

Look Who Lives in the Desert!

Animal Charades

1. As a class, recall desert animals from the book and write them down on a page of paper. Pick as many animals as there are students in the class—think of additional desert animals if more than 21 are needed.
2. Cut the paper into small slips with one animal on each slip. Fold the slips so the writing cannot be easily seen. Put all the slips into a box and stir them up.
3. Each student should select one slip from the box and “act out” the animal for the class while everyone tries to guess what it is. **Remember: NO SPEAKING!** If it is an easy one, try not to give the animal away too quickly. To keep the audience guessing, offer universal clues first (ex: flying could be a bat or a bird) and then move toward more specific characteristics (eating something nasty would confirm it’s a vulture).

For younger classes:

Choose several animals from the book that are especially interesting or new. As a group, write them down, say them aloud and then act them out. Discuss how different animals move.

For older classes:

Make the game more complex by adding a timer plus one factually descriptive word before each animal on its slip of paper. The performing student should act out details, including how many words, how many syllables, what it rhymes with, what it sounds like, etc., following the traditional gestures of charades.

Divide the class into two teams. A player from Team A draws a slip from the box. After he/she has had a short time to review the slip, the timekeeper starts the clock. Team A then has three minutes to guess the animal phrase. If they figure it out, the timekeeper records how long it took. If they do not figure it out in three minutes, the timekeeper stops them and records a time of three minutes. Repeat the process with a player from Team B. The game should continue until every player has had a chance to act out an animal phrase. Total up the time that each team needed for all of the rounds. The team with the shortest time score wins.

Gestures

- A performer usually starts by indicating how many words are in the phrase. From then on, the usual procedure is to act out the words one at a time (although not necessarily in the order that they appear in the phrase). In some cases, however, it may make more sense to try to act out the “entire concept” of the phrase at once.
- Number of words: Hold up the number of fingers.
- Which word you’re working on: Hold up the number of fingers again.
- Number of syllables in the word: Lay the number of fingers on your arm.
- Which syllable you’re working on: Lay the number of fingers on your arm again.
- Length of word: Make a “little” or “big” sign as if you were measuring a fish.
- “The entire concept:” sweep your arms through the air.
- “On the nose” (i.e., someone has made a correct guess): point at your nose with one hand, while pointing at the person with your other hand.
- “Sounds like”: Cup one hand behind an ear.
- “Longer version of :” Pretend to stretch a piece of elastic.
- “Shorter version of:” Do a *karate chop* with your hand
- “Plural”: link your little fingers.
- “Past tense”: wave your hand over your shoulder toward your back.
- A letter of the alphabet: move your hand in a chopping motion toward your arm (near the top of your forearm if the letter is near the beginning of the alphabet, and near the bottom of your arm if the letter is near the end of the alphabet).

RUNNING COYOTE

ROADRUNNER “BROKEN LEG” ACT

UPSIDE DOWN GECKO

RESTING COUGAR

CACTUS WREN DUST BATH

VOMITING VULTURE

KANGAROO RAT POUCHES

KIT FOX EARS

PRANCING TARANTULA

LEAPING BIGHORN SHEEP

SNORTING JAVELINA

HUNGRY BOBCAT

SWOOPING BAT

RATTLESNAKE PITS

VENOMOUS GILA MONSTER

NOCTURNAL OWL

HAWK TALONS

SCORPION BABIES

STINKY STINK BEETLE

ZIGZAGGING JACKRABBIT

TORTOISE SHELL