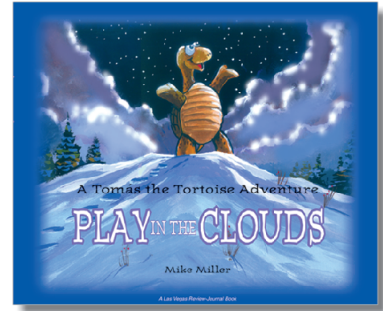


Teaching Guide

Play in the Clouds

A Tomás the Tortoise Adventure



Synopsis

Play in the Clouds is a continuation of the Tomás the Tortoise series of picture books tailored specifically to the Nevada desert. In this book, Tomás is beckoned by faraway clouds on the top of Mt. Charlston from his burrow in Red Rock Canyon. Through his long journey up the mountain, Tomás is welcomed and encouraged by the other animals of the desert including Chacko Coyote, Snowshoe the Rabbit, Hooty Owl, Miguel the Mouse, and a man made of snow.

Themes

Use *Play in the Clouds* to enhance a unit of desert living, habitat, and/or geology, weather and/or friendship and kindness.

Bulletin Board

Begin your unit with a classroom discussion of different types of weather.

1. Make a classroom chart with three categories and title them “Snowy,” “Rainy,” and “Sunny”.
2. List what kinds of activities can be done in snowy weather, rainy weather, or sunny weather.
3. Next, hand out “In _____ weather, I like to _____” worksheet and have students choose a weather type and what they like to do in that weather. For instance, “In rainy weather, I like to splash in puddles.”
4. Have students illustrate their weather statement.
5. Bulletin board should have a title like “My Favorite Weather” or “Any Weather Fun” and worksheets posted.

Extension Activity: Have students survey friends and family at home to find out what their favorite weather is and what they like to do in that weather.

What can you do in different types of weather?

Sunny	Rainy	Snowy
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Play in the Clouds Worksheet #1

In _____ weather, I like to _____.

Play in the Clouds Worksheet #2

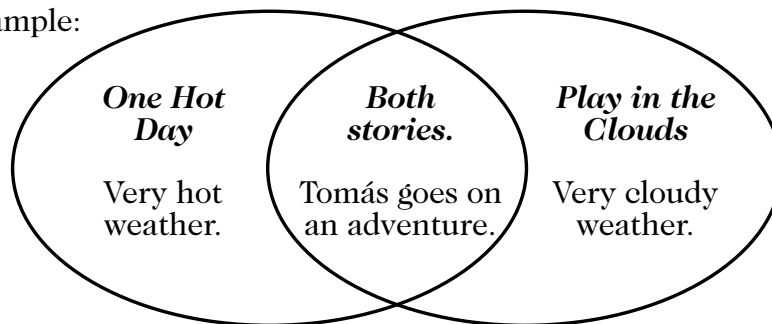
Language Arts Activities

Comparing and Contrasting One Hot Day and Play in the Clouds

After the class reads *One Hot Day* and *Play in the Clouds*, compare the elements of each story using a Venn diagram. Two interlocking circles are drawn. *One Hot Day* is written above the circle on the left and *Play in the Clouds* is written above the circle on the right.

1. As a class, discuss each story: *One Hot Day* and *Play in the Clouds*.
2. Write elements that pertain only to *One Hot Day* in the left circle and elements that pertain only to *Play in the Clouds* in the right circle. Elements that are similar to both stories are written inside the interlocking parts of both circles.

For example:



Extension Activity: Have students make their own Venn diagram and compare and contrast two characters from the story.

Word Associations

Ask students to call out single words they associate with the story *Play in the Clouds*. List them on the board. Words can include character names, animals, places, weather, and anything else that comes to mind while considering this story. Next, have students individually or as a class depending on skill level:

1. Write them alphabetically.
2. Classify the words by noun, adjective, taste smell, feel, etc.
3. Say rhyming words after one of the associated words presented orally, or write lists of rhyming words under each associated word.
4. List antonyms or synonyms for each word.

Extension Activity: Use the words in a new story.

Living in a Desert Climate

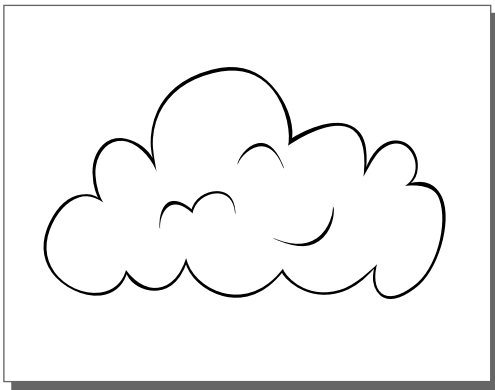
Talk about desert life and climate. Ask students what they like and dislike about living in the desert. What benefits do they have living in this climate compared to living in say a Midwest or Eastern United States climate? Have each student write a short essay about what their favorite thing about living in the desert is.

Cloud-Shaped Stories

Shapely stories are fun for students to write because they are written in the shape of the object they are about.

1. Direct students to draw a cloud on a large piece of paper or use the reproducible worksheet provided.
2. Upper level students can write a story about a cloud around their cloud. Lower level students can write descriptive words about clouds around their cloud. It might be necessary to brainstorm some words beforehand.

Extension Activity: Fill inside of cloud with shaving cream using a paint brush for a cloudy effect.



Play in the Clouds Worksheet #3

Using Descriptive Language

Stories are always more exciting when you can picture them happening in your mind. Pretend that the class has just walked onto the playground and it is covered with snow. Write words on the board or individually that describe what it might be like.

1. What do you smell?
2. What do you taste?
3. What do you hear?
4. What do you see?
5. What do you feel under your feet?

Critical Thinking Activities

Prereading:

- Let students know that *Play in the Clouds* is another Tomás the Tortoise adventure. Discuss the first book in the series, *One Hot Day*. Talk about the adventure Tomás went on and the animals he met along the way.
- Show the students the cover of *Play in the Clouds*. Have them predict what might happen in this adventure and animals Tomás might happen upon.

Reading:

Here are some questions to ask students while reading or after reading *Play in the Clouds*.

- What time of year might this story take place?
- Why did Tomás want to visit Mt. Charleston?
- Why doesn't the coyote go with Tomás on his adventure?
- What did Tomás do to make it easier for him to walk in the snow?
- What kind of man did Tomás meet in front of the cabin?
- Why couldn't Tomás drink water from the stream in the pines?
- Where did the snow on Mt. Charleston come from?
- Do you think a real desert tortoise might make this trip to the top of Mt. Charleston?

Postreading:

In a classroom discussion, discuss the adventures Tomás has been on from *Play in the Clouds* and *One Hot Day*. Talk about the different types of weather in each story.

Art Ideas

Let It Snow

Tomás finds his favorite desert to be covered in snow as he climbs Mt. Charleston to the clouds. Students can create their own winter scene to reinforce the changing of the seasons.

Materials:

Paper

Crayons or watercolors

Window screen

White Tempura paint

Paint brushes

Instructions:

1. Have students draw and color a picture of Mt. Charleston or any mountain area during the summer or springtime.
2. Cut old window screen into 6-9" squares.
3. Brush white tempura paint onto the screen and blow the paint through the screen onto the picture. Continue until the picture is lightly covered in "snow." It might be necessary to thin the paint with water in order for it to easily pass through the screen.

Science

Testing the Temperature

The weather in *Play in the Clouds* changed dramatically as Tomás climbed Mt. Charleston. The weather where we live changes hourly each day. Students will build their own thermometers to record daily temperatures.

Materials:

Drinking water bottle

Food dye

Bowl

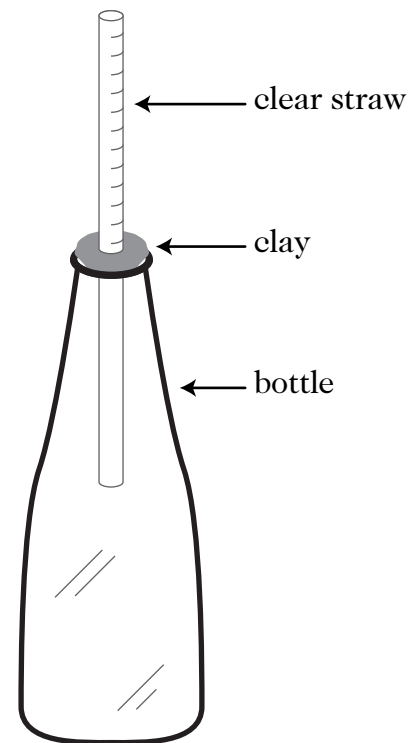
Water

Clear, narrow drinking straw marked with permanent marker in centimeters 1-12

Clay

Instructions:

1. Fill bottle with cold water. Add some drops of food dye to the water, and then top off the bottle with water until it overflows.
2. Roll some clay around the straw about 4 inches from the top.
3. Put the straw in the bottle. Push the clay around the top of the bottle, so the bottle is airtight. Water should rise up the straw.
4. Tape a measurement chart to the straw.
5. Stand the bottle in cold water for a while. The water in the straw should fall.
6. Take and record measurements two times each day. It is best to take a measurement in the morning when students begin the day and in the afternoon before they leave. Chart findings to show the increase/decrease of daily temperatures.



Make a Cloud

Tomás wanted to play in the fluffy white clouds. Here is a great project to make a classroom cloud. In this experiment, water evaporates to form tiny droplets on small pieces of dust in the air to form a cloud. This happens when the air is cooled by the ice.

Materials:

Plastic soda bottle – 2 liter

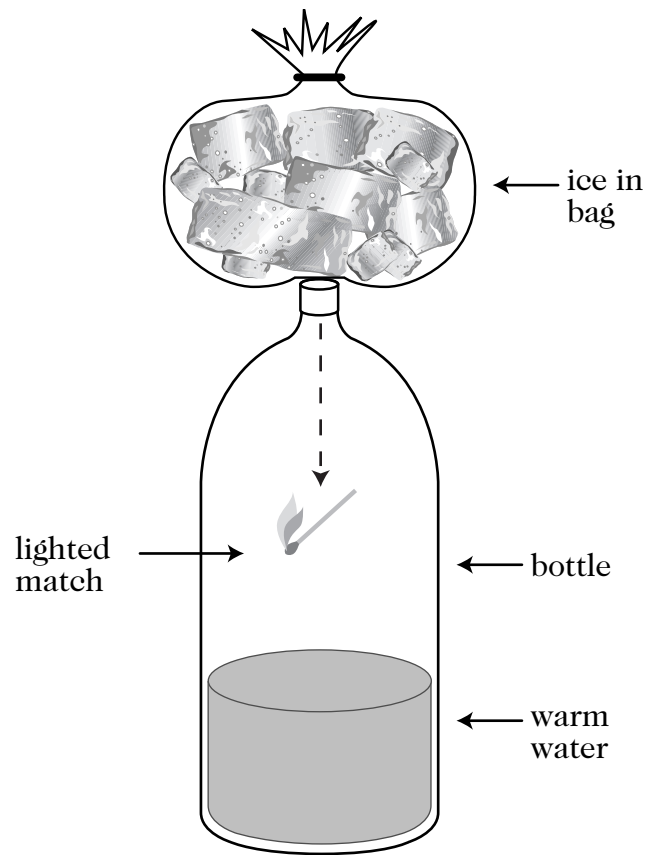
Ice in a plastic bag

Matches

Warm water

Instructions:

1. Fill 1/3 soda bottle with warm water.
2. Light a match and drop it into the bottle.
3. Quickly cover with bag of ice.
4. Watch for a cloud to appear.



Social Studies

What to Wear?

Chacko the Coyote did not go up the mountain with Tomás because he was too cold. How do we prepare ourselves for cold weather conditions? How do we protect ourselves in warm weather?

Materials:

Magazines from various times of year

Poster board

Glue

Instructions:

1. Organize students in groups of approximately 3-4 people.
2. Each group is given a poster board with four sections on it. Each section is labeled as follows: sunny and clear, cloudy and rain, cloudy and snow, and windy.
3. Next, groups are instructed to look through magazines and find clothing that would be appropriate in each climate. Cut and paste pictures to poster.
4. Have groups present their poster and be prepared to explain why they picked each outfit.

In _____ weather, I like to _____

