

Oxford Read and Discover

All About Desert Life

Julie Penn

Read and discover all about desert life around the world ...

- How do animals stay cool in the desert?
- Why are deserts getting bigger?

Read and discover more about the world! This series of non-fiction readers provides interesting and educational content, with activities and project work.

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Level 3
600 headwords



Level 5
900 headwords



Level 4
750 headwords

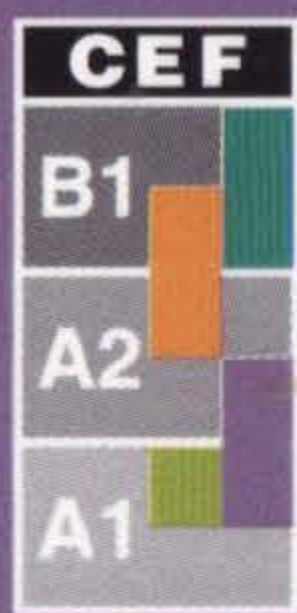


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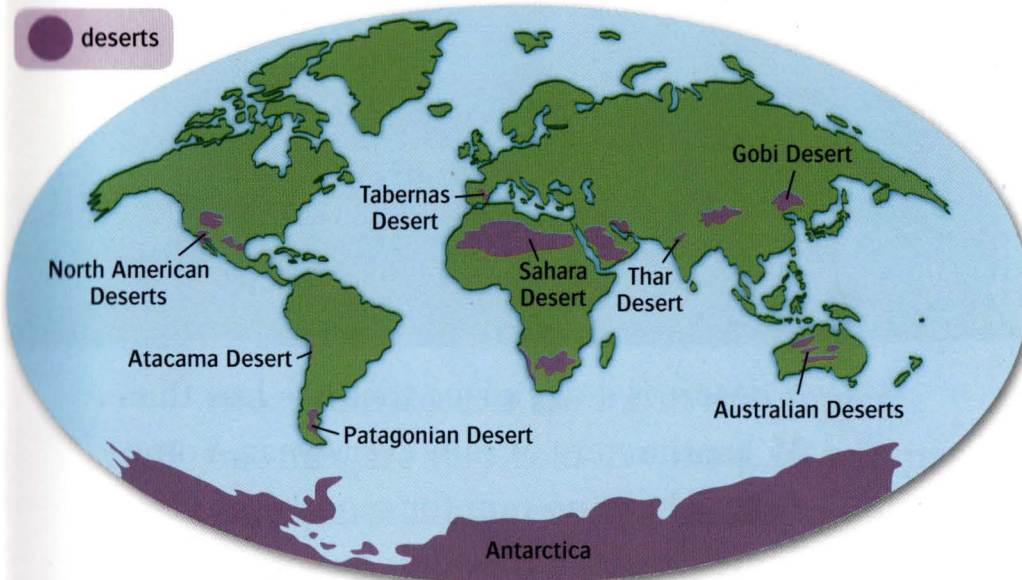
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Introduction

There are many deserts on Earth. All deserts are dry, but they aren't all hot – there are cold deserts, too. Millions of people, animals, and plants live in deserts.



What deserts do you know?
What do you know about deserts?
What people, animals, and plants live in deserts?



Now read and discover more about desert life around the world!



1

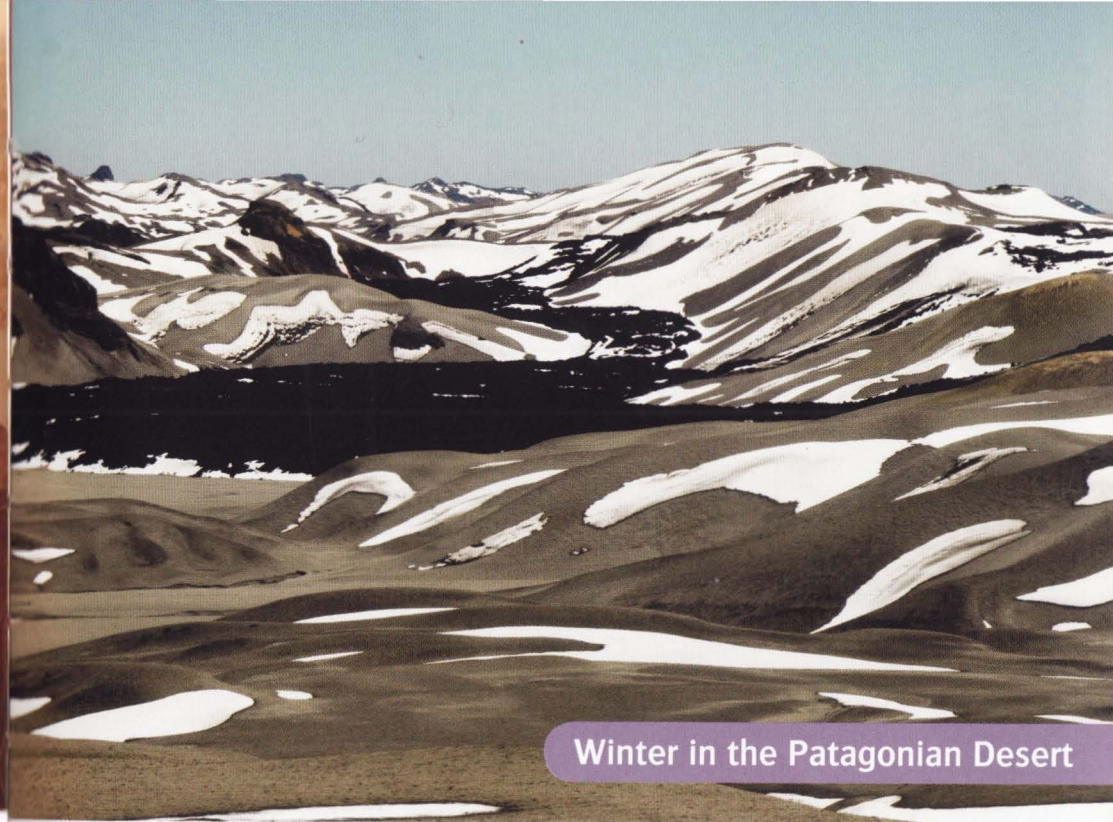
What Is a Desert?



The Thar Desert

A desert is a dry place that has less than 25 centimeters of rain every year. Some deserts have no rain for months or years. Some deserts have sand, but others have stones or rocks. Some deserts are in the mountains.

In the day, temperatures in hot deserts are usually from 20 to 35 degrees centigrade, but temperatures can be more than 50 degrees. At night, the air gets very cold. Sometimes, it's less than 0 degrees.



Winter in the Patagonian Desert

Most cold deserts are warm in summer, but they are very cold in winter. In summer, temperatures are usually from 21 to 26 degrees centigrade. In winter, they are usually from 2 to 4 degrees. Most of the water in cold deserts comes from snow or fog. It doesn't come from rain.



It snows in Antarctica, but this only makes about 5 centimeters of water every year. It's the biggest and coldest desert on Earth.

2

Different Deserts



A Sandstorm in the Sahara Desert

More than 20 percent (%) of the land on Earth is desert. There are many different deserts.

The Sahara Desert, in North Africa, is the biggest hot desert on Earth. It's 9 million square kilometers – that's about as big as the USA! The Sahara has sand dunes, rocks, and mountains. Some of the sand dunes are 180 meters tall. The Sahara has very strong winds that make big sandstorms. The sandstorms can take plants and animals into the air!

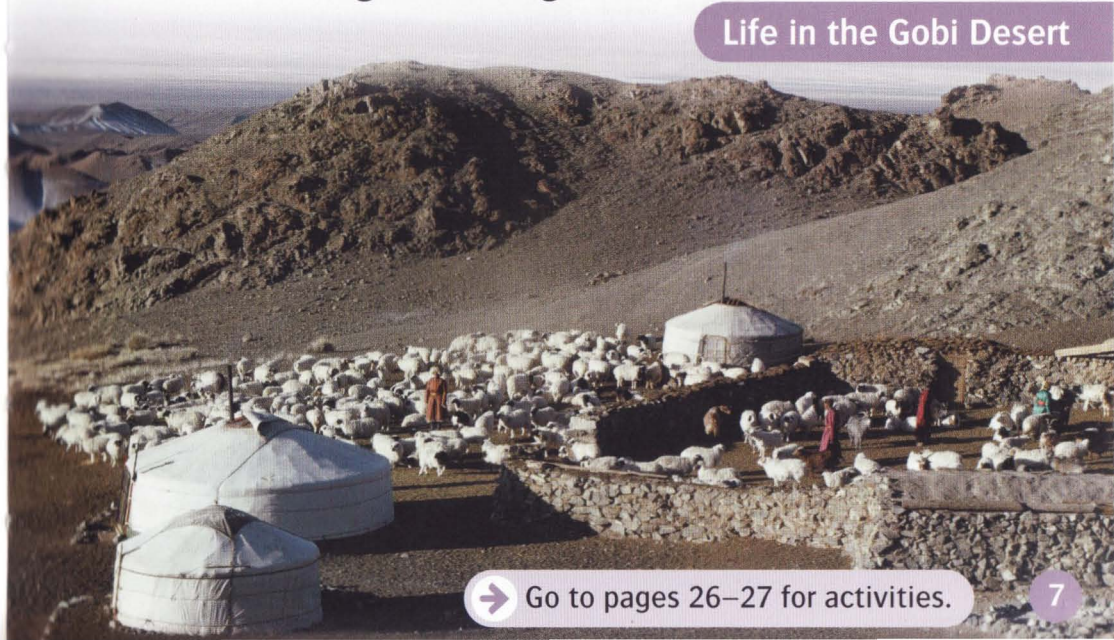
The Atacama Desert is in Peru and Chile. It's not very hot, and it's one of the oldest and driest deserts on Earth. It has less than 1 millimeter of rain every year! Scientists think that at one time, it didn't rain here for 400 years.



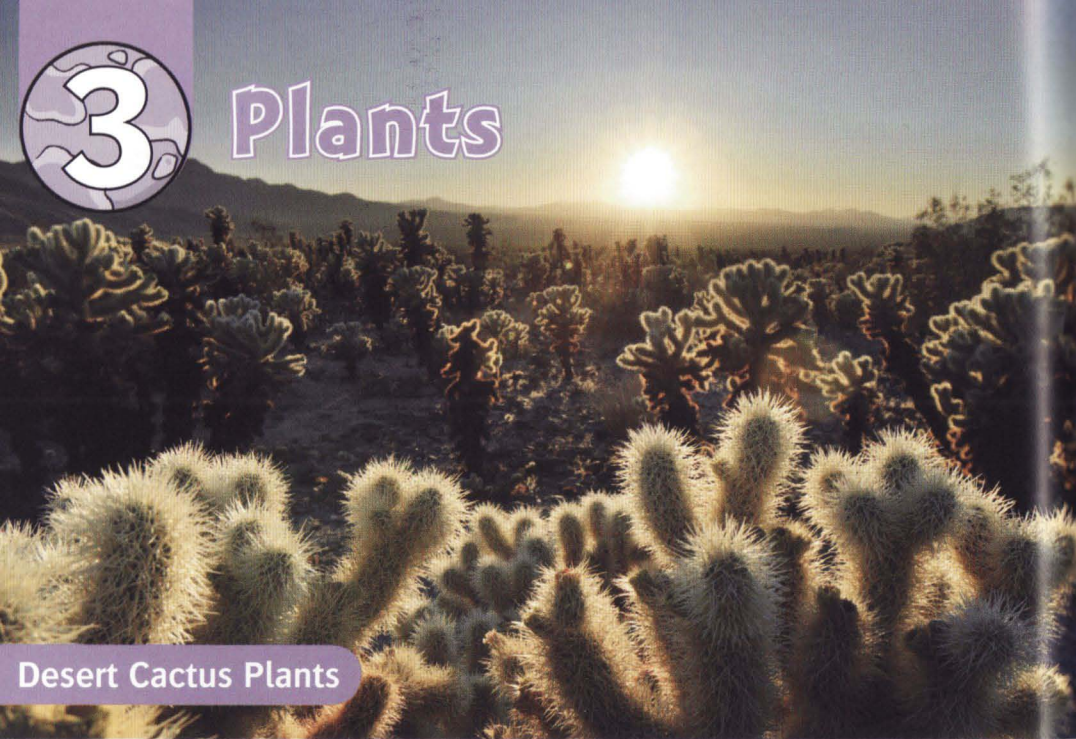
There aren't many deserts in Europe. There's one small desert in Spain. It's called the Tabernas Desert.

The Gobi Desert is in Mongolia and China. It's 1,300,000 square kilometers and it's in the mountains. Most of the land is rock. It's one of the coldest deserts on Earth. In winter, the temperature can be minus 40 degrees centigrade!

Life in the Gobi Desert



3 Plants



Desert Cactus Plants

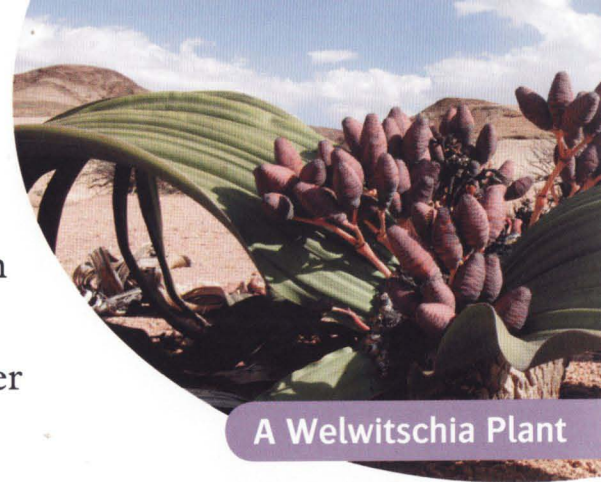
Deserts are very dry places, but plants can still grow there. Desert plants collect and use water in special ways.

The cactus has big roots, so it can collect water fast when it rains. It stores water in its stem for when there isn't any rain. Many cactus plants have spikes. The spikes also collect water, and they stop animals eating the plant.



There are about 1,200 different types of plant in the Sahara Desert.

The welwitschia plant gets water from fog. The leaves collect the water and it goes down into the soil. Then the plant takes up the water with its roots.

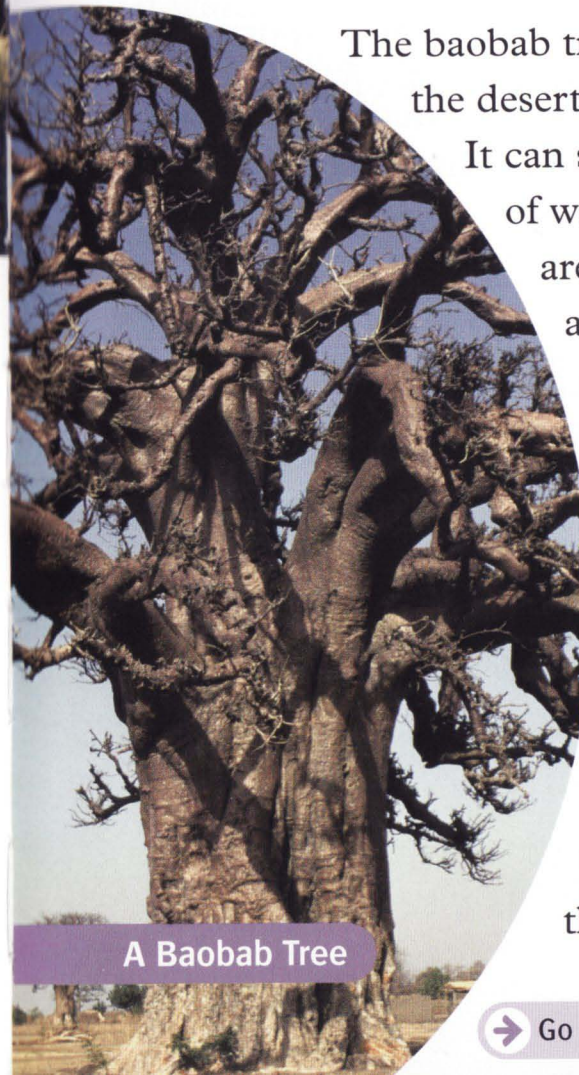


A Welwitschia Plant

The baobab tree grows in the deserts in Africa and Australia.

It can store thousands of liters of water. Some baobab trees are more than 9 meters across! Desert people can drink the water from this tree.

The seeds of many desert plants can stay in the soil for a long time. When it rains they grow fast and produce flowers. Then they die, but they leave seeds for the next time it rains.



A Baobab Tree

4

Animals

It's hard to live in the desert, but deserts are homes for many different animals.

Insects, like ants, can live underground when it's hot. They put their eggs underground, too. Insects are important because bigger animals need them for food.

Spiders and scorpions are arachnids. Many desert arachnids are poisonous. They use their poison to catch insects and other small animals.



A Desert Spider



Some deserts even have fish. Pupfish live in small rivers in the deserts in North America.

Mammals are animals that drink milk from their mother when they are young. Many desert mammals can live for days with no water because they can get water from plants. Desert jerboas make water in their body when they eat dry seeds and roots!



A Jerboa

Reptiles, like snakes, lizards, and desert tortoises, have a thick skin. This helps their body to save water. Most reptiles get food and water from other animals, but desert tortoises eat plants.



➔ Go to pages 30–31 for activities.

5

Day and Night



A Lizard in the Sun

In deserts around the world, different animals come out at different times.

Reptiles come out in the morning to get warm in the sun. Lizards lie on rocks to get warm. They lie in the shade when it's too hot. Desert tortoises look for food in the morning. At night, they stay in their burrows so that they are warm and safe from other animals.

Many desert birds also come out in the day. In the morning, they look for spiders, insects, and seeds.

Most desert animals sleep in the day and come out at night. Many small animals sleep in burrows. Bigger animals, like foxes, sleep in big holes called dens.



At night, scorpions look for food. Scorpions have tiny hairs on their legs. The hairs help the scorpions to feel other animals moving.



Some animals, like desert cats and owls, have special eyes to help them to see well at night. Owls can also hear very well, so they know when animals are moving.



An Owl at Night

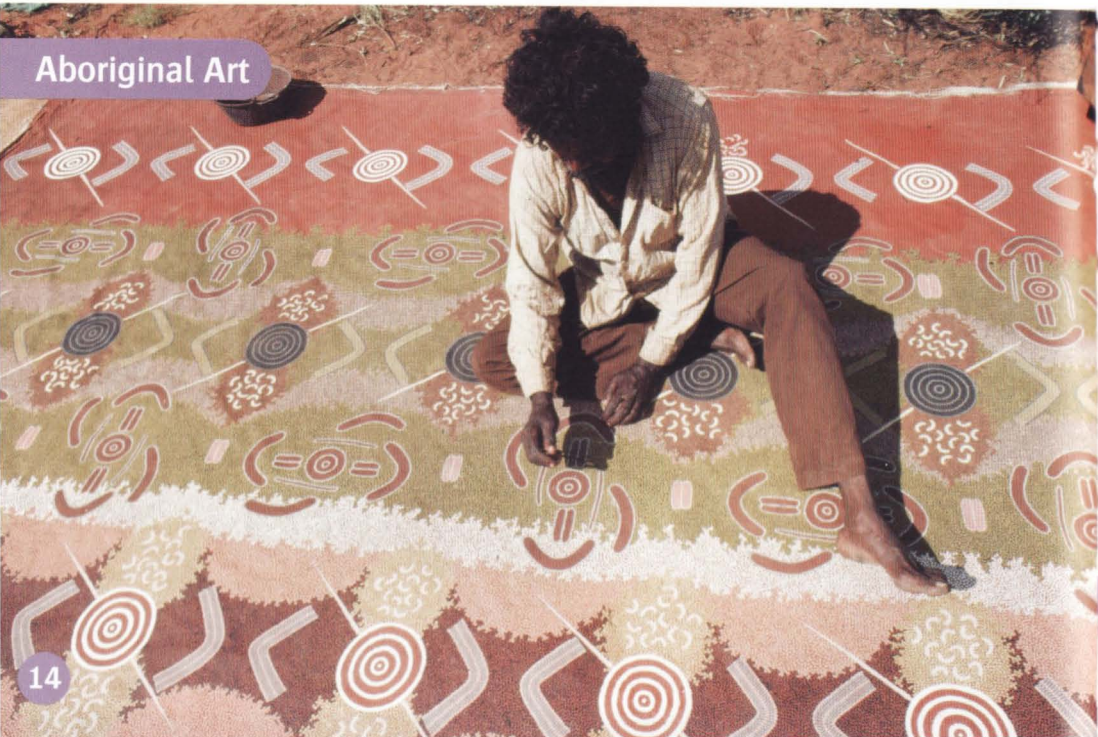
6

People

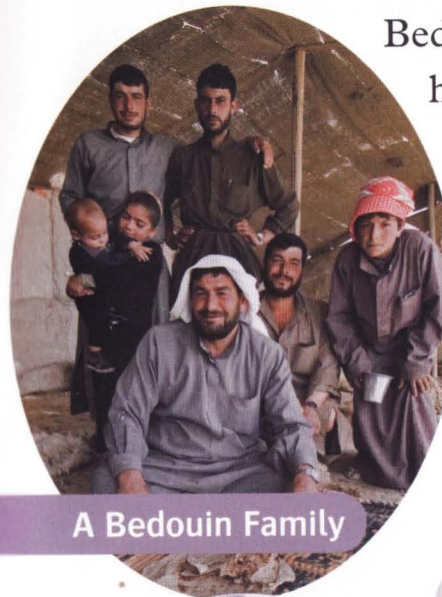
About 13% of all the people in the world live in deserts. Some people lived in deserts a long time ago.

Aborigines were the first people of Australia. They lived in the deserts in Australia more than 40,000 years ago! Aborigines use art to tell stories. Many Aborigines live in cities today, but some are going back to their traditional life in the desert.

Aboriginal Art



Tuareg people lived in the Sahara Desert more than 2,000 years ago. They are called the blue people because of the color of their clothes. Traditional Tuaregs travel across the desert on camels. They live in tents made from animal skins and wood. Many Tuaregs have farms, and others work in cities.

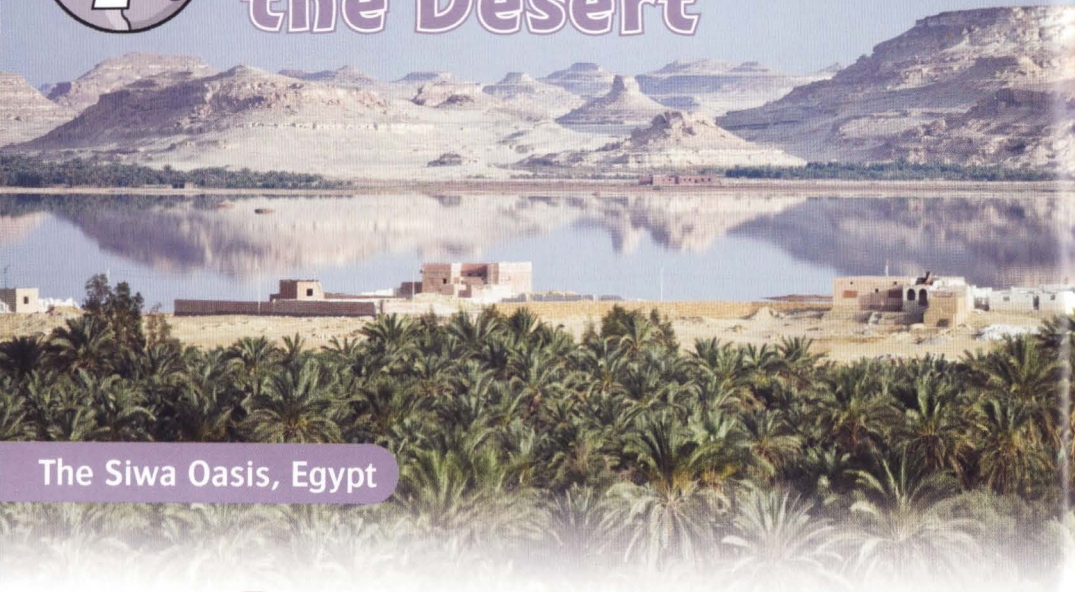


A Bedouin Family

Bedouin people lived in the deserts hundreds of years ago. They live in the Middle East and North Africa. Traditional Bedouins are traveling farmers. They live in tents or mud houses. Today, many Bedouins work in cities. Some Bedouins make and sell things.

7

Water in the Desert



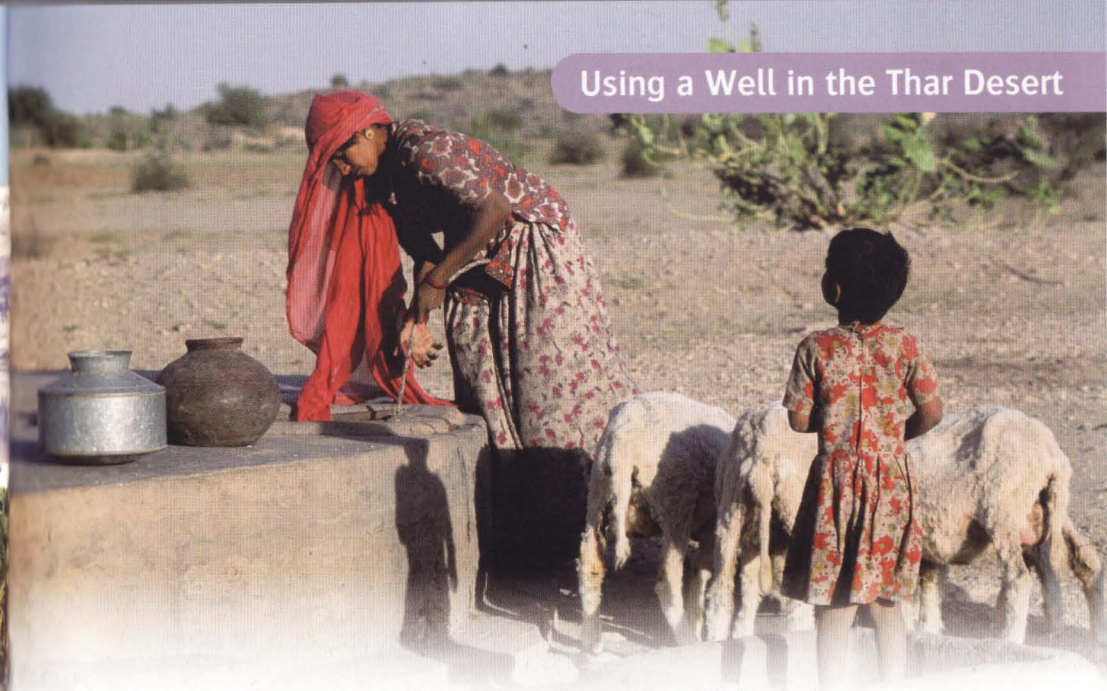
The Siwa Oasis, Egypt

Deserts are very dry places, but all deserts have some water.

An oasis is a place where water from under the ground makes a lake or pond. Some oases are small, but some are very big. The Siwa Oasis in Egypt is 80 kilometers long and 20 kilometers across. About 23,000 people live here.

Some deserts have rivers. The Nile River travels through the Sahara Desert. Many people live near this river. They can catch fish and use the water for farming.

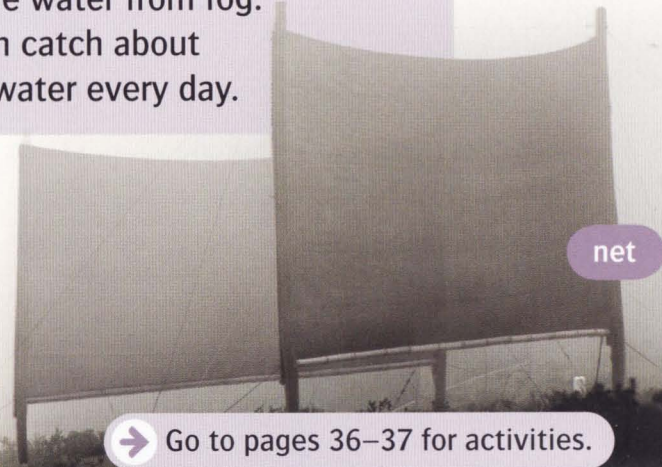
Using a Well in the Thar Desert



In some deserts, there are big rainstorms. Then there's no more rain for a long time. So it's very important to collect rainwater. In the Thar Desert, people collect water in ponds, wells, and big tanks.



People in some cold deserts use nets to collect the water from fog. Each net can catch about 14 liters of water every day.



net

→ Go to pages 36–37 for activities.

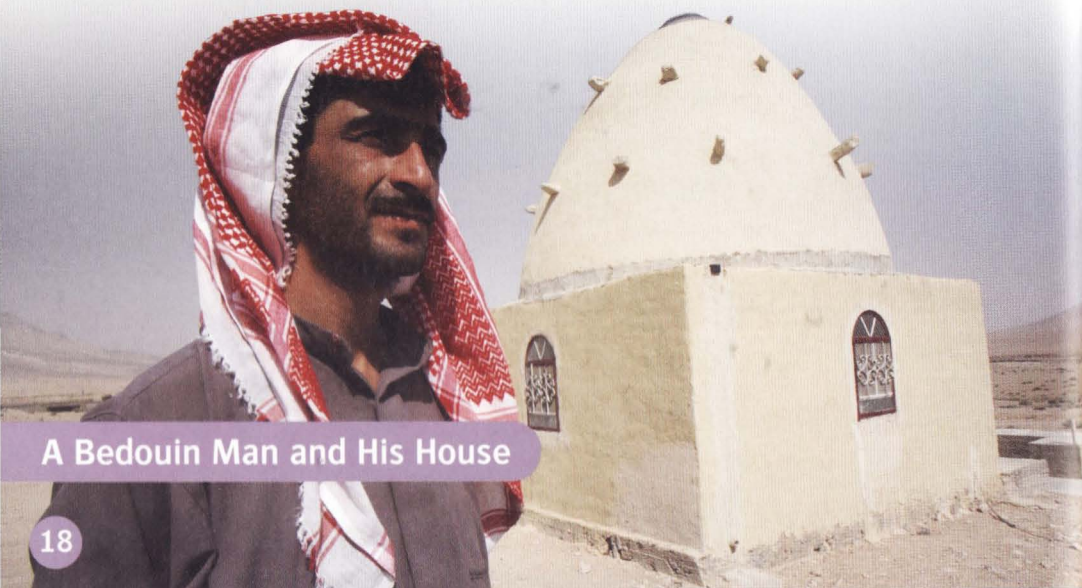
8

Staying Cool

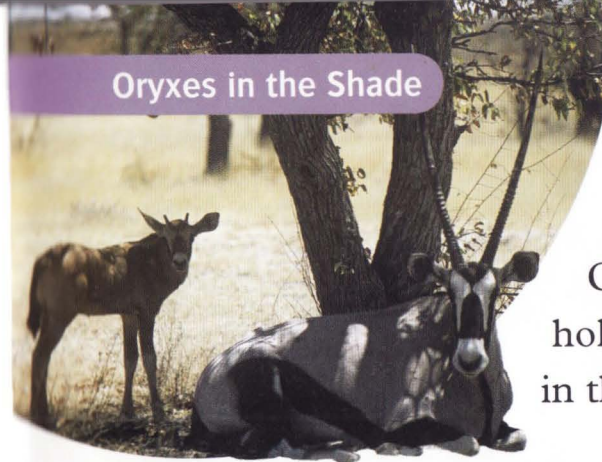
Many people and animals live in hot deserts. They have different ways to stay cool.

Desert people use their clothes and houses to stay cool. Bedouin and Tuareg people wear long clothes to protect them from the hot sun and the wind. They wear a head cloth to protect their head and face.

People in deserts build houses with small windows so that it stays cool inside. This keeps out the sun and also the wind. Some desert houses have no windows!



A Bedouin Man and His House



Oryxes in the Shade

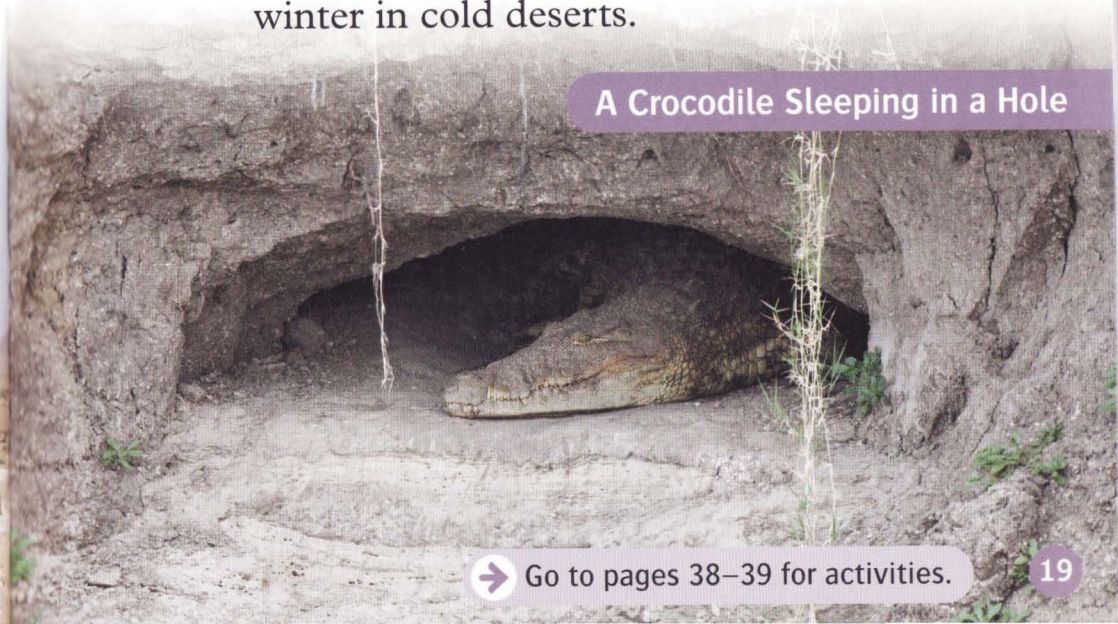
Many big desert animals stay in a cool place in the day. Oryxes make a cool hole to sit in, or they sit in the shade.



Some desert lizards are called sand swimmers. When it's hot, these lizards swim under the sand to stay cool.



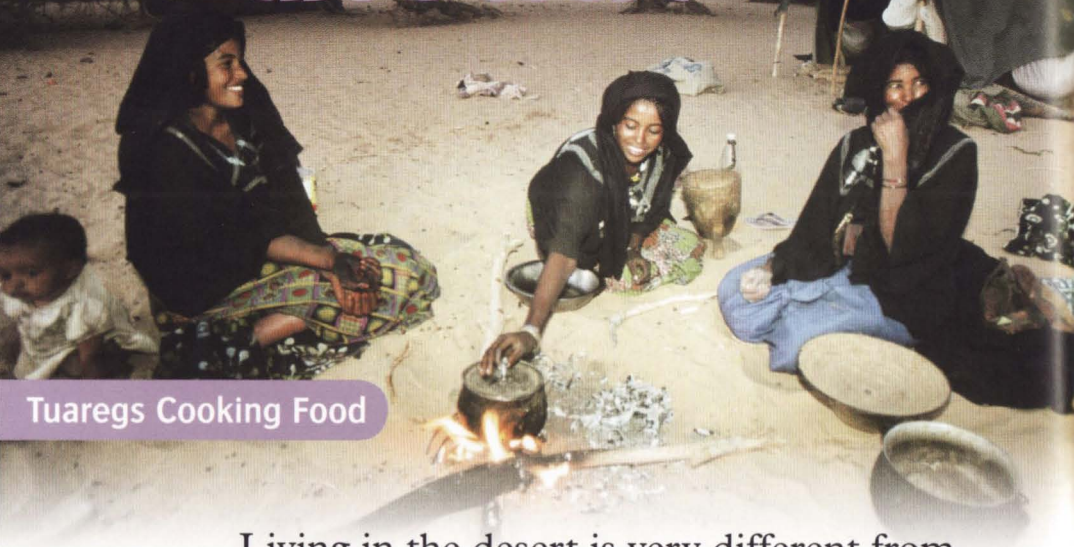
Some animals, like crocodiles, snakes, and frogs, sleep in the hottest parts of summer. Other animals, like desert tortoises, sleep in winter in cold deserts.



A Crocodile Sleeping in a Hole

9

Living in the Desert



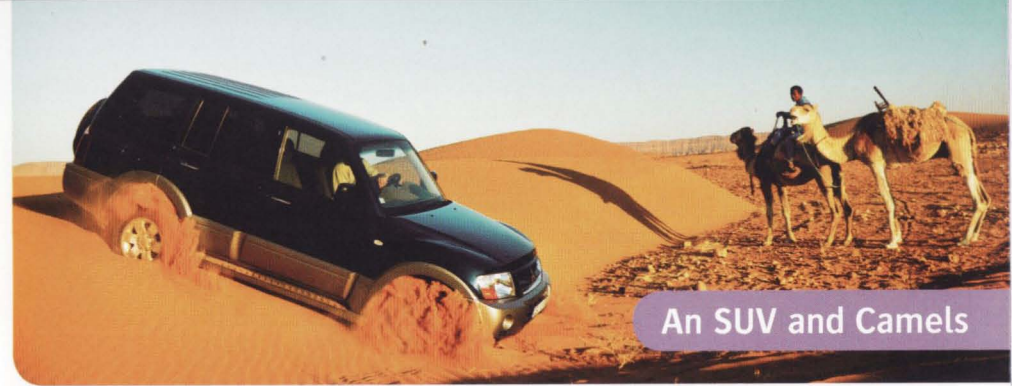
Tuaregs Cooking Food

Living in the desert is very different from living in a city, but people still cook, travel, and go to school.

Most desert people eat bread, porridge, milk, cheese, and food from desert plants. They cook their food on a fire outside their home. Dates grow well in deserts. Dates with cheese is traditional Tuareg food.



Every year, there's a festival in the Sahara Desert, near Timbuktu in Mali. There are three days of music, dancing, and camel racing.

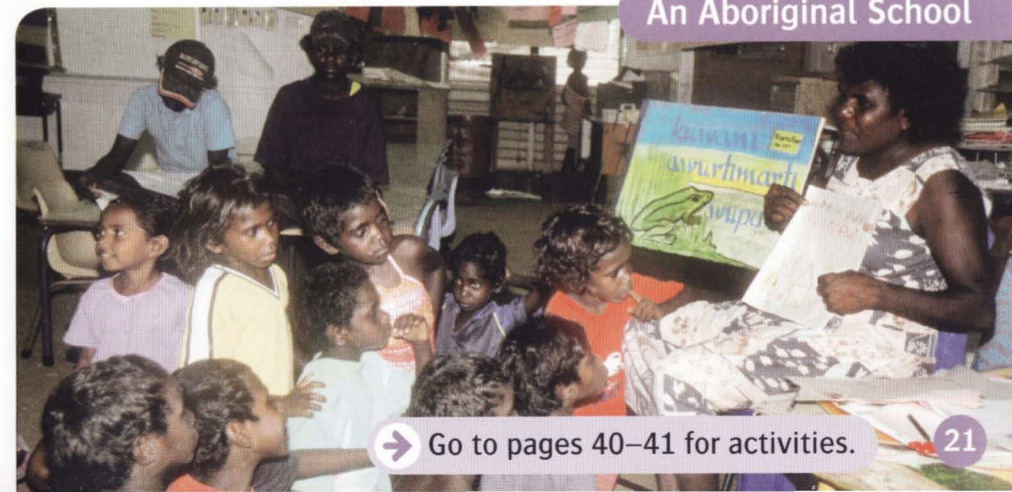


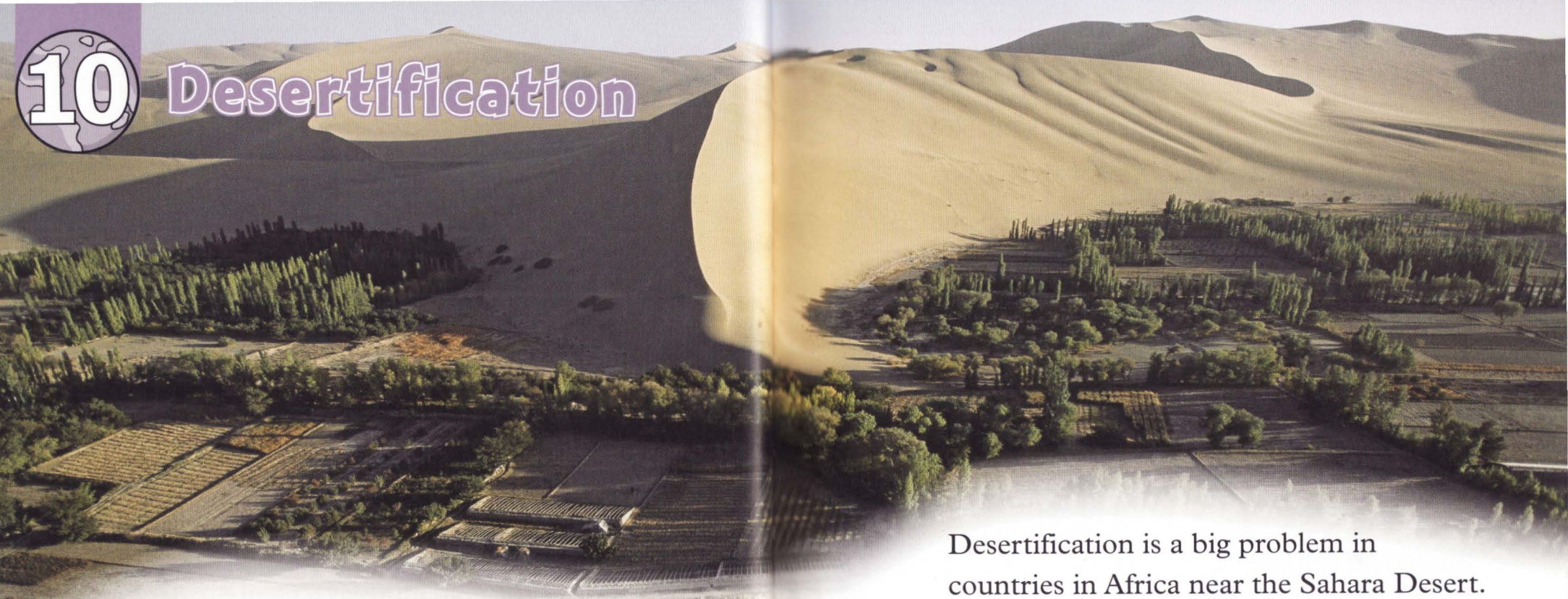
An SUV and Camels

Today, many desert people drive SUVs, but camels are better for traveling across sand! Camels can travel more than 40 kilometers in a day. They are strong animals. Desert people can use camels to carry food, tents, and other things from their homes.

A long time ago, only a few desert children went to school, but this is changing. In the deserts in Australia, Aborigines are building new schools. Students speak their own language, and they also learn English.

An Aboriginal School





Deserts are getting bigger. Every year, the land around many deserts gets dry and changes into new desert. This is called desertification.

The land can get too dry when there's no rain for a long time. Sometimes people also make the land dry. When there are too many farms in one place, animals eat all the plants, and the soil blows away. Then new plants can't grow and there isn't food for everyone.

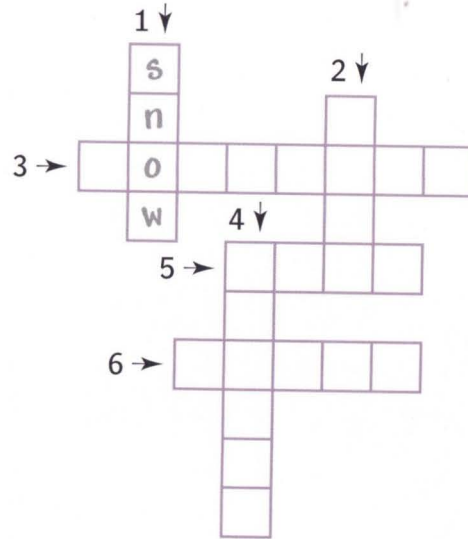
Desertification is a big problem in countries in Africa near the Sahara Desert. In 50 years, these countries have lost 650,000 square kilometers of land – that's about the same size as France. Millions of people here are hungry, because they can't grow food in the desert.

How can people help to stop desertification? In many countries people are growing more trees. Trees stop the soil blowing away. In China, people are using a wall of trees to stop desertification near the Gobi Desert. The wall is 4,000 kilometers long!

1 What Is a Desert?

← Read pages 4–5.

1 Complete the puzzle.



2 Write the numbers.

0 2 4 5 25 50

- Deserts have less than 25 centimeters of rain every year.
- In hot deserts, temperatures can be more than _____ degrees centigrade.
- At night, it can be less than _____ degrees centigrade in a hot desert.
- In winter, temperatures in cold deserts are from _____ to _____ degrees centigrade.
- The snow in Antarctica makes about _____ centimeters of water every year.

3 Write true or false.

- All deserts have sand. false
- Some deserts have stones or rocks. _____
- Some deserts are in the mountains. _____
- Hot deserts are hot at night. _____
- Most cold deserts are warm in summer. _____
- Most of the water in cold deserts comes from rain. _____

4 Match. Then write sentences.

Some deserts have no rain

Deserts can be

The temperatures in hot deserts

At night

The winter temperatures in cold deserts

Water in cold deserts

it's cold in the desert. comes from snow or fog. hot or cold.

are from 2 to 4 degrees centigrade.

for months or years.

are from 20 to 35 degrees centigrade.

1 Some deserts have no rain for months or years.

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

2 Different Deserts

← Read pages 6–7.

1 Circle the correct words.

- 1 The Sahara Desert is nine / ten million square kilometers.
- 2 The Sahara Desert is in **Africa** / Asia.
- 3 The Atacama Desert is not very **hot** / cold.
- 4 The Gobi Desert is in China and **Russia** / Mongolia.
- 5 The Gobi Desert is one of the **coldest** / hottest deserts.
- 6 Spain has **one desert** / two deserts.

2 Write *Sahara*, *Atacama*, or *Gobi*.

- 1 It's in the mountains. Gobi
- 2 It's the biggest hot desert. _____
- 3 Most of the land is rock. _____
- 4 It's one of the driest deserts. _____
- 5 It has tall sand dunes. _____
- 6 It didn't have rain for 400 years. _____

3 Complete the sentences.

coldest desert rock sand dunes sandstorms

- 1 20% of the land on Earth is _____.
- 2 The Sahara Desert has tall _____.
- 3 Strong winds make _____.
- 4 The Gobi Desert is one of the _____ deserts.
- 5 Most of the land in the Gobi Desert is _____.

4 Answer the questions.

- 1 What is one of the oldest deserts?
One of the oldest deserts is the Atacama Desert.
- 2 How tall are some of the sand dunes in the Sahara Desert? _____
- 3 Where is the Atacama Desert?

- 4 How cold can it be in the Gobi Desert in winter?

- 5 Which country is about the same size as the Sahara Desert? _____
- 6 How big is the Gobi Desert?

3 Plants

← Read pages 8–9.

soil seeds leaves
stem roots spikes

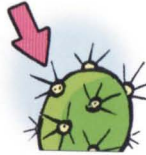
1 Write the words.



1 leaves



2 _____



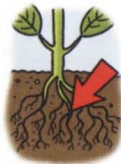
3 _____



4 _____



5 _____



6 _____

2 Complete the chart.

9 meters spikes water fog leaves desert

Plant	Facts
Cactus	It can have <u>spikes</u> . It collects _____ fast.
Baobab	It's a _____ tree. It can be more than _____ across.
Welwitschia	It collects water on its _____. It can get water from _____.

3 Complete the sentences.

grow dry fog store soil big

- Deserts are _____ places.
- The cactus has _____ roots.
- Some plants can _____ a lot of water.
- Baobab trees _____ in Africa and Australia.
- Plant seeds can stay in the _____ for a long time.
- The welwitschia gets water from _____.

4 Answer the questions.

- Why does the cactus have big roots?

- What do the spikes on cactus plants do?

- How much water can a baobab tree store?

- How big are some baobab trees?

- What part of the welwitschia plant collects water?

- What do seeds do when it rains in the desert?

4 Animals

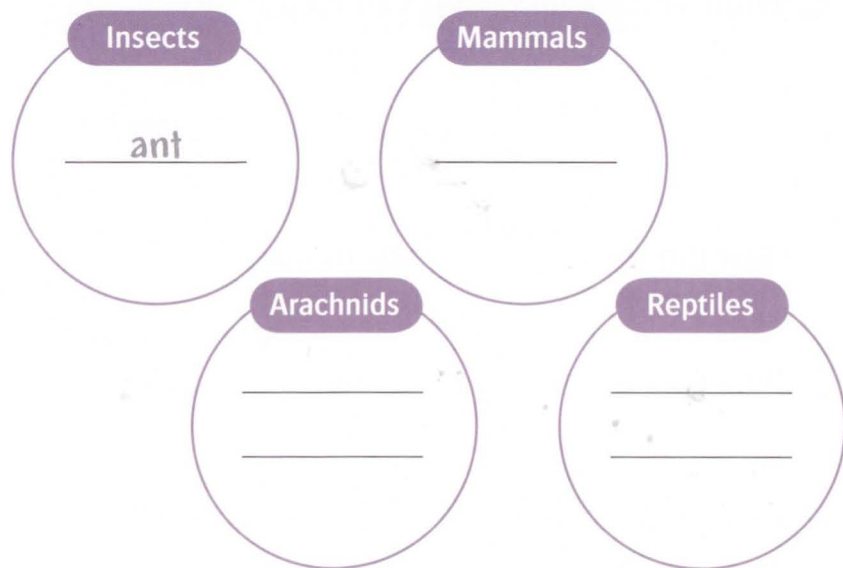
← Read pages 10–11.

1 Write true or false.










- 1 Desert insects can live underground. _____
- 2 Other animals in the desert eat insects. _____
- 3 Scorpions and spiders are insects. _____
- 4 Some mammals get water from plants. _____
- 5 Desert jerboas make water in their body. _____
- 6 Snakes and lizards only eat plants. _____

2 Complete the diagram.

scorpion snake ant spider lizard jerboa



3 Write the words. Then write the numbers.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | na ^t | ant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2 |  |  |
| 2 | na ^s ke | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |  | 2 |
| 3 | dip ^{se} r | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |  |  |
| 4 | on ⁱ co ^r p ^s | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |  | 4 |
| 5 | i ^r to ^o es | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |  |  |
| 6 | ra ^d zil | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |  | 6 |

4 Complete the sentences.

tortoises plants poison seeds bigger skin

- 1 Desert jerboas eat roots and dry _____.
- 2 Desert arachnids use _____ to catch other animals.
- 3 Many mammals get their water from _____.
- 4 Reptiles have a thick _____.
- 5 Insects are food for _____ animals.
- 6 Desert _____ don't eat other animals.

5 Day and Night

← Read pages 12–13.

1 Complete the diagram.

lizards scorpions desert cats foxes
many birds owls desert tortoises

Animals that come
out in the day:



Animals that come
out at night:



2 Write *in the day* or *at night*.

- 1 Reptiles come out in the day.
- 2 Scorpions look for food _____.
- 3 Lizards lie on rocks _____.
- 4 Desert tortoises stay in their burrows _____.
- 5 Many birds look for food _____.
- 6 Owls have special eyes to see well _____.

3 Complete the sentences.

see feel food hairs well

- 1 Different animals have different ways to find _____ at night.
- 2 Desert cats have special eyes to help them to _____ well at night.
- 3 Owls can hear very _____.
- 4 Scorpions have tiny _____ on their legs.
- 5 Scorpions can _____ other animals moving.

4 Write the words in order.

- 1 warm. / lie / Lizards / get / on / to / rocks
Lizards lie on rocks to get warm.
- 2 in / Tortoises / the / food / morning. / look / for

- 3 desert / the / Most / in / day. / sleep / animals

- 4 in / animals / burrows. / sleep / Small

- 5 their / Scorpions / legs. / hairs / have / on / tiny

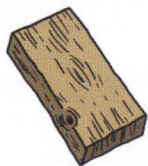
- 6 see / Desert cats / well / at / night. / can

6 People

← Read pages 14–15.

1 Write the words.

wood mud house tent clothes city farm



1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____



4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

2 Complete the sentences.

first farmers clothes 2,000 art things

- Tuaregs wear blue _____.
- Some Bedouins make and sell _____.
- Aborigines use _____ to tell stories.
- Traditional Bedouins are traveling _____.
- Tuaregs lived in the desert _____ years ago.
- Aborigines were the _____ people of Australia.

3 Match. Then write sentences.

Aborigines live in the
Many Aborigines are
going back to
Tuaregs are called
Tuareg tents are made from
Many Bedouins work

in cities.
the blue people.
Australian deserts.
their traditional life.
animal skins and
wood.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

4 Answer the questions.

- Why are Tuaregs called the blue people?

- How do traditional Tuaregs travel?

- What do Aborigines use to tell stories?

- What do Bedouins live in?

- Where do many Bedouins work?

7 Water in the Desert

← Read pages 16–17.

1 Write the words.

well oasis tank lake pond river



1 _____



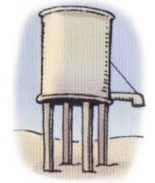
2 _____



3 _____



4 _____



5 _____



6 _____

2 Write true or false.

- 1 The Siwa Oasis is 80 kilometers long. _____
- 2 About 2,300 people live near the Siwa Oasis. _____
- 3 The Nile River travels through the Thar Desert. _____
- 4 Desert people catch fish from the Nile River. _____
- 5 There are never any rainstorms in the desert. _____
- 6 People have lots of ways to collect rainwater in the Thar Desert. _____

3 Complete the sentences.

collect dry rainwater ground farming fog

- 1 Deserts are very _____ places, but all deserts have some water.
- 2 An oasis is a place where water from under the _____ makes a lake or pond.
- 3 People can use water from rivers for _____.
- 4 It's very important to _____ rainwater.
- 5 In the Thar Desert, people collect _____ in lots of different ways.
- 6 People in cold deserts get water from _____.

4 Answer the questions.

- 1 Where is the Siwa Oasis

- 2 How do people collect water in the Thar Desert?

- 3 How do some people get water from fog?

- 4 Where does the water that you drink come from?

- 5 What do you use water for every day?

8 Staying Cool

← Read pages 18–19.

1 Match.

- 1 People wear long
- 2 People wear a head cloth to
- 3 Some desert houses
- 4 The houses keep out

clothes to stay cool.
have no windows.
protect their head and face.
the sun and the wind.

2 Complete the sentences.

clothes Crocodiles tortoises
hole Oryxes lizards snakes

- 1 _____ sit in the shade to stay cool.
- 2 _____ and _____ sleep in summer.
- 3 Desert _____ sleep in winter in cold deserts.
- 4 Some _____ swim under the sand to stay cool.
- 5 Some animals make a cool _____ to sit in.
- 6 People wear long _____ to stay cool.

3 Write the words in order.

- 1 live / people / in / animals / deserts. / and /
Many _____
- 2 Desert / clothes / cool. / use / to / people / stay

- 3 no / desert / have / houses / windows. / Some

- 4 a / place. / Big / cool / in / animals / stay

- 5 in / Some / sleep / summer. / animals

- 6 swim / lizards / sand. / under / Some / can / the

4 Answer the questions.

- 1 What do some desert people wear to protect their face? _____
- 2 Why do people build houses with small windows?

- 3 What can big desert animals do to stay cool?

- 4 How do some lizards stay cool?

9 Living in the Desert

← Read pages 20–21.

1 Find and write the words.

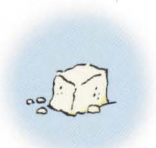
o	t	b	a	e	f	i	v
p	o	r	r	i	d	g	e
h	n	e	r	i	c	s	y
e	i	a	k	h	h	e	r
r	p	d	o	u	e	a	p
l	o	t	b	a	e	t	j
m	i	l	k	e	s	i	h
n	a	s	t	c	e	r	e
a	f	d	a	t	e	s	s



1 porridge



2 _____



3 _____



4 _____



5 _____

2 Write true or false.

- Desert people don't eat bread. _____
- Desert people cook inside their homes. _____
- People use camels in the desert. _____
- Camels can travel 400 kilometers in a day. _____
- A long time ago, only a few desert children went to school. _____
- There aren't any schools in the deserts in Australia. _____

3 Complete the sentences.

schools tents fires SUVs cheese sand

- Desert people cook their food on _____.
- Dates with _____ is traditional Tuareg food.
- Camels are good for traveling across _____.
- Camels can carry food and _____ for desert people.
- Today, many desert people drive _____.
- Aborigines are building new _____ in the desert.

4 Answer the questions.

- Where do you live?

- How do you travel to different places?

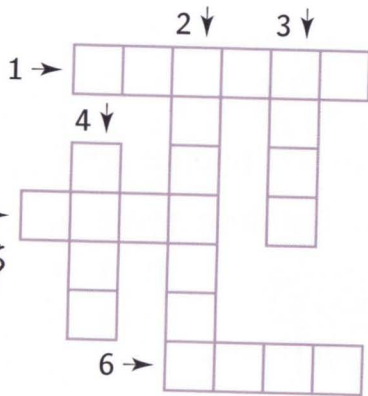
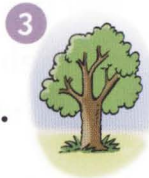
- What do you like to eat?

- What is traditional food in your country?

10 Desertification

← Read pages 22–23.

1 Complete the puzzle.



2 Write true or false.

- 1 Deserts are getting bigger. _____
- 2 Land gets dry when there's no rain. _____
- 3 It's a good idea to have lots of farms in one place. _____
- 4 People are hungry because of desertification. _____
- 5 People can grow trees to stop soil blowing away. _____

3 Complete the sentences.

food desert hungry blows away rain

- 1 Every year, more land gets dry and changes into _____.
- 2 The land can get too dry when there's no _____.
- 3 Farm animals eat too many plants and the soil _____.
- 4 When plants can't grow, there isn't _____ for everyone.
- 5 Millions of people are _____ in Africa.

4 Answer the questions.

- 1 When can the land get too dry?

- 2 What happens when new plants can't grow?

- 3 Where is desertification a big problem?

- 4 How can people help to stop desertification?

Project 1

A Desert Poster

- 1 Choose a desert and find information about it from books or the Internet.
- 2 Complete the chart.

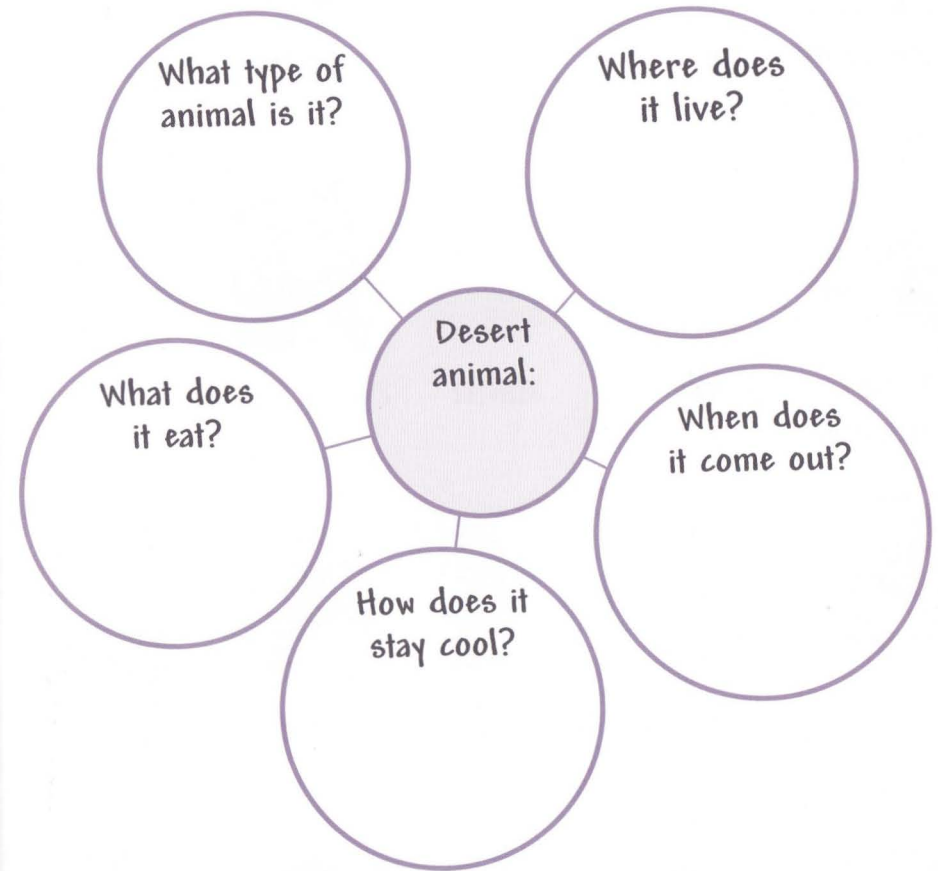
Desert Name	
Where is it?	
Plants	
Animals	
People	
Other Interesting Facts	

- 3 Make a poster about your desert.
- 4 Display your poster.

Project 2

A Desert Animal

- 1 Choose a desert animal from this book.
- 2 Answer the questions and write notes.



- 3 Find or draw pictures of your animal and write sentences.
- 4 Display your work.

Picture Dictionary



blow away



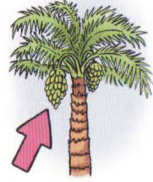
burrow



city



clothes



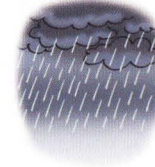
dates



pond



porridge



rainstorm



river



rocks



desert tortoise



die



Earth



fire



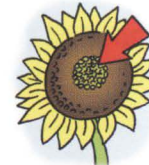
fog



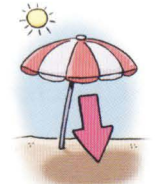
roots



sand dunes



seeds



shade



skin



food



grow



head cloth



hole



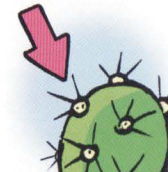
lake



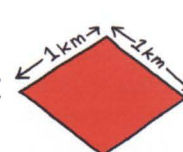
snake



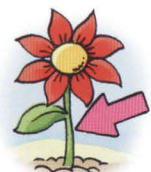
soil



spikes



square kilometer



stem



leaves



lie



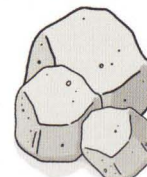
million



mud



poison



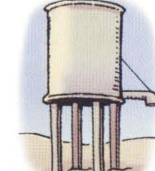
stones



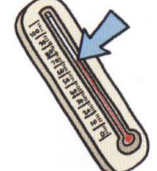
store



SUV



tank



temperature



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Series Editor: Hazel Geatches • CLIL Adviser: John Clegg

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Subject Area Level	The World of Science & Technology	The Natural World	The World of Arts & Social Studies
3 600 headwords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How We Make Products• Sound and Music• Super Structures• Your Five Senses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amazing Minibeasts• Animals in the Air• Life in Rainforests• Wonderful Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Festivals Around the World• Free Time Around the World
4 750 headwords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All About Plants• How to Stay Healthy• Machines Then and Now• Why We Recycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All About Desert Life• All About Ocean Life• Animals at Night• Incredible Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animals in Art• Wonders of the Past
5 900 headwords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials to Products• Medicine Then and Now• Transportation Then and Now• Wild Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All About Islands• Animal Life Cycles• Exploring Our World• Great Migrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homes Around the World• Our World in Art
6 1,050 headwords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cells and Microbes• Clothes Then and Now• Incredible Energy• Your Amazing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All About Space• Caring for Our Planet• Earth Then and Now• Wonderful Ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helping Around the World• Food Around the World

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