

Grade. VII.

Supplementary: 3. The Desert

### Supplementary Reader

#### Soul of the chapter

#### The popular belief about a Desert and Being a Tropical Garden :

Many people who live in areas surrounded by forests and hills believe deserts to be vast areas of sand where no rainfalls and therefore, it is hot and dry. In such circumstances there is hardly any vegetation to be found in such areas. However, this definition is not entirely correct. People who closely study it can find desert to be a beautiful place and is a home to a variety of people who live under hot and dry conditions. In a desert, the ground is hardly ever covered with grass, plants or trees. Rains in the desert are also rare, but whenever it does rain the desert flowers bloom and the desert looks no less than a tropical garden.

#### An Oasis

At times, the flat, unchanging wasteland of dry sand gives way to mountains and hills. It may have an oasis. An oasis is a small patch of green island with a well of water, allowing the plants and trees to grow better. A desert may be hot like the 'Thar Desert' or cold like 'Ladakh'. But, usually it is believed that any place that has little or no water and vegetation is called a desert. There are some deserts which have absolutely no water. In such places, strong winds blow and raise sand in mounds. Such sand mountains are called 'sand dunes'. These sand dunes keep moving and shifting in the forests. Plants however, can hardly sustain themselves in such weather.

#### Sustainability in the Desert

Living things are dependent on water for their sustenance. Therefore, very few plants and animals are found in a desert. The few that are to be found have adapted themselves to the conditions in a desert. They have developed an ability to require less water for their existence. Camel, 'the ship of the desert' can do without water for several days. This is possible because camels can drink a lot of water in one go and they lose very little water as they

hardly sweat. Humans are required to constantly sweat in high temperature in order to maintain their body temperature.

### **The smaller Desert Animals and Plants**

The smaller desert animals only come out of their burrows during night and avoid the heat during the day. Most of them either eat other animals or plants and meet their minimum water requirement from the moisture present in the meat and the plant juices, respectively. Desert plants too, likewise adapt themselves to the desert climate, Cactus, for instance, can store water in its thick stems.

### **Absence of the Protective Blanket**

In humid climates, the moisture in the atmosphere casts a protective blanket on the Earth. In deserts, this protective blanket is not there because of occasional rains. Therefore, the deserts heat up rapidly during the day and cool off rapidly during the night. However, despite the harshness of the climate, the deserts are an important part of nature.

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#### **NCERT Corner**

#### **Check 1**

##### **1. From the first paragraph**

**(i) Pick out two phrases which describe the desert as most people believe it is;**

“ The popular belief is that it is an endless stretch of sand where no rain falls and therefore, no vegetation grows.”

**(ii) Pick out two phrases which describe the desert as specialists see it.**

**Which do you think is an apt description and why?**

“The desert can be a beautiful place. It is the home of a variety of people, animals and plants that have learnt to live under very hot and dry conditions.” The apt description of the desert has been given by the specialists. The popular belief is based on hearsay.

People may have or have not been to the desert and studied its climatic occurrences before having formed this opinion. The specialists, on the other hand, have looked at the entire ecology in the desert before stating their beliefs.

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

i) An endless stretch of sand	❖ Fertile place with water and plants in a desert
ii) Waterless and without shelter	❖ Not visible because the grass is thick
iii) On oasis	❖ Nothing but sand as far as one can see
iv) Hidden by a cover of	❖ No water and no shade

i) An endless stretch of sand	❖ Nothing but sand as far as one can see
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iv) Hidden by a cover of	❖ No water and no shade

**Check 2**

**1. A camel can do without water for days together.**

**What is the reason given in the text?**

As per the text, a camel can survive without water for several days because it does not sweat much. Unlike humans, a camel does not need to regulate its body temperature through sweating. Therefore, it losses less water.

Also, the camel can consume a greater quantity of water in a go.

**2. How do the smaller desert animals fulfil their need for water?**

The smaller desert animals remain in their burrows during the day. Thereby, they avoid the exposure to heat which could result in loss of water. Furthermore, they consume other

animals or plants and the moisture from meat and plant juices, respectively supplements their need for water.

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

In a desert the temperature rises during the day and falls rapidly at night because of the absence of moisture in the air.

The moisture in the air usually acts as a protective blanket and protects the Earth. However, in the deserts this is not the case. Therefore, the rapid rise and fall in the temperature.

#### Check 3

#### Exercises (NCERT Page 19)

#### 1. Describe a desert in your own way. Write a paragraph and read it aloud to your classmates.

A desert is a large area of barren land where rains hardly occur. The scarcity of water makes the land infertile, thereby making the scope for vegetation limited. A desert is also characterized by harsh climatic conditions like extremely hot temperature, rapid rise and fall of temperature during day and night and so on. The harsh weather conditions make the habitat hostile for animal and human existence.

The real beauty of desert is the ship of the desert the camel. The camel can survive and sustain itself easily in the extreme weather conditions of the desert. The cactus is another wonder found in the desert. The thick stems of the cactus can store water for a long time.

The camel and the cactus are the best examples of how natural life can adapt itself to adversities.

#### 2. Go to the library and collect information about the lifestyle of people in desert areas - their foods, clothes, work, social customs etc. Share this information with the group.

The people living in deserts usually lead a nomadic life. They move from one place to another in search of water. In places where water is found, these nomads irrigate the land and set-up their tents.

Once the water depletes in that area these people move along with their cattle and other household goods to another place where water could be found.

The people living in deserts, therefore, are usually cattle bearers who also do some vegetation.

## Chapter Practice

### Very Short Answer Type Questions

**1. What is the most popular definition of a desert?**

A stretch of land with little or no water and vegetation is called a desert.

**2. When can one come across a beautiful and rewarding sight in the desert?**

One comes across a rewarding sight in the desert whenever it rains. Though rare, during rains desert flowers bloom and the desert looks no less than a tropical garden.

**3. Do you think a desert is only a flat, unchanging wasteland of dry sand?**

No, a desert is not only a flat, unchanging wasteland of dry sand. It also has other natural elements like mountains, hills and oasis.

**4. What is an oasis?**

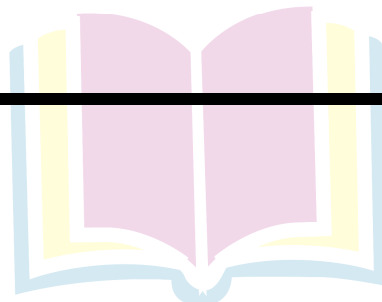
An oasis is a small patch of land in the middle of the desert which has a spring of water. It allows plants and trees to grow better.

**5. What are 'sand dunes'?**

In deserts where there is no water at all strong winds blow piling heaps of sand. Such piles or mounds where sand gets deposited are called 'sand dunes'.

**6. Give an example each of a hot and a cold desert.**

'The Thar' is an example of a hot desert and 'Ladakh' is an example of a cold desert.



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### Short Answer Type Questions

**1. Discuss a unique feature of the desert plants and animals.**

The desert plants and animals have the ability to require less water.

Unlike the plants and animals in humid or other climates, the desert plants and animals have adapted themselves to the climatic conditions and the scarcity of water in the deserts, thereby surviving in adverse conditions.

**2. Why do human being sweat?**

The human beings sweat in order to keep their body temperature constant. In hot climates, they are unable to stand the high body temperature, and thus sweat.

This cools their body and regulates their temperature. This is also one of the reason why human being's need for water is much more.

**3. How does the cactus plants manage to sustain itself in the desert?**

Cactus plants manage to store water in their thick stems. Their roots lie very close to the surface of the ground and are quick to absorb moisture from the rains that occasionally occur in the deserts. Cactus plants have thus, adapted themselves to the dry weather in the deserts.

### Long Answer Type Questions

**1. How do the desert plants and animals combat the scarcity of water in deserts?**

The desert plants and animals learn to adapt themselves to the climatic conditions of the desert and thereby require less water than most plants and animals. Some plants have the capacity to store in their stems, roots and other parts excess water. Also, they constantly suck moistures from the ground. The desert animals, too, are able to consume and store mote water. Animals like camels can survive without water for days. The smaller animals, on the other hand, face this adversity by not exposing themselves to heat during the day. Also, they eat other smaller animals from whose meat they could gather moisture.

## Value Based Questions

### 1. Why do you think deserts are an important part of nature's great plan?

A large portion of the Earth is covered by deserts. The dry patches of land with no water or vegetation too have a purpose to serve.

If nothing else, deserts remind us of the beauty of other places with which God has blessed human things.

Just like it is impossible to understand the significance of light in the absence of darkness. Similarly the beauty of nature could be appreciated by understanding barrenness as another alternative.

Nonetheless, the natural landscapes of deserts too are a thing of beauty.

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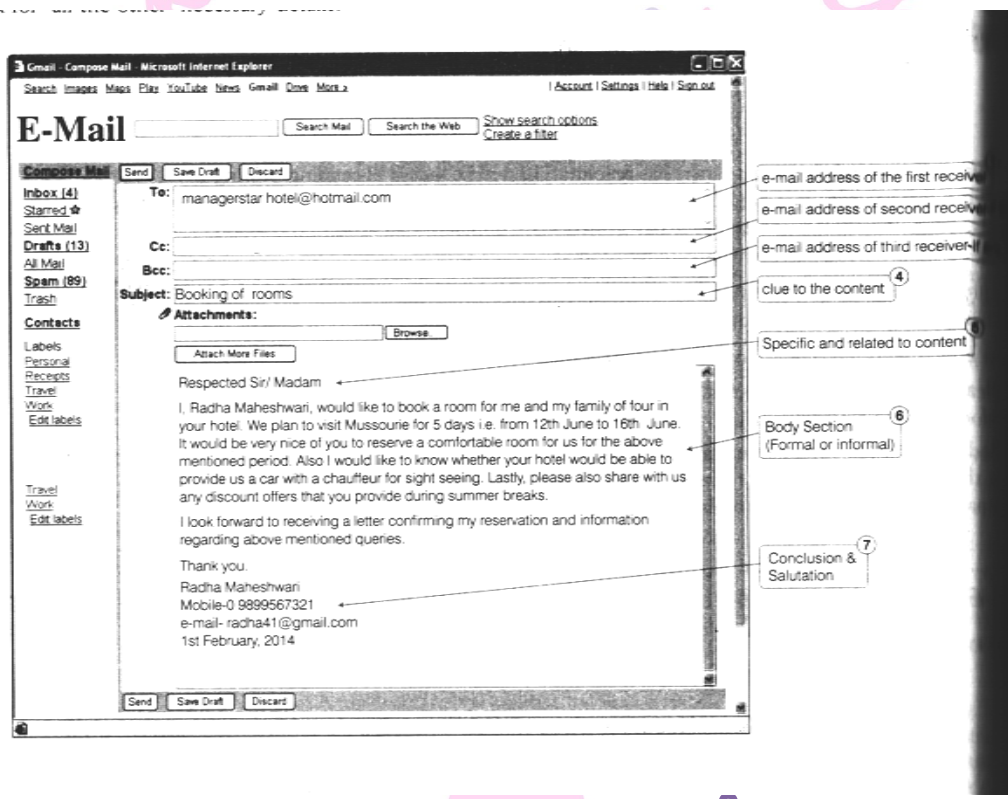
## E-Mail

### Guidelines for Writing the E-mail

- ❖ An e-mail should always carry a subject in the subject line. (related to content).
- ❖ It should be clear, specific and not vague. The content should be written in a concise and logical manner.
- ❖ Before sending the e-mail, it can be proofread for detecting any errors.
- ❖ Salutation (first name in the case of informal message and Dear/ Respected Sir/ma'am in the case of formal message, signature / name (of the sender), date should be there in the e-mail.
- ❖ It should not be too lengthy. The content should be divided into suitable number of paragraphs.
- ❖ The opening sentence should begin with pleasantries followed by the main idea / content of the message. SMS language should be avoided.

## Sample E- mail

You are Radha Maheshwari. You want to book a room for your family for 5 days stay in Mussourie during summer vacation break. Write an e-mail to the manager of star hotel there to book a room for you and your family. You can ask for all the other necessary details.



## E-mail for Friend Importance of hard work

### Solved Questions

Your friend has failed in his semester exams. Write an e-mail motivating him by boosting his morale and sharing with him the importance of hard work and dedication in life.

To : [vinitamehta@hotmail.com](mailto:vinitamehta@hotmail.com)  
 Cc :  
 Bcc :  
 Subject : Importance of hard work.

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Dear Vineeta,



How are you? Actually I came back from hostel today and called at your place. Your mother told me that you were not at home and that nowadays you are feeling low and nervous. I was really sad to know that you failed in your semester exams. But dear friend, don't lose hope and heart so easily. Life is full of ups and downs and one has to fight hard to win.

I just wanted to tell you that still there are many chances of your succeeding both in studies and life. You just have to focus on your studies, work very hard with full sincerity and dedication. . Make a time table and follow it, rigorously. Prepare notes for every subject. Get your queries solved and clarify your doubts with your teachers.

Anything is possible in life my friend, If we have the will power to do so and to do it with our full passion. So, please don't loose hope and feel sad about the past events. Just prepare yourself for present and give your soul to it.

I can assure you with full conviction that if you keep this talk in your mind and follow it too with your heart then you would pass your tests with flying colours.

I hope you will take my advice in good spirits and plan your study schedule accordingly.

Good luck!

Nupur.

[Mk.nupur@gmail.com](mailto:Mk.nupur@gmail.com)

1<sup>st</sup> February, 2014.



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## Solved Questions

### Message for Mother go for Tuitions

You receive a phone call from your mother's friend, Mrs. Rakhi in her absence and have the following conversation with the speaker. Write a message, for your mother as you have to go for your tuitions. Put the message in a box.

Mrs. Rakhi : Hello! Is this 25258654?

Smriti : Yes. May I know who's calling?

Mrs. Rakhi : I am Mrs Rakhi. Can I talk to Devika?

Smriti : I am afraid Mother is not at home. Do you have any message for her.

Mrs. Rakhi : Yes, please tell her that the kitty party fixed to tomorrow  
i.e 25<sup>th</sup> January has been cancelled?

Smriti : It has been cancelled?

Mrs. Rakhi : That's right also tell her that I shall let her know as and when the next  
date for the party is fixed.

Smriti : Ok aunty. I shall tell her.

### MESSAGE

24<sup>th</sup> January, 2014

11 : 30 am

Mumma

Mrs. Rakhi called in your absence stating that the kitty party scheduled for tomorrow, i.e. 25<sup>th</sup> January has been cancelled. She also said that she would let you know as and when the next date for the party is fixed.

Smriti

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