

FIESTA FIASCO

by Ann Whitford Paul

Suggested Classroom Activities

Literature:

The animals in *Fiesta Fiasco* talk and wear clothing and have birthday parties. Do real animals do this? Find nonfiction books about these animals and compare their behaviors with *Culebra* and his friends. Introduce the concepts of Fiction and Nonfiction, and discuss how to tell the difference. What factual information about snakes, turtles, rabbits and iguanas did the author use in the story?

Iguana, Tortuga, and Culebra played games at the party: "Pin the Tail on the Coyote," "Cactus, the desert game of Statues," and "Musical Rocks." Discuss the actual games on which these names are based. Students can discuss other games that they enjoy playing at birthday parties.

Discuss the following questions: Why do you think *Conejo* at first had the other animals buy the gifts that **he** wanted? What made him change his mind at the end? What gifts would you buy for your friend for his/her birthday?

Math:

Make word cards with all of the 'gifts' mentioned in the story: shirt, pants, hat, balloon, book, and bowl. These can be in English or bilingual in English and Spanish. Ask students to decide which gift was purchased first, and then have him/her come to the front of the class and hold up the word card for hat/*sombrero*. Follow with the remaining 'gifts.' Introduce the concept of Sequence – putting things in order.

Science:

The setting for *Fiesta Fiasco* is the desert. Students can do research to find out what other animals live in the desert. One online source is The Animal Spot's "Desert Animals" section: www.desertanimals.net. Students can create a chart for each animal showing an illustration of the animal and facts about their size, diet, habitat, and behavior. These can be combined into a classroom book.

Learning Spanish:

Students can use an English-Spanish picture dictionary (suggested titles below) to find the names of other animals in Spanish. They can make a classroom chart with an illustration of each animal and the words in English and Spanish. They can do the same with articles of clothing, foods, colors, toys, etc.

Resources:

Passport Books, Let's Learn Spanish Picture Dictionary. McGraw-Hill, 1991.

Shapiro, Norma, Oxford Picture Dictionary: English-Spanish. Oxford University Press, 1998.