



The Desert Speaks

902 *Across the Great Desert*
Teacher Information Sheet

Program Description

Across the Great Desert follows the 1909-1910 expedition of Norwegian scientist/explorer/writer, Carl Lumholtz, to the Gran Desierto (the Great Desert) in Sonora, Mexico. The adventurer explored the last unexplored region of North America in the early part of the 20th century, spending months among the waterless sand dunes and salt mines of Northern Mexico from the Colorado River delta to the coast of the Sea of Cortez.

Teaching Tips

1. Discuss vocabulary words
2. Introduce the episode by giving a brief summary of the program and telling students what information you would like for them to gain from viewing the program.
3. Review the information on the viewing sheet prior to watching the episode.
4. Allow time at the conclusion of the program for discussion and the completion of the viewing sheet. Allow students to work alone or in small groups to complete the *Expedition Planning Form*.
5. Investigate the related web sites listed below.

Vocabulary Words

- Carl Lumholtz a Norwegian explorer who in 1909 led an expedition to the Great Desert in Sonora, Mexico
- expedition a journey or voyage made for a specific purpose such as for exploration
- basin a hollow or depression in the earth's surface
- saline containing or tasting of salt
- limestone a sedimentary rock consisting primarily of calcium carbonate
- desolate barren

Related Web Site

Tracking a Vanished People Through the Sierra Madre
An article from the online version of Smithsonian Magazine
<http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues96/nov96/sierramadre.html>

The Desert Speaks
Across the Great Desert
Student Viewing Sheet

Fill in the blanks with information provided in the video.

1. In the year _____ , _____ an explorer from the country of _____ , led an expedition to one of the most desolate regions of _____ . The story of his journey was written in a book called _____ .

2. Why did Lumholtz choose to explore the Great Desert of Sonora, Mexico? _____

3. The greatest difficulty facing Carl Lumholtz and his men was a lack of _____

4. Why did Lumholtz walk much of the way on his journey? _____

5. What kinds of food did Lumholtz and his men eat along the way? _____

**Lumholtz saw a large variety of useful plants on his journey.
Match the following plants with their description.**

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | the leaves of this plant can be brewed into a tea to cure fever and colds |
| _____ | this tree provides a lot of shade, its wood makes very good firewood |
| _____ | a tuberous plant that is eaten by some birds |
| _____ | sends out roots 15 - 20 feet long in order to anchor itself and obtain moisture |

* **codina** * **creosote** * **dune buckwheat** * **ironwood** *

Name 3 animals that Lumholtz saw on his journey. _____

Expedition Planning Form

If you could plan an expedition to any place in the universe, where would you go. How would you prepare? Use the *Expedition Planning Form* to chart the details of your expedition.

Destination _____

Why did you choose this place to explore? _____

Choose your crew. Who would you take with you? _____

Why did you choose these people to be members of your crew? _____

How long will you be gone? _____

What will the weather or other climate conditions be like? _____

What supplies will you need? _____

If you discover new geographic features such as mountains, lakes or rivers, what will you name them? _____

What difficulties or challenges do you think you might face on your journey? _____

When your journey is all over, will you write a book about your adventures? _____

If so, what will you call your book? _____

The Desert Speaks
Across the Great Desert
Answer Key

Fill in the Blank

1. 1909, Carl Lumholtz, Norway, Mexico, New Trails in Mexico
2. he liked to visit places that other people hadn't visited
3. water
4. he was curious; he liked to examine cactus, flowering plants and tracks along the way
5. beans, corn, flour and little bits of meat

Matching

Creosote

Ironwood

Codina

Dune Buckwheat