

Encyclopedia

Emerald/Lime, Level 25, 610L

Text Type: Report

Summary: These pages are about seven desert regions on Earth and the people groups who choose to live in these environments.

Themes/Ideas: learn where deserts are located on Earth; understand how people have adapted to the challenges of these environments

Text Features: bold text, map, photos

Vocabulary:

- **animal herders:** people living a semi-nomadic life while caring for animals
- **barren:** land that does not grow much/any vegetation
- **hunter gatherers:** nomadic people who live by hunting animals and collecting wild food
- **Indigenous:** native to a region or country
- **nomads:** people who travel from place to place, wanderers
- **temperature:** how hot or cold something is
- **vast:** very large, immense

Deserts of the World

? **Focus Question:** Where are deserts found on Earth and who lives in these deserts?

PREPARE & READ

- Note that these pages are from an encyclopedia.
- Review the meanings of “nomad” and “indigenous”.
- Ask students to read the text.

READ CLOSELY

Text Feature

Look closely at the world map. Identify the brown desert regions. What might the lighter yellow colour indicate within these desert regions? How does the map help you understand the deserts discussed in the text? **1 2**

Vocabulary/Text Feature

What does the word **vast** mean? Which deserts shown on the map would you describe as **vast**? **2**

Text Feature

Look at the text on the front and back of the card. Why has the author used bold print for certain words in each paragraph? How would bold print assist someone researching one specific desert? **3 4 7–11**

... The author used bold print for the name of each desert. The bold print allows me to quickly locate information about a specific desert.

Sequence

Why did the author discuss the Gobi Desert straight after discussing Antarctica? What connection do these two deserts have? **3 4**

Photos and Text

Study the photo of the Mongolian family outside their home in the Gobi desert. How does this photo illustrate the information you read about the Gobi desert? What can you learn from the photo that wasn't explained in the text? **4 5**

Photos and Text

The text explains that Tuareg nomads living in the Sahara desert “do not stay long in one place”. How does the photo support this statement? What “essentials” do you think the Tuareg would always carry with them? **6 7**

Make Connections

Review the information on the Mojave Desert in the map and text. Why do you think Europeans settled on the edge of the world's hottest desert? How would the many visitors to Las Vegas get enough water? (Consider the size of the desert and how close it is to ‘green’ areas on the world map. This will affect how hard it is to transport water and supplies into the desert.) **8**

Deserts of the World



Many of us think of deserts as hot, dry, sandy places, but that isn't always true. Deserts are all different. Some are very hot, while others are very cold. They all have one thing in common though. They get very little rain.

Look at the map above. You can see the lush lands of the tropics as a green belt, right across the middle of the planet. The brown areas on either side of the tropics are the deserts. They are vast! Surprisingly, people live in these barren lands.

We don't usually think of Antarctica as a desert, but it has very little rainfall. It's the largest cold desert in the world. Imagine a place that can get down to -90°C in winter! The only people living in Antarctica are on scientific research stations. They do experiments that aren't possible anywhere else.

The Gobi Desert in Asia is another cold desert. Winter temperatures can drop to -40°C . In summer it can reach 50°C ! The Gobi is north-east of the Himalayas, the highest mountain range in the world. The Himalayas stop rain from reaching the Gobi. That's why the Gobi is so dry! Most of the people living there are Mongolian animal herders.



A Mongolian family outside their home in the Gobi desert



You couldn't miss the vast desert of North Africa! The Sahara Desert is the largest hot desert in the world. People called the Tuareg live there. They are nomads. They don't stay long in one place, but travel to find food and water.

The Mojave Desert in North America is the world's hottest desert. Native American peoples have lived there for thousands of years. The Mojave, Hopi, Navajo and Chemehuevi still live there

today. Europeans started settling there about 500 years ago. These days, tourists flock to Death Valley in California, and to the city of Las Vegas.

The Atacama Desert in South America is the driest of the world's deserts. Some parts of the Atacama have never had rain! Sometimes, though, it rains during spring and wildflowers burst out of the ground. The indigenous Atacameño people have lived there for 1500 years.

Australia is a dry continent. There are ten deserts in Australia, including the Great Sandy Desert. Only the coastal areas get much rainfall. Aboriginal people have lived there for at least 50,000 years. They traditionally lived as hunter-gatherers. That means they lived off what the land provided. Some still live this way today.

In the south of Africa is the Kalahari Desert. The Kalahari gets more rain than most deserts. It is home to the San people, once known as the Bushmen. The San were traditionally hunter-gatherers, but now many of them are farmers.

Life in the desert is hard. Plants and animals have adapted to the challenges of the desert. So, too, have humans!



San children living in the Kalahari Desert

DISCUSS

These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the group.

- How does the author organise information in these pages? How does this organisation make it easier for you to understand the information?
- Revisit the text about the Kalahari Desert on page 2. What important feature of the Kalahari Desert would make it easier for the San people to farm the land, and remain in one location?
- What facts about deserts did you find most surprising? Why is it valuable to learn about people, plants and animals existing in these extreme environments?

WRITE

Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.

- Create a table that summarises the most important features about each desert featured on the card. Include such things as rainfall, temperature and people living there. Complete further internet research to fill in any gaps in your table. **(Information/Explanation)**
- If you were forced to select one desert to live in for a year, which would you choose and why? Support your choice using details from the text. **(Opinion)**