



Maggie's Activity Pack

Name _____

Date _____

Winding Through the Atlas Mountains

Take a deep breath. The air is filled with the rich smells of spices. People crowd the marketplace. They look at rows of shoes, lamps, and beautiful carpets. This square is called the *souk* in Marrakech, Morocco. The city is a mixture of ancient sights and modern life. New streets cut through the city. These are busy with cars and buses taking people on their way to work or school.

From the city you can see one of Africa's most beautiful mountain ranges, the Atlas Mountains. These snow-capped peaks are rich with mountain streams, colorful birds, and butterflies. There are pretty villages where the local people greet visitors.

The Atlas Mountain range cuts through three countries: Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. People often think of these mountains as being made up of several different parts. These include the High Atlas Mountains, the Middle Atlas Mountains, and even the Anti Atlas Mountains. Some spots are low, treeless plateaus that seem to fade into the sands of the desert. Other peaks are very high. Only 50 miles from Marrakech is the highest mountain. It is called the Toubkal. Here streams flow with the melting snows. Thick forests cover the steep slopes. Eagles glide above the tree line. The Barbary Macaque calls from a hidden tree. Flowering bushes are playgrounds

for a rainbow of butterflies. You see white, yellow, blue, and other colorful wings flutter by. Trailing arbutus cover the forested slopes. Their tiny flowers hide beneath the green of their leaves. There are special spots to protect the endangered Barbary Sheep. Other types of animals include monkeys and wild boars. But, the clearing of land has made it difficult for some animals to survive.



From Marrakech, a winding, steep road carries visitors to villages. Small local rest stops offer glasses of cool mint tea. You might order a meal of meat, couscous, and vegetables. This dish is served in a *tagine*. This clay-covered cooking dish is placed on the table. Everyone shares the meal. You are sure to meet many of the people who call themselves the *Shleuh*. These people often make their homes in flat-roofed, mud homes, baked by the sun. You will be greeted warmly and may even be able to listen to stories about the land which is home to these friendly people.

Thinking About the Atlas Mountains

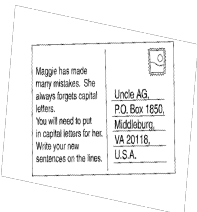
1. Write a sentence about something you think makes the Atlas Mountains special.

2. What is one question you would like to ask a person called a *Shleuh*?

3. What are two things you would like to see if you visited the Atlas Mountains?

Using the Facts

Imagine you have visited Morocco. Write a postcard telling what you liked about this trip.

	 <p>Maggie has made many mistakes. She always forgets capital letters. You will need to put in capital letters for her. Write your new sentences on the lines.</p> <p>Uncle AG P.O. Box 1850 Middleburg, VA 20118 U.S.A.</p>
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Dear Colleague,

Some of you may remember that last year around this time I went to Morocco for a conference. This trip was a highlight as I had never been to the continent of Africa before. There were, of course, many wonderful sights, sounds, and smells in the city of Marrakech, but the day we spent in the Atlas Mountains had to be a highlight! Even though it was April, the snows still capped the peaks but warm breezes blew. We especially enjoyed talking with the local people, sipping mint tea, and sharing the wonders that were uncovered when the top of the *tagine* was removed. That day was a very special one as was my later visit to a school in Marrakech. I will never forget the little girl who grabbed my blonde hair and pulled me close to plant a kiss on my cheek. It was a wonderful visit and I remain grateful to the conference organizers who were able to arrange this visit for me.

As I was preparing to write this WAP, I looked through the photos of my trip and realized the power in these pictures. As many of you know, current research suggests children are more successful in school when their parents are supportive of YOUR efforts and are invited to become involved. My photos of a faraway country reminded me of something we can do close to home. As you prepare for your next school year, think about the power of photographs. Keep a digital camera handy and take photos of your students throughout the year. (Of course, we have to be sure parents give permission for their children to be photographed.) Keep these photos and have children make a book of remembrances, not just at the end of the school year, but at many times throughout your time together. Capture individual children using unifix cubes in math, cutting apart a sequence story in reading, using the four-square writing method, etc. This will serve many purposes. The photos may spark home discussions between parents and children regarding their schoolwork. It will also give you an opportunity to highlight the many methods you use within your classroom. Many parents do not understand the power of hands-on learning as they grew up in the era of worksheets. These pictures will give you the chance to explain new research-based teaching strategies!

And speaking of strategies, I'm sure you noticed that the follow-up questions for this article are based on higher-order thinking skills. We didn't just ask children to "parrot back" information, but we asked them to use the information they gleaned from the article. As follow-up, we suggest asking children to locate the Atlas Mountains on a map or globe. Perhaps you will even want some groups of students to construct their own topographic maps of this mountain range. A favorite is to mix salt, flour and water to make a substance that will form peaks and valleys on a large piece of sturdy cardboard or scrap of wood. A few drops of food coloring helps to add interest and can aid in highlighting the features of an area. What a great way to make geography a hands-on experience. Photo anyone?

Happy teaching,
Kathy

Answers will vary.

Goals:

Students will read an article about the Atlas Mountains in northern Africa. Follow-up questions require students to use the factual information in the article to formulate their own opinions (application and evaluation questions). Ideas for classroom connections with parents are given in the Dear Colleague letter. This activity is available on the primary and intermediate levels and correlates with the National Social Studies Standards: Culture, People, Places and Environment, and Individuals, Groups, and Institutions.