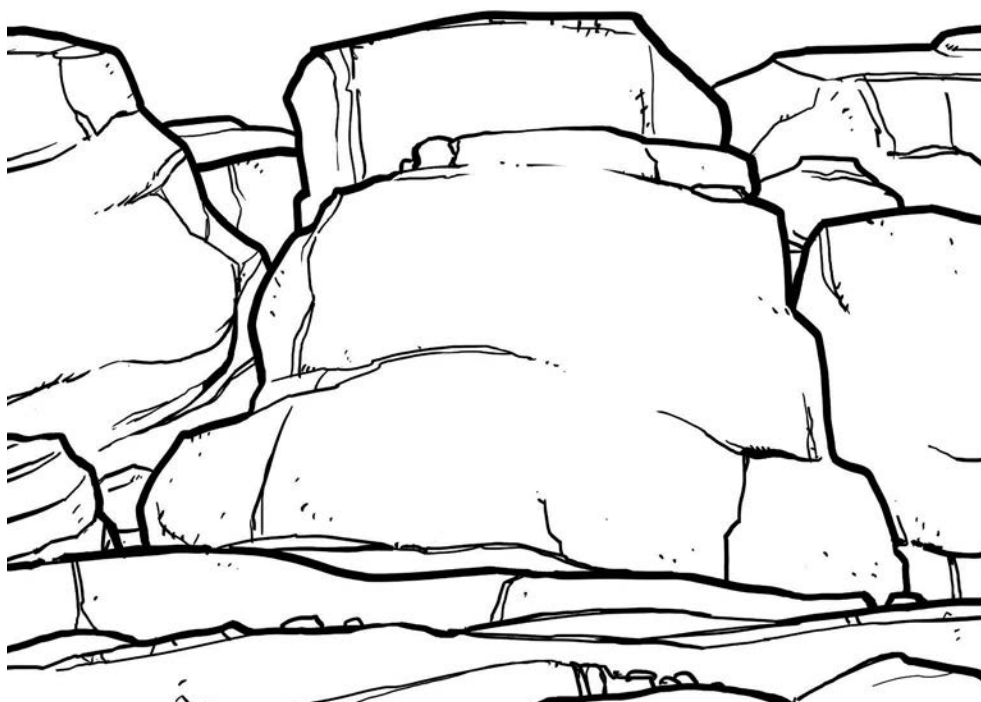
= _____



= _____



= _____



We use symbols too!
Modern signs:



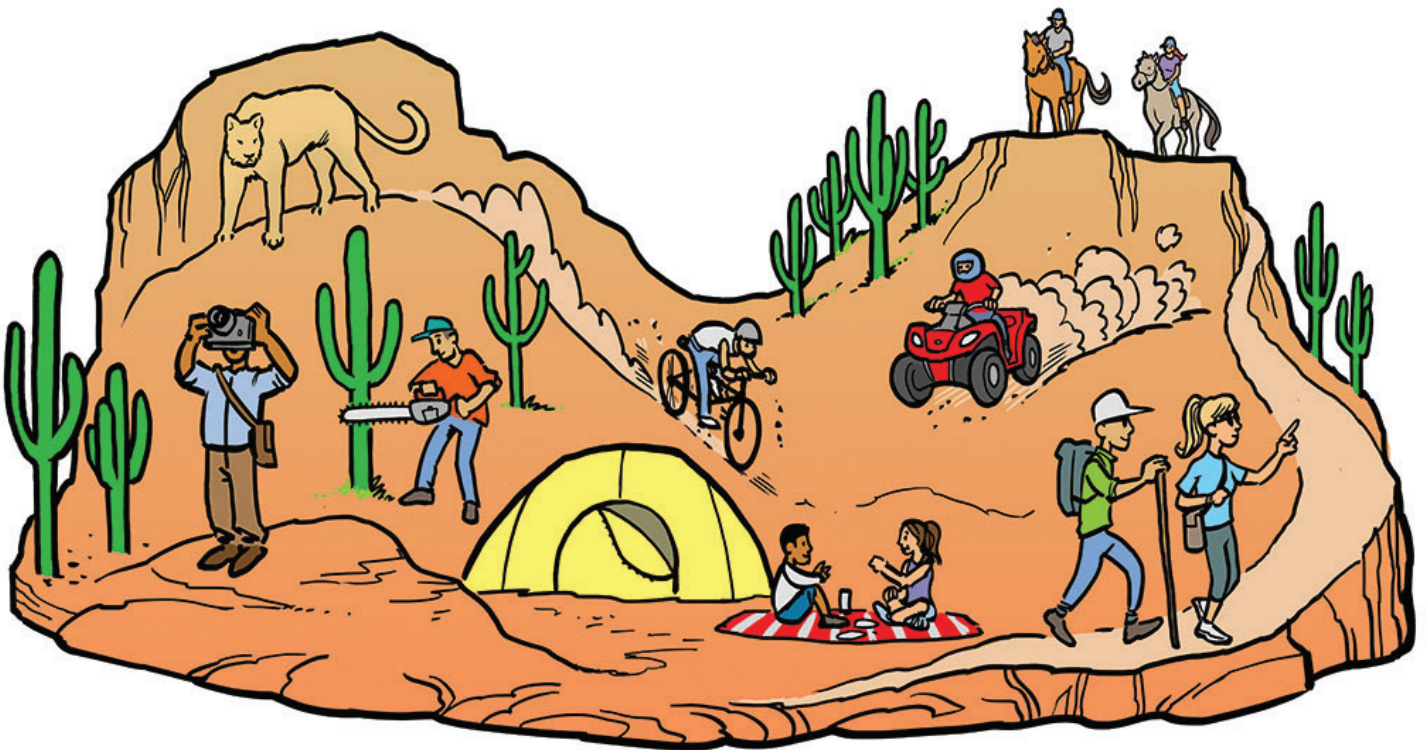
Draw your own petroglyph on the rock above.

What does it mean to you? _____

11. Wilderness



& “It’s so beautiful out here,” says Thelma the Tortoise. “Don’t you wish you could live here?” “Yes,” replies Sunny the Saguaro. “But if people lived here, it wouldn’t be the wilderness anymore.” Wilderness is a place where people only visit, not live. It is a place where machines are not allowed, a place where animals and plants may live freely and on their own. Most of Saguaro National Park is a wilderness area, including desert grasslands and mountain forests. In this picture, put an **X** over things that don’t belong.



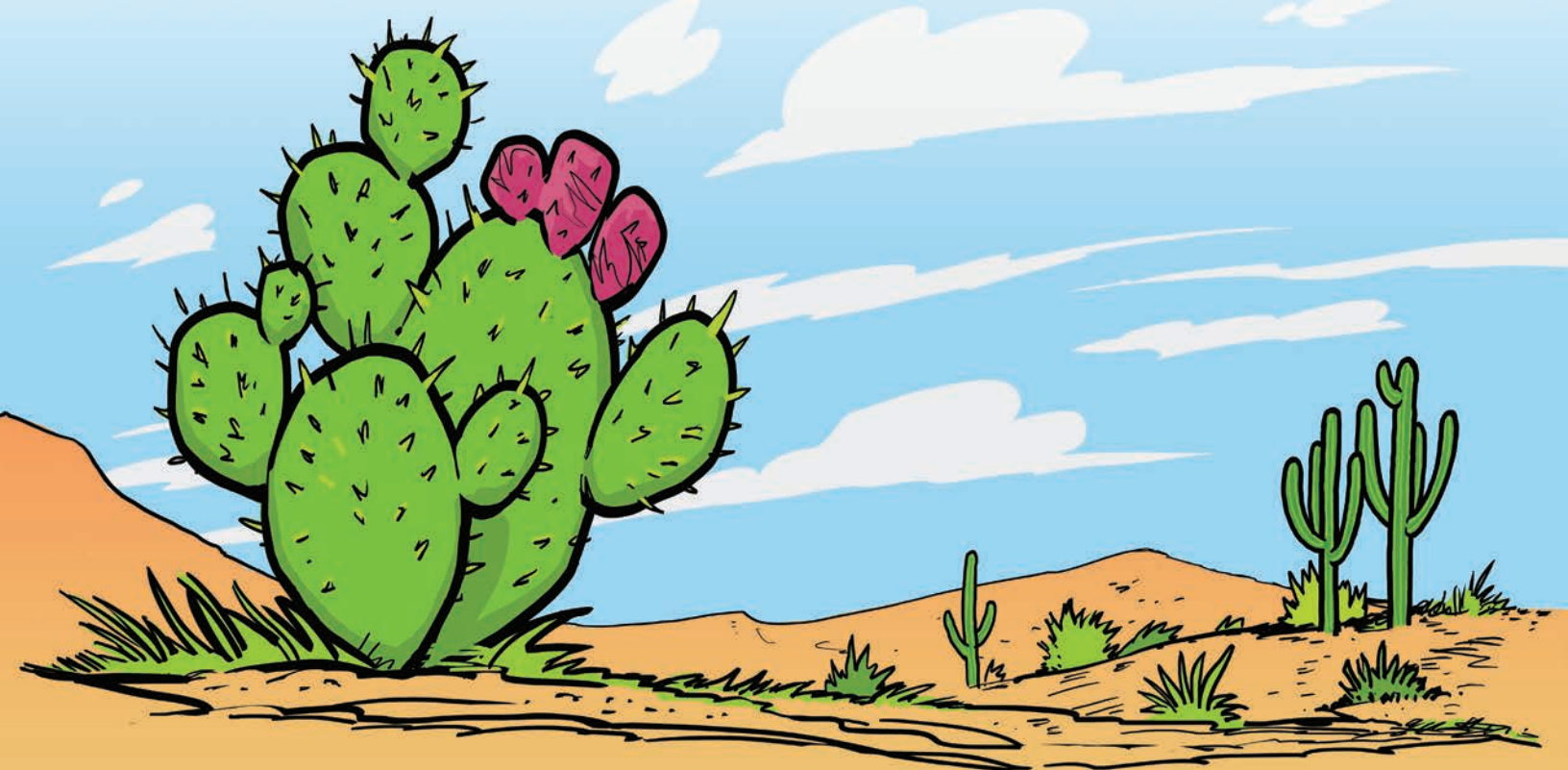
12. Poetry

“I want to remember this forever,” Sunny the Saguaro says. “It’s so beautiful here. I think I’m going to write a poem about it.”

Connect with the desert and the park by writing a poem. You can use some of the words listed below. Before you start, take a few minutes to reflect on your time in the park. Which views did you like best? What do you want to remember?

WORD BANK

juicy	twig	predator	rattle	ancient	red	scat	tracks	life
cactus	monster	steward	fruit	prickly	explore	visitor	protect	
desert	wilderness	ranger	ocotillo	singing	blossom			
majesty	seeds	arms	cycle	critters				





Write a poem with 3 lines. Line 1 should have 3 words, line 2 should have 5 words, and line 3 should have 4 words. Try using some of the words in the word bank on the previous page.

Example:

*In the desert
I love all the plants
Even the spiky cactus*



Try a type of Japanese poem called a *haiku*. A haiku has 3 lines. Lines 1 and 3 each have 5 syllables and line 2 has 7 syllables. Or write your own rhyming poem!

Example (haiku):

*Here at Saguaro
Animals are all around
Which ones did you see?*

13. Trail BINGO

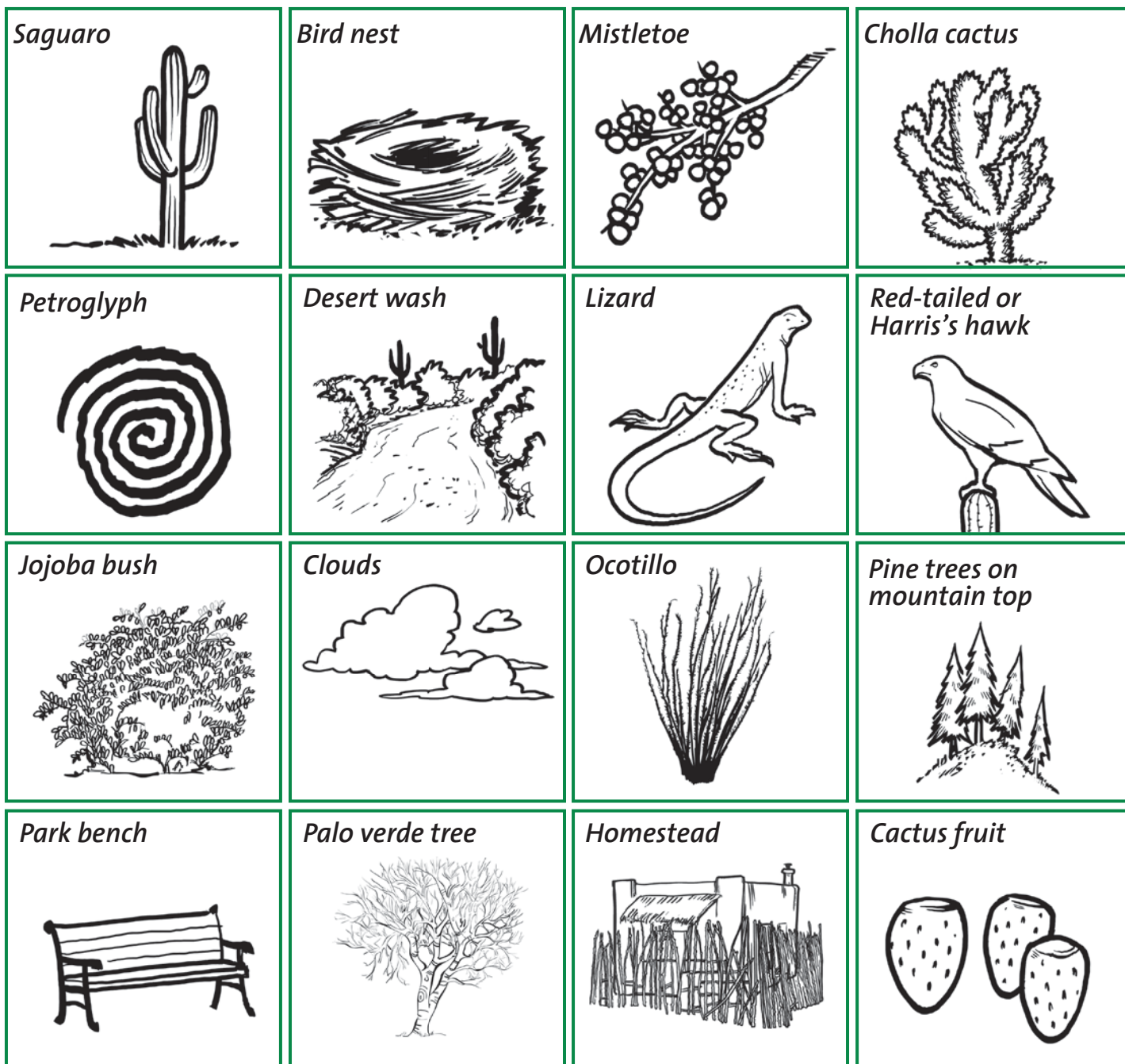


&

Harry the Javelina, always up for some fun, wants to play a game!

“Anybody want to play ‘I Spy?’” he asks. “Or how about bingo?”

As you explore the park, try to get bingo by spotting things on the bingo card. You’ll need to get 4 boxes in a row going up, down, across, or diagonal. Try one of these trails: Desert Discovery, Signal Hill, and Valley View at Saguaro West, or Desert Ecology and Freeman Homestead at Saguaro East.

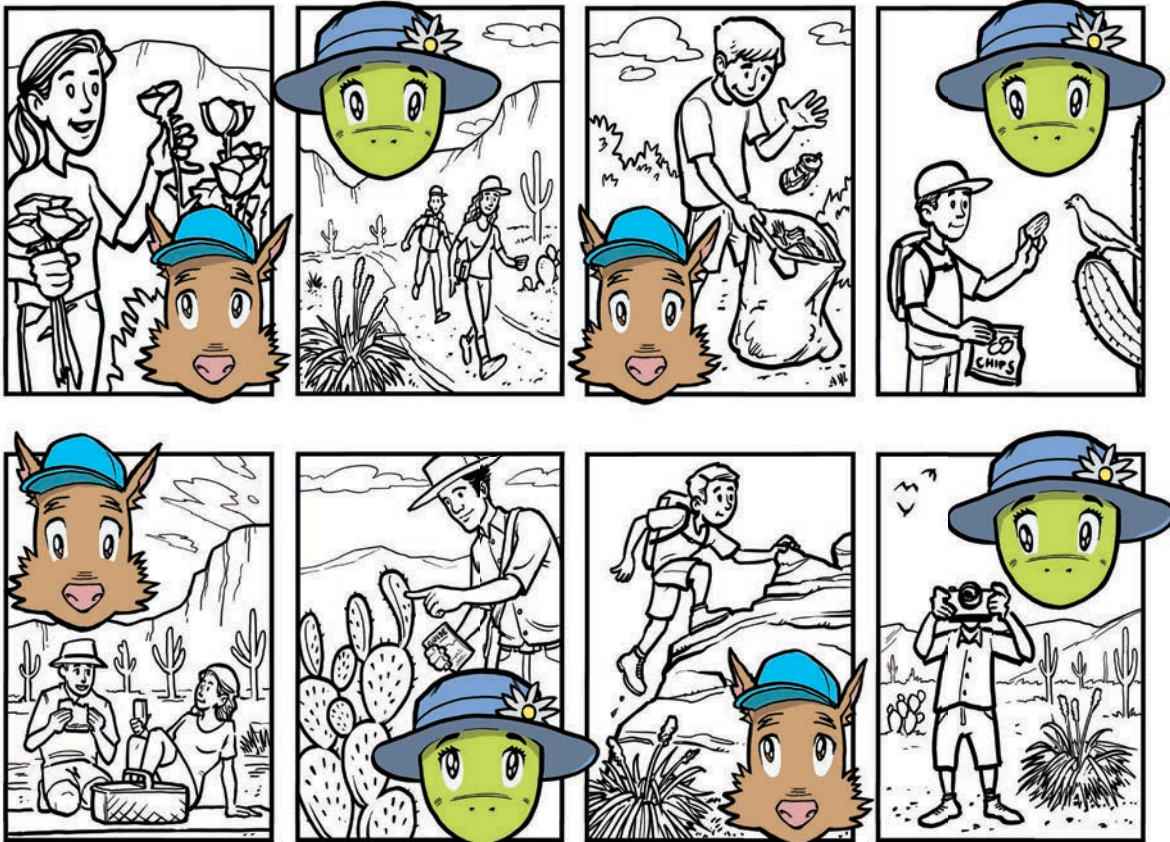


14. Caring for Your Park



Harry the Javelina sees something in a creosote bush. *“Hey, what’s this?”* he asks. *“It’s trash,”* sighs Sunny the Saguaro. *“Somebody didn’t take it with them when they left like they should have.”*

Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina are trying to protect the park. Help them out by looking at the action being performed in each box. If the action is OK in the park, draw a smile on the mascot’s face. If it hurts the park, draw a frown.



Did you know that our desert home is threatened by buffelgrass? This plant was brought to Arizona almost 100 years ago to feed cattle and control erosion. But buffelgrass has grown so much, it is threatening to take over our desert plants. It also fuels destructive wildfires. Look at the drawing of the buffelgrass to the right, then find the matching buffelgrass in the pictures above and draw an **X** through it.



15. Interview a Ranger



"I've learned so much today about Saguaro National Park!" Thelma the Tortoise says. *"So we're done now, right?"*

"Almost," Sunny the Saguaro tells her. *"We just have one more activity to complete."*

You, Sunny the Saguaro, Thelma the Tortoise, and Harry the Javelina are almost Junior Rangers! Discover more about this important job by interviewing a ranger or volunteer at the park.

Write down two questions you would like to ask a park ranger or volunteer about working in a national park. Then go find a ranger or volunteer and ask them your questions!

1.

2.

Ranger or Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____

The Saguaro
National Park
Junior Ranger Pledge

*"As a Junior Ranger
I promise to help
care for and protect
America's National Parks
to keep them safe and
beautiful for everyone."*



This document certifies that

is an official Junior Ranger at

Saguaro National Park

Park Ranger

Date

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Illustrations by Owen Brozman

Western
National Parks
Association



Western National Parks Association (WNPA) is a nonprofit education partner of the National Park Service. WNPA supports parks across the West, developing products, services, and programs that enrich the visitor experience. Learn more at www.wnpa.org.

Friends of Saguaro National Park (FOSNP) is a nonprofit fundraising partner of the National Park Service, created to help preserve, protect and enhance the fragile environment and unique cultural heritage of the Sonoran Desert at Saguaro National Park. Learn more at www.friendsofsaguaro.org.

