

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?

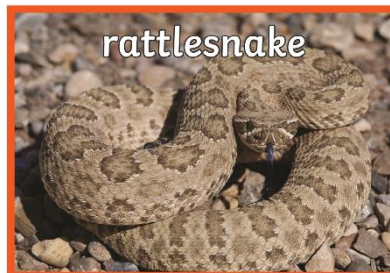
What is it like for humans living in the desert?

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



Key Texts: Fiction: The

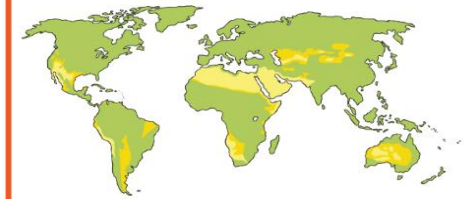
Desert Challenge

by Bear Grylls.

Meerkat madness: Flying 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](#)

By the end of our topic you will have the following Knowledge:

To know how to locate some of the world's major deserts on a world map.
To know that much of the desert is too hostile to be lived in by humans.
To know the ways in which deserts are used by humans?
To know some of the natural resources of the desert, such as oil.
To know that deserts are characterised by extremely low rainfall
To know how to describe the weather and climate of deserts.