

Name _____

Desert

Learn facts about desert biomes.

Read the passage and answer the questions.

What are the characteristics of a desert? A dry climate, deserts can get between half an inch and 15 inches of rainfall a year. Some deserts, like the Australian Desert, are hot, and some are cold, like the Gobi Desert. Because deserts are so dry, temperatures vary a lot each day. Moisture in the air is what helps hold temperatures steady. In hot deserts, high daytime temperatures and cold nights make it difficult for living things to survive. Deserts are home to many reptiles, insects, birds, and small mammals. An example of a small mammal in a North American desert is the kangaroo mice; in Australia, there is the red kangaroo. Many animals in the desert get shelter from the sun by burrowing underground. Another way animals survive in this harsh climate is by being inactive in the day and hunting and moving around at night. Some plants you might see in the desert are short grasses, sagebrush, and cacti. Cacti are succulents, which are plants that store water in their leaves, stems, roots, or fruits. Other plants have adapted to be able to live in this dry climate with long taproots that go 20 to 30 feet below ground to reach water, or shallow roots that spread far around the plant to catch as much of the rain as possible.

1. What kind of climate is a desert?

2. What is one way animals survive in this harsh climate?

3. Describe an adaptation of some plants in the desert.

4. What kind of plant is a cactus? Describe what makes it special.

5. Name two deserts.
