

THE DESERT

[Comprehension Check]

Question 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) It is an endless stretch of sand where no rain falls and, therefore, no vegetation grows. It is dry, hot, waterless and without shelter.
(ii) It is the home of a variety of people, animals and plants that have learnt to live under very hot and dry conditions. But whenever it rains, which is rare, desert flowers bloom and the sight can be as rewarding as that of any tropical garden.

Question 2. The phrases on the left in the following box occur in the text. Match each of them with a phrase on the right.

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

Answer:

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

Question 3. A camel can do without water for days together. What is the reason given in the text?

Answer: Camels sweat very little. Camels can stand high body temperature. They don't need to sweat and can, therefore, retain the water they drink for long periods of time.

Question 4. How do the smaller desert animals fulfil their need for water?

Answer: Some of the smaller desert animals burrow themselves underground during the hot day and come out at night to eat. Some of them eat other animals and get the water they need from the moisture in the meat. Others eat plants and seeds and get the water they need from plant juices.

Question 5. In a desert the temperature rises during the day and falls rapidly at night. Why?

Answer: Deserts do not have humid climates. So, the temperature rises during the day and falls rapidly at night.