

## Mountain Explorers: Discover the Santa Cruz Mountains with Sabrina

### Instructions:

Check out this sample lesson plan and activity ideas for inspiration, ideas, and more. Feel free to edit, delete, or highlight to make it your own! These notes are yours to customize. They will not be published anywhere such that you're held to teaching exactly what's here.

### Topics

Nature, Local wildlife, habitats, Hiking and observation, local plant life, Environmental awareness

### Lesson Ideas

Lesson Title

Let's Learn About Where We Are, the Santa Cruz Mountains

Duration

1 Hour

Lesson Plan

1. Introduction to the Santa Cruz Mountains (10 minutes)

- Briefly introduce the location, geography, and significance of the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- Discuss why it's important to learn about our local environment.

2. Nature Walk and Observation (20 minutes)

- Guide the students on a short, simulated nature walk.

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- Encourage them to observe their surroundings and take note of different habitats, such as forests and streams.

## 3. Local Wildlife Exploration (10 minutes)

- Present information about common local animals such as mountain lions, deer, and numerous bird species.
- Introduce some lesser-known creatures found in the mountains.

## 4. Plant Life Identification (10 minutes)

- Show images or samples of local plant species like the coast redwoods and poison oak.
- Encourage students to identify and list different plants they might find.

## 5. Environmental Awareness Activity (10 minutes)

- Engage students in a discussion about why preserving the Santa Cruz Mountains is crucial.
- Brainstorm simple actions they can take to help protect this area, e.g., Leave No Trace practices, picking up litter.

## Materials List

- Map of the Santa Cruz Mountains
- Images or samples of local wildlife and plants
- Paper and pencils for note-taking and sketching

## Adaptations for Different Ages

- For younger children: Use storytelling to introduce wildlife and habitats. Include a short, illustrated story about an animal in the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- For older children: Include more scientific names and require a few sentences about why they find a particular plant or animal interesting.

## Movement Break

- Animal Charades (5 minutes): Have students imitate different local animals. Peers will guess the animal based on movements.

## Bonus Activities

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- Create a Santa Cruz Mountains Diorama: Provide materials such as construction paper, clay, and natural items (leaves, sticks) for students to construct a small model of a mountain habitat.
- Nature Journaling: Encourage students to maintain a journal for a week, noting any information or observations about local nature.

## Series Outline

### **\*\*Week 1: Introduction to the Santa Cruz Mountains\*\***

- Create a large map and identify key locations within the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- Discuss the basic geography and formation of the mountains.
- Watch a video or presentation on the geological history of the region.

### **\*\*Week 2: Nature of the Santa Cruz Mountains\*\***

- Organize a nature scavenger hunt to identify different natural features.
- Collect natural materials to make art projects.
- Create a sensory box with different textures found in the area.

### **\*\*Week 3: Local Wildlife\*\***

- Research and create a scrapbook with pictures and facts about local animals.
- Invite a wildlife expert for a presentation or Q&A session.
- Play a game mimicking the sounds and movements of local animals.

### **\*\*Week 4: Habitats in the Santa Cruz Mountains\*\***

- Build simple models of different habitats like forests and streams.
- Compare and contrast the various habitats found in the area.
- Read stories or watch documentaries about inhabitants of these habitats.

### **\*\*Week 5: Hiking and Observation\*\***

- Plan a guided hike on a local trail identifying landmarks.
- Teach basic skills to observe and record nature, like sketching.
- Discuss how to stay safe and what to bring on nature hikes.

### **\*\*Week 6: Local Plant Life\*\***

- Start a classroom garden with native plants.
- Conduct a leaf rubbing activity with different types of leaves.
- Identify and create a guide of common trees and plants in the area.

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## **\*\*Week 7: Environmental Awareness\*\***

- Discuss the importance of conservation and protection of local ecosystems.
- Organize a small clean-up project in a community park or nearby natural area.
- Role-play scenarios related to environmental challenges and solutions.

## **\*\*Week 8: Weather and Climate of the Region\*\***

- Keep a daily weather chart and discuss patterns observed.
- Create simple experiments demonstrating weather phenomena.
- Compare the climate of the Santa Cruz Mountains to other regions.

## **\*\*Week 9: Cultural History of the Area\*\***

- Research and present on the indigenous peoples and their connection to the land.
- Create a timeline of the human history in the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- Explore local folklore or legends and relate them to the geography.

## **\*\*Week 10: Reflection and Celebration\*\***

- Share personal projects or presentations created throughout the course.
- Host a showcase event with parents invited to see students' work.
- Reflect on what was learned and discuss favorite experiences or activities.

For additional support, reference this [experience outline template](#) which includes tips and prompts to help you develop and lead an excellent Grasshopper Kids experience.

*Note: This lesson plan outline was drafted by Hopper. If you would like to see different results, you can [submit another idea](#), or text us with feedback so we can work to make the algorithm better. We built this tool to help save you time in bringing more kids enrichment experience ideas to life!*

