



Hello, Arizona!

A story-based geography unit

Unit 1:5 of *Hello, United States!*

Please enjoy these sample pages from *Hello, Arizona*. Included in this sample, you'll find an excerpt of one of Thaddeus's journal entries, an activity sheet, and a reflection sheet.

STARRING
THADDEUS



So there I was, lounging on a butte, just having my morning bath and tuna niblets like any normal cat, when I heard a *whoosh* right over my head. There it was again!

Whoosh.

Whoosh.

Whooooooooosh!

Can you guess what it was, Meow? Give up?

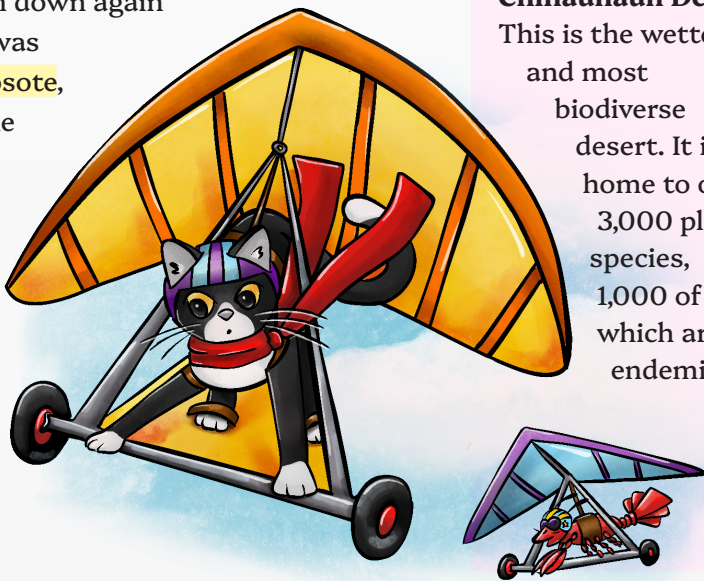
It was Stefano. AND HE HAD WINGS.

Because he was hang gliding right over **Sedona**! What's a Sedona? It's not a *what*, but a *where*—and it's this **intriguing** town we arrived in late last night. Nestled in the **Verde Valley**, Sedona is surrounded by red rock country ... and I mean red rocks that just rise up out of nowhere like FWOOMP! But anyway, back to the hang gliding. I couldn't let Stefano explore the skies alone, so I geared up, got a good running start, and ...

Whooooooooosh!

I had wings, too, Meow! How amazing to be part of that blue sky, looking down at those red sandstone rocks rising like ancient watchtowers over the town. Stefano and I swooped and soared over spectacular landforms like Bell Rock and the majestic Cathedral Rock. We whooshed to the top of a butte and sailed down the other side, counting the layers of sediment left by an ancient sea as we soared past. I even came nose-to-beak with a curious cactus wren, Arizona's state bird!

From our bird's-eye view, we could see the valley reach all the way to the distant **Mogollon Rim** in the north, where the **Colorado Plateau** drops down to the **White Mountains** and then down again to the golden **Sonoran Desert**. The air was filled with the scent of juniper and **creosote**, which Stefano explained was part of the **chaparral**, a unique habitat I'd never encountered before. Looking down, I saw that the chaparral was a shrubby **biome** thick with tough plants like scrub oak, manzanita, and sagebrush. As we swooped down for a closer look, we startled some jackrabbits right out of the shrubs! I guess they've never seen flying cats and crayfish before. (*I promise I only chased them a little bit.*)



? Did You Know?

Arizona is the only state in the U.S. that contains all four of North America's desert regions. Each desert has its own environment, flora, and fauna.

Northwest: Mojave Desert. This is the driest desert. It's known for its dunes and Joshua trees.

Northeast: Great Basin Desert. This is the highest and coldest desert. Most of its precipitation is in the form of snow.

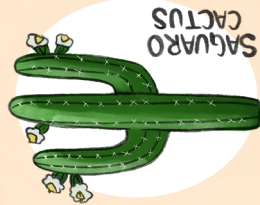
Southwest/Central: Sonoran Desert. This is the hottest desert. It's the only place in the world where saguaro cacti grow.

Southeast: Chihuahuan Desert. This is the wettest and most biodiverse desert. It is home to over 3,000 plant species, 1,000 of which are endemic.

SONORAN DESERT

CHIHUAHUA DESERT

GLUE HERE



SAGUARO CACTUS



OCTOTILLO PLANT



DESERT TORTOISE



JAVELINA

GLUE HERE



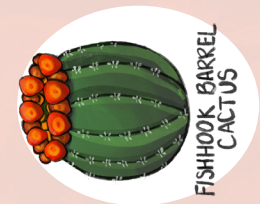
AGAVE PLANT



BIGHORN SHEEP



PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS



FISHHOOK BARREL CACTUS

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GREAT BASIN DESERT

MOJAVE DESERT

GLUE HERE



PINYON PINE



GREAT BASIN RATTLESNAKE



SAGEBRUSH



SALT FLAT

GLUE HERE



COYOTE



JOSHUA TREE



TUMBLEWEED



YUCCA PLANT

GLUE HERE

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★ DAY 3 REFLECTIONS

SPEAKING

Thaddeus loves to explore his surroundings. Have you ever gone on an exploration with friends or family? What did you explore, or what would you *like* to explore?

LISTENING AND COMPREHENSION

1. There are several metaphors and similes in the Day 3 journal entry. How many can you find?
2. What is a sky island? What changes as you climb higher up a sky island?
3. What does Thaddeus mean when he says that he can “almost hear the clang of tools and the voices of miners echoing across the years”?

WRITING

Arizona is full of fun vocabulary words like *caterwaul*, *haboob*, and *cave bacon*. Help Thaddeus write a postcard to his friend Wendell by filling in the blanks with the vocabulary words below!

backcountry ethereal haboob intriguing caterwaul ecosystems
Gila monster spelunking cave bacon sky island javelinas

Dear Wendell,

Greetings from the wilds of Arizona! This place is purr-fectly amazing, though I must say it's full of strange things. First, I put on my headlamp and tried a little _____. I was so excited to find something called _____ hanging from the ceiling ... and then so disappointed to discover I couldn't eat it. What a tragedy!

I also met a _____, a scaly fellow that I found rather interesting and _____. I was about to ask him how he liked life in the desert when I was interrupted by loud wailing, almost like a _____. I thought another cat was hiding behind a cactus, but turns out it was just a pack of silly _____ squealing in the sagebrush.

Then I climbed to the top of a _____ full of trees and bears in the middle of the desert! This land has so many different habitats and _____ to explore. It's all so _____, like something out of a kitty dream when I've had too many tuna niblets before bed.

Oh, and did I mention the _____? I was so dusty after that I had to go get myself vacuumed!

Anyway, I'll be back soon with more tales from the wild and mysterious _____, where few cats have tread.

Purrfully yours,



Thaddeus

Answer Key: spelunking, cave bacon, Gila monster, intriguing, caterwaul, javelinas, sky island, ecosystems, ethereal haboob, backcountry

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If you and your student would like to continue Thaddeus's journey through the beautiful state of Arizona be sure to check out the complete *Hello, Arizona!* unit with over 30 pages of educational fun that makes geography exciting and memorable.

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