

Chapter – 3

The Desert

Comprehension Check I

1. From the first paragraph

(i) pick out two phrases which describe the desert as most people believe it is;

(ii) Pick out two phrases which describe the desert as specialists see it. Which do you think is an apt description, and why?

Answer:

(i) Two phrases which describe the desert as most people believe it is are “an endless stretch of sand, where no rainfalls and no vegetation grows.” and “A place that is dry, hot, waterless and without shelter.”

(ii) Two phrases which describe the desert as specialists see it are “a beautiful place”, “home of a variety of people, animals and plants that have learnt to live under hot and dry conditions.”

Both are apt descriptions as they describe the desert’s reality but in two different contexts.

2. The phrases on the left in the following box occur in the text.

Match each of them with a phrase on the right.

(i) an endless stretch of sand	Fertile place with water and plants in a desert
(ii) waterless and without shelter	Not visible because the grass is thick
(iii) an oasis	Nothing but sand as far as one can see

(iv) hidden by a cover of grass	No water and no shade

Answer:

- (i) an endless stretch of sand ---- nothing but sand as far as one can see
- (ii) waterless and without shelter-- no water and no shade
- (iii) an oasis -- fertile place with water and plants in a desert
- (iv) hidden by a cover of grass -- not visible because the grass is thick.

Comprehension Check II

1. A camel can do without water for days together. What is the reason given in the text?

Answer:

Camels, popularly known as the Ship of the Desert, can do without water for days together. They are capable of drinking a lot of water in a single go and can stand high body temperature so they don't sweat much and therefore retain the water they drink for long periods of time.

2. How do the smaller desert animals fulfil their need for water?

Answer:

The smaller desert animals do not drink water. They burrow underground during the hot day and come out at night to eat. Some eat other animals and get the water they need from the moisture in their meat. Others eat plants and seeds and get the water they need from plant juices.

3. In a desert the temperature rises during the day and falls rapidly at night. Why?

Answer:

The major reason for this change in temperature is the absence of moisture. In humid climates, the moisture present in the air acts as a blanket and protects the earth's surface from the hot rays of the sun. The absence of moisture in desert lands causes the desert to heat up rapidly during the day and to cool off rapidly at night.

Exercises

1. Describe a desert in your own way. Write a paragraph and read it aloud to your classmates.

Answer:

A desert is a vast stretch of barren land with little or no water. Deserts have their own kind of vegetation and fauna. Plants like cactus and animals like camel are the major sight. An oasis can also be seen at some places. It is a small water body surrounded by a green patch of land. The sandy dunes with a little vegetation offer a picturesque landscape.

2. Go to the library and collect information about the life style of people in desert areas — their food, cloths, work, social customs, etc. Share this information with the group.

Answer:

Life in a desert is not very easy due to absence of resources which is why not many people prefer living in deserts. Deserts majorly serve as a tourist location because of the picturesque location the sandy dunes and the little vegetation of the area provide. The deserts are mainly inhabited by nomads. Some facts about the life style of people living in desert areas are:

Food— The people of the desert areas mainly eat the roots of desert plants or the crops that they can grow in the unfertile land. Their most important food is the meat of animals.

Clothes — They wear clothes made from the hair of animals or animal skin. It also keeps their body protected from alternative heat and cold during the day and night respectively.

Work — The main occupations of the desert people are hunting and agriculture.

Social Customs — People living in deserts lead a nomadic life. They have their own customs and traditions. They even have their own dance forms. They live a life isolated from the rest of the world.