



## Special Lesson Plan

### Animals and Ecosystems of the Southwestern United States *Investi-gator*

#### Everyone Makes Mistakes!

##### Background

When “The Lands of Time” was written, one of the editors mistakenly wrote that Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1810. In fact, the Mexican War of Independence was begun in 1810. Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821. This error was not recognized or corrected by one of the editors, and therefore the hard copy journals give an incorrect date for Mexican independence from Spain. The electronic copies have been corrected.

The *Investi-gator*'s editors decided to turn this error into a lesson about making mistakes. The lesson's goal is to help students understand that everyone makes mistakes and that most mistakes do not have lasting consequences. Prior to implementing this lesson plan, do not tell students about the incorrect date. **Should you choose not to do this lesson plan, please note the corrected date for students on page 89 in “The Lands of Time” article.**

Introduce the following to your students:

Everyone makes mistakes at one time or another. While some mistakes can have bad consequences, most mistakes do not. When someone makes a mistake, they should realize that mistakes happen. Mistakes should not stop people from

moving forward. Admitting that you've made a mistake and apologizing for it is a positive first step. Doing what you can to correct the mistake is another positive step.

Adults make mistakes too. One of the *Investi-gator* editors made a mistake in the "Animals and Ecosystems of the Southwestern United States" edition. She wrote a date incorrectly. The first 10 classrooms that email us (through the *Natural Inquirer* or *Investi-gator* Web sites) identifying the incorrect date and providing the correct date will receive a classroom set of *Natural Inquirer* pencils. This offer will be good until 10 classrooms have received their pencils, or until June 30, 2014.

Addendum: Once students have identified and corrected the error, teachers may also provide the following information to them about dates marking a country's won independence from another country. This information can be used in a class discussion.

In the 1760s, American colonists began to think about becoming independent from Great Britain. The first battle of the Revolutionary War occurred in 1775 at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. The following year, in 1776, the American colonies officially declared their independence from Great Britain. The Revolutionary War was not over until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783. Americans, however, consider Independence Day as July 4, 1776. This was 7 years before the treaty ending the war was signed.

Hold a discussion about when a country's independence can be considered won. Is a country independent when it begins to revolt against its parent country, or is a country independent only after its revolutionary war has been won? When does independence begin?

Created by the *Natural Inquirer* team  
<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>  
<http://www.scienceinvestigator.org>