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The Western Desert



A **desert** is an area of flat land where you can see lots of sand everywhere. The Great Indian Desert is located in the north-western part of our country. It is also called the **Thar Desert**. The area extends from the **Rann of Kachchh** in Gujarat to the borders of Haryana. Covering a vast area of Rajasthan, the desert is situated towards the west of the Aravalli Hills. The desert is both rocky and sandy.

The flat land becomes hilly at some places with thicker layers of sand. These hills of sand are called **sand dunes**. Very hot and dry winds blow in the desert. These winds are known as **sand storms**. These storms carry huge amounts of sand, which results in shifting of the sand dunes. It becomes extremely difficult for people to find directions in these sand storms.

The availability of water is very rare due to scanty rainfall. There are very few streams which remain dry most of the times. But in some places, underground water comes out through a spring. Such a place is called an **oasis**. The land around an oasis is fertile, so most villages are situated near an oasis. In these areas, **date palms** grow.

The climate is hot and dry. In summers, the days are extremely hot and the nights are cold. Plants cannot grow in hot and dry climate so, there are no trees in the desert. The only plants that grow here are scattered bushes and thorny shrubs like **cactus**.

Water is scarce, so people who live in the villages have to walk long distances to fetch water for domestic use. The **Rajasthan Canal**, also known as the **Indira Gandhi Canal** has been built to provide water for domestic use as well as for irrigating the fields. It is one of the largest canals in the world. The canal water helps the farmers in irrigating their crops.



The Western Desert Region of India

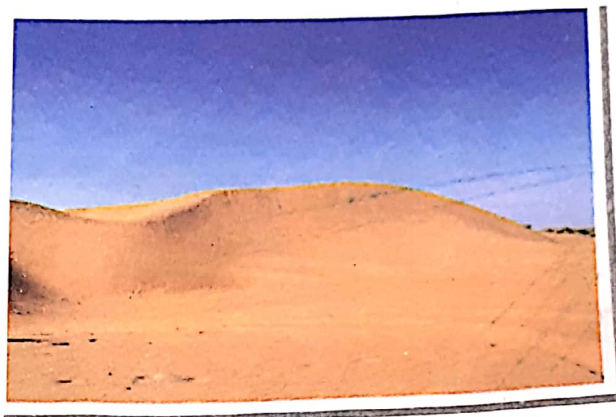
Places where rainfall is very little are likely to become deserts. Felling of trees and over-grazing by animals are causing fast spreading of deserts. This is a serious situation which should be controlled immediately. We can stop the desert from spreading by planting more trees.



Cactus in a Desert Indira Gandhi Canal

Life in the Desert

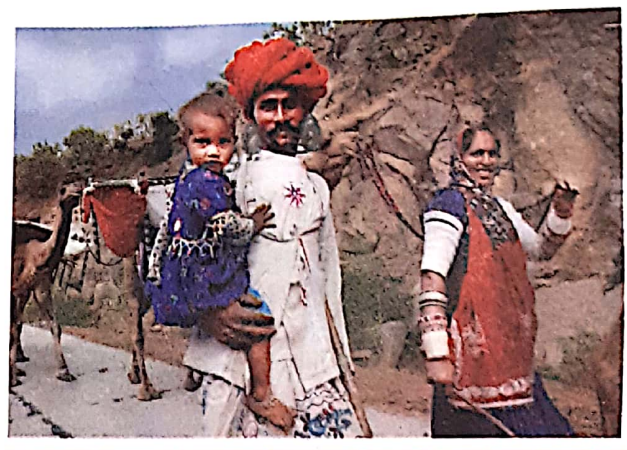
Life is not easy for people living in the desert region. The flat-roofed houses have thick walls and smaller windows for keeping both sand and heat out of the houses. Some houses have underground tanks to store water. The villagers generally rear animals such as camels, sheep, goat and cattle.



Sand Dune in a Desert

Some people keep moving from one place to another in search of food for themselves as well as for their animals. Such people are known as **anjaras**.

The camel is an extremely useful animal for the people living in the desert. It is called as the **ship of the desert**. People travel on camels or in carts pulled by them. The camel is used for many purposes. It provides milk. Its hair is used for making clothes. Its hide (skin) is used for making



People of Thar Desert



The Pink City - Jaipur

known as the **Pink City**. The other big cities of Rajasthan are Kota, Jaisalmer and Bikaner. Rajasthan attracts a large number of tourists every

tents. It also ploughs the fields. It is also drawing water from wells.

Rajasthani people wear colourful clothes. The traditional dress of the men is **dhoti**, **kurti** and **turban**. Women wear **ghaghara**, **choli** and **saree**. Rajasthan celebrates many festivals including Holi, Dussehra, Diwali, Eid, Gangaur and Navratri. The capital city of Rajasthan is **Jaipur**. It is one of the largest cities of India.

The capital city of Rajasthan is Jaipur. It is one of the largest cities of India.

did you know?

The critically endangered Siberian Crane migrates to India by covering a long distance and spends winters at the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary. It does this to escape the cold winter of Siberia.



STRANGE BUT TRUE

Saffron is extracted from the flowers of the crocus sativus plant.



Glossary

- **Desert** – Flat land covered by a thick layer of loose sand.
- **Sand Dunes** – Small hills made of sand.
- **Sandstorm** – Hot and dry winds that carry sand.
- **Oasis** – Area in a desert where underground water comes to the surface.
- **Banjaras** – People who roam around in search of food.



Quick Glance

- The climate is hot and dry. In summer, the days are extremely hot and the nights are cool.
- The availability of water is very rare.
- People face many hardships in the desert region.
- The Camel is called the 'Ship of the Desert'.
- The capital city of Rajasthan is Jaipur.

Question Bag

Brain Game:

Guess my name?

1. I am the Great Indian Desert.
2. I am a small hill made of sand.
3. I bring underground water to the surface by a spring.
4. I am always in short supply in the desert.
5. I am the canal that brings water from the Satluj.

thar desert
sand dune
oasis
well
Indira Gandhi

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. The Great Indian Desert is also called the:

a. Thar desert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	b. Oasis <input type="checkbox"/>	c. Banjara <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. The small hill made by sand is called:

a. Sandstorm <input type="checkbox"/>	b. Sandstone <input type="checkbox"/>	c. Sand dune <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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3. The Indira Gandhi Canal gets water from:

a. Ganga <input type="checkbox"/>	b. Yamuna <input type="checkbox"/>	c. Satluj <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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4. The animal that is known as the Ship of the Desert is the:

a. Horse <input type="checkbox"/>	b. Camel <input type="checkbox"/>	c. Sheep <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Take clues from the box and fill in the blanks:

Indira Gandhi Pink Thar Camel

1. The Great Indian Desert is also called the Thar Desert.
2. Camel is called the 'Ship of the Desert'.
3. Jaipur is also known as the Pink City.
4. The Rajasthan canal is also known as the Indira Gandhi canal.

Answer the following questions.

1. How will you describe a desert?

2. What are sand dunes? How are they formed?

3. How can we stop desert from spreading?

4. How is camel useful for the people of Rajasthan?

Reality Check

Recognize the following pictures and write their names.

