

UU Summer Term Topic: Deserts

(vertical Driver: Our Place in the World)

Topic Overview: In this topic we will define what a desert actually is and discover that there can be deserts in cold climates as well as hot climates. We will use a world map with a key to identify the major deserts of the world. We will also find out some interesting facts about different deserts around the world. Also, we will think about some of the challenges faced by people living in deserts. We will find out how people find water in the desert and the effects that a lack of water can have on people and animals living in a desert.



Animal Life in the Desert

There are many animals that live in the Arabian Desert. They also have special adaptations that help them to live in the hot, dry conditions.

Camels are able to drink a lot of water at one time. They do not sweat, which helps them to conserve the water that they drink.

Other animals, such as spiny-tailed lizards, do not need to drink any water at all. They have glands that help them to keep hydrated.

Arabian oryx and sand gazelle survive the heat of the desert by grazing at cooler times of the day and finding shade from the heat during the day.



Key Questions:

What are the different deserts called?

Where in the world they are located?

What is the weather and climate like?

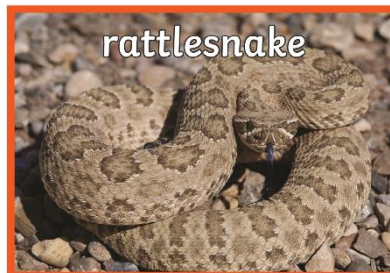
What is it like for humans living in the desert?

How are deserts used by humans?

Do plants survive in the desert?

Which animals live in the deserts?

Desert Animals



What Is a Desert?

A desert is a place where it is often hot and dry during the day, and sometimes very cold at night. It has a lot of sand or rocks and hardly ever rains.

Did you know?

Antarctica is the world's largest desert! This might seem strange as it is not a hot place. However, it is considered a desert because the precipitation (rainfall, snowfall etc.) is very low. It does snow in Antarctica, but not as much as you would think. On average, it may snow about 8-12 inches in a whole year.

The hottest desert in the world is the Sahara Desert. It is located in Africa and it has mostly sand and rock.



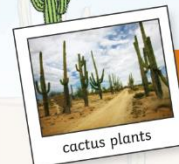
Sahara Desert



Antarctica

Desert Plants

Desert plants do not need much water.



They have thick leaves or spiky spines.

They have long roots to find water.



Key Vocabulary:

Desert
Sand dunes
Adaptation
Climate
Hostile
Natural
Dwellers
Arctic Antarctic
Equator tropics
Sahara
Antarctica

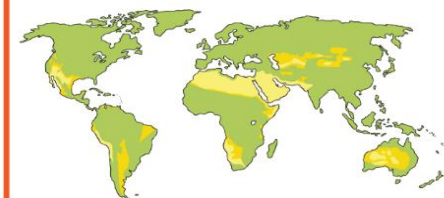
desert



Challenge tasks: Explore some different types of desert formations, such as sand dunes, salt flats, pillars and arches, and find out how they were formed. Sketch a desert animal and research how they are adapted to suit their environment. Make a PPT about contrasting deserts. Create your own sand art. Model sand into an artistic form, sand bottles, build a sandcastle.

Key Texts: various non-fiction texts based on deserts from around the world. **Fiction:** The Desert Challenge by Bear Grylls. Meerkat madness: Flying high by Ian Whybrow.

Around one third of the Earth's surface is covered in deserts.



The largest cold desert on Earth is Antarctica.



The largest hot desert on Earth is the Sahara.



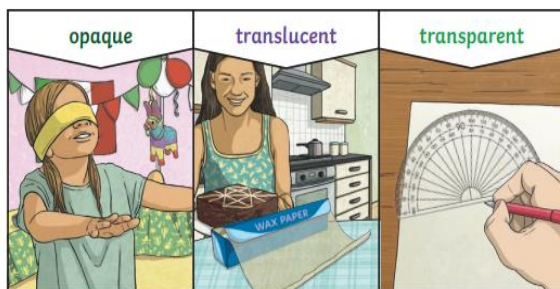
Places to visit: The library, to find books about contrasting deserts. A beach or park with a sand pit to create your own sand sculpture.

Online resources: [What is a desert habitat? - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Deserts 101 | National Geographic - Bing video](#)

[Wild Arabia - Hidden Deep in the Desert | Wonders of the Wildlife \(Nat Geo Wild\) - Bing video](#)

[Amazing Ways to Live in the Desert! - Bing video](#)



In science, we will be learning about light.

A shadow is caused when light is blocked by an opaque object. A shadow is larger when an object is closer to the light source. This is because it blocks more of the light.



Key Vocabulary

light	A form of energy that travels in a wave from a source.
light source	An object that makes its own light.
dark	Dark is the absence of light.
reflection	The process where light hits the surface of an object and bounces back into our eyes.
reflect	To bounce off.
reflective	A word to describe something which reflects light well.
ray	Waves of light are called light rays. They can also be called beams.

Key Knowledge

We need light to be able to see things. Light travels in a straight line. When light hits an object, it is reflected (bounces off). If the reflected light hits our eyes, we can see the object. Some surfaces and materials reflect light well. Other materials do not reflect light well. Reflective surfaces and materials can be very useful...

