



Focus In

Location of activity provided by staff

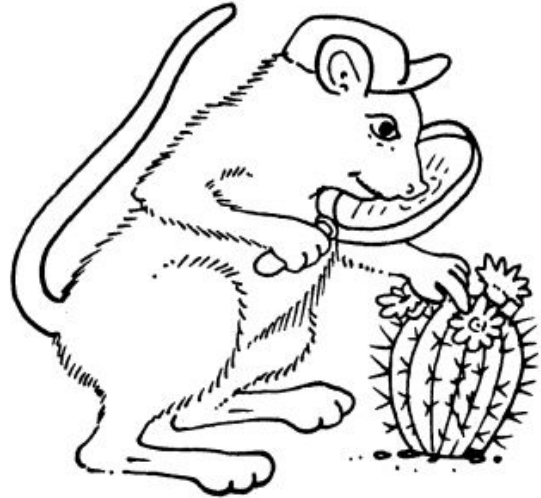
Grades: (suggested) K-3

Summary
Intro/ passing out materials: 3 mins
Activity: 15-20 mins
Conclusion/sharing: 3 mins

Subject: Desert Exploration

Activity Objective:

To have students take a close-up look at the desert as they use a variety of hand lenses and color sticks. They may record their discoveries through a sketch as well.



Materials & Preparation:

PROVIDED:

- 6 Pouches, each containing:
 - * 1 set of color sticks
 - * 1 magnifying glass
 - * 1 hand lens
 - * 1 kaleidoscope
- Clipboards

NOT PROVIDED:

- Paper & pencils
- Large envelope to contain students sketches for safe transport back to school

PREP: Check the contents of the Focus In box, if time (before the first group arrives) take a walk to familiarize yourself and find some interesting features in the area.

Key Vocabulary Terms: lenses, observation, exploration, discovery

Intro/ Passing Out Materials: (about 3 mins)

Explain to the students that we often do not take time to really look at our surroundings. We are only partly aware of what is around us. This center will give us a chance to examine our world more closely. We will have time to sit down and observe a leaf, an insect, a flower, a rock, cactus needles, seeds, or other small parts of nature that we may never notice.

Divide the children into groups of two. Give each group a pouch containing the lenses and color sticks.

Activity: (15-20 mins)

Tell the children that they have 5-10 minutes to explore with their lenses and color sticks. The lenses will give them different perspectives. Suggest looking for small objects...insects hidden beneath leaves, seeds, and flowers. The color sticks are used to match to colors in the desert. We think of the desert as being shades of green and brown, but a closer look shows us that there are many colors hidden in the plants and rocks.

Caution the students to go slowly. Children tend to rush through activities.

After approximately 10 minutes call the students together. Ask them to share their experiences. **What new things did they see? Did the different lenses make the same object look different?**

Give each child a sheet of paper, a clipboard, and a pencil. Tell the children to think about which view they would like to sketch. Then explain that each student will take one lens of his/her choice, go back to the view they liked best, and take time to make a careful sketch of what they see as they look through the lens. Allow only one lens per child for the sketching activity. Collect all the pouches and check the contents to be sure all equipment has been returned.

The children have about 5-10 minutes to work on their sketches. Encourage them to find **one** view they like and sketch it carefully.

Conclusion: (about 3 mins)

About 3 minutes before the end of the activity period, call the students together. Ask them to write their names on their papers and a note of what the sketch is about. (You may call the students back early if you think they want to share their sketches with the group). Place the drawings in the envelope to be given to the teacher later.

Collect all lenses and return them to the bags. Make sure ALL lenses are collected at the end of each period. Collect the sketches, pencils, and clipboards.

Clean Up:

Check to see that each bag contains all the lenses and color sticks. Give the children's sketches to the teacher to be taken back to school. After the last group, return all materials to the Biznaga building.

