

Chapter – 3

The Desert

Comprehension Check

Q1. 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: “dry, hot, waterless and without shelter” “a flat, unchanging wasteland of dry sand”

(ii) Two phrases which describe the desert as specialists see it: “a beautiful place” “home of a variety of people, animals and plants” The description of the desert as specialists see it is more apt as their description is based on actual studies, and not just on beliefs and assumptions.

Q2. 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

Q3. A camel can do without water for days together. What is the reason given in the text?

Answer. The camels can do without water for days together because they sweat very little. They can stand high body temperature. They do not need to sweat. Therefore, they can retain the water they drink for long periods of time.

Q4. 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 of them eat other animals and get the water they require from the moisture in the meat. Others eat plants and seeds, and get the water they require from plant juices.

Q5. In a desert the temperature rises during the day and falls rapidly at night. Why?

Answer. In humid climates, the moisture in the air acts like a blanket and protects the earth's surface from the hot rays of the sun. The absence of this blanket in desert lands causes the desert to heat up rapidly during the day and to cool off rapidly at night.

Exercises

Q1. Describe a desert in your own way. Write a paragraph and read it aloud to your classmates.

Answer. Do Attempt it.

Q2. Go to the library and collect information about the lifestyle of people in desert areas— their food, clothes, work, social customs, etc. Share this information with the group.

Answer. Do Attempt it.