

Progress Monitoring Probe 6

What Is a Desert?

When you think about deserts, you probably think of hot, dry places with sand stretching for miles and miles. While it is true that some deserts are hot, sandy areas, most deserts are different.	11
For example, some deserts have mountains, and others have bare plains covered with stones and gravel. Some deserts are even quite cold.	23
The one thing that all deserts have in common is that they are dry. In fact, some deserts receive no rain at all for years at a time. In one South American desert, no rain has fallen in over forty years! The average amount of desert rainfall is less than ten inches a year.	34
The plants and animals that live in deserts have special features that help them survive in the desert's dry climate. For example, some desert plants have very long roots that grow deep into the ground to reach water. Other plants have very shallow roots that extend outward in a large area around the plant. These roots are close to the surface so they can take in water from even a small amount of rain. The leaves of some desert plants have a thick, waxy coating that holds water in.	44
Desert animals include snakes, birds, insects, rodents, and a few large mammals. Like desert plants, desert animals have special features that help them survive the harsh desert conditions. Desert foxes and rabbits lose heat through their long ears. Camels store fat in their humps and use the energy from the fat when there is no food. In hot deserts, smaller animals spend their days hiding in burrows or under stones. Then, when the temperature drops at night, they come out to look for food.	54
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What Is a Desert? (Continued)

A few of the world's deserts are located in the southwestern part of the United States. If you ever visit this area, be sure to take your camera. Tourists love to take pictures of these deserts because of their beautiful colors of red, brown, and gold.	294
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Total words: _____ – errors: _____ = words correct: _____

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