

Lesson Plan

Mystery at Lake Cachuma

Primary subject: Character Education

Secondary subjects: geography, Native American history, vocabulary

Grade Levels: 4 through 6

Note: It is vital that students be allowed, above all, to enjoy the book as an intriguing story. Removing the "study" element allows them to identify more closely with the characters, and allows the character trait to be caught more than taught.

Objectives: Students will:

- understand what character is and be able to name several character traits
- know which character trait is of greatest importance
- apply character to daily life
- know the basic history of the Chumash tribe
- know the location and geography of the Mojave Desert and Lake Cachuma
- enrich vocabulary

Context: **Mystery at Lake Cachuma** specifically addresses the need for Character Education material for upper elementary students. In addition, it provides cross-disciplinary study, and can be integrated into your overall curriculum.

Resources: For each student, you will need a copy of the book **Mystery at Lake Cachuma**, student questionnaire sheet and test (both reproducible). You will need also one questionnaire answer sheet and one test answer sheet.

Anticipatory set: Before distribution of the books, read the book's back-cover copy to the students, emphasizing the excitement. Let students guess at what kind of mystery might be at the lake. Distribute the books, and read the 2-page prologue together. Refer to the phrase "character doesn't matter" and, without teacher input or discussions, ask students to write their present understanding of the word "character." Explain to the students that there is no right or wrong answer, since the definition has not been given yet.

Procedure: Hands-off is the key here. Allow students the joy of discovery as they read the book. It should be read as a novel, not as a study book. Students will follow the downloadable student questionnaire (below), answering questions for each chapter as they complete it. Students check and correct their own answers at the end of each section. The teacher will check the accuracy of students' corrections.

Supplementary: For some students, discussion of the book, either in sections or at the end, can be beneficial. The teacher should read, and be thoroughly familiar with, the entire book. Refer to student questionnaire for discussion material.

Assessment: The downloadable student test (below) assesses understanding of the term "character" as well as students' grasp of the book's vocabulary, history and geography. Students will demonstrate understanding through completion of the concise definition, and through a short written description of the character's application of the trait. Students will show their grasp of new vocabulary through multiple choice questions. They will respond to questions on historical, geographical and cultural concepts encountered. Finally, they will write a brief essay to demonstrate practical understanding of how to put this character trait into action in their own lives.

Download the following forms as needed. You may print as many as necessary for your own use and for that of your students.

For All Students:

- 01 – Lesson Plan Explanation for the book **Mystery at Lake Cachuma**
- 02 – Student Questionnaire for the book **Mystery at Lake Cachuma**
- 03 – Questionnaire Answer Sheet for the book **Mystery at Lake Cachuma**
- 04 – Classroom Activities for the book **Mystery at Lake Cachuma**
- 05 – Student Test for the book **Mystery at Lake Cachuma**
- 06 – Test Answer Sheet for the book **Mystery at Lake Cachuma**

Supplemental Activities, Crafts and Teaching Tools:

- 07 – Character Chains
- 08 – Character Trees
- 09 – Character Party