



Grade VI

Lesson 9. Desert Animals

PROSE

Summary of the chapter

Deserts are the Driest Places

These are the driest places on Earth and sometimes remain without rain for years. Desert animals cannot live without water or stay for long periods under Sun. They have adapted themselves to live in harsh condition, examples are gerbils and beetles. Some deserts are rocky with small bushes while others have flowers during the spring.

Snakes are Generally Harmless Except Rattlesnakes which are Dangerous

There are over 2300 kinds of snakes in the world. Most of them are quite harmless. But some are very poisonous and can kill anybody, including human being. Some of them lay eggs while others give birth to their young ones. They are found in the dry rocky deserts of America. Their frightening rattle can be heard as far as 30m away. They generally avoid people. They rattle their tails whenever they are disturbed to scare their intruders. They attack only when they feel threatened. Rattle snakes are common and widespread across the American continent from Canada to Argentina.

They eat mice, rats, voles and other small animals. They kill their prey with venom. They swallow the entire animals. Pythons can live without eating for a year or more. Snakes cannot hear the noises around them but they hear through vibrations in the ground. If a person walks nearby, the snake can feel the movement.

Mongoose Live in a Group

They like to hunt together and keep watch on dangerous predators. They are very amusing animals to watch for. They are easily found in many parts of Africa. They are always careful from hawks, eagles and large snakes. They warn one another about the danger with a special alarm call.

They can kill snakes without getting hurt themselves. Their reactions are so fast that they can move quickly each time the snake strikes. The children of mongooses are raised by the



whole group. When most of the adults are out looking for food, one or two males stay behind to guard their children.

They were first domesticated many thousands of years ago. They have long, shaggy winter coats to keep warm and shorter, tidier coats in summer to keep cool. A thirsty camel can drink up to thirty gallons of water. They get moisture from desert plants and can survive for up to 10 months without water.

There are Two Type of Camels

One has only a single hump and the other has two humps. The humps help the animals to survive in the desert by acting as storage containers. They do not store water and are full of fats. These help camels when food is not available. There are many other ways in which camels are adapted to desert life. Their mouths are so tough that even the sharp thorn cannot pierce through.

NCERT Corner

Working with the Text

A. 1. Talk to your partner and say whether the following statements are True or False.

- (i) No animals can survive without water.
- (ii) Deserts are endless sand dunes.
- (iii) Most snakes are harmless.
- (iv) Snakes cannot hear, but they can feel vibrations through the ground.
- (v) Camel store water in their humps.

Ans.

- (i) True (ii) False (iii) True (iv) True (v) False



2. Answer the following questions.

(i) How do desert animals survive without water?

Desert animals have to find ways of coping with harsh conditions. For example, gerbils cool themselves in underground burrows. The beetles catch moisture on their legs.

(ii) How do mongooses kill snakes?

Mongooses act swiftly each time snakes strike. They cause trouble to snake until it is tired and then they attack it. They are famous for killing snakes without getting hurt themselves.

(iii) How does the hump of the camels help them to survive when there is no water?

The hump helps the camels to survive in the desert by acting as storage containers. The fats stored in it nourish the camels when food is scarce.

The camels can survive without water for many months.

B. Read the words/phrases in the box. With your partner find their meaning in the dictionary.

harsh conditions, harmless, survive, intruder, threatened, predators, prey, continually

Fill in the blanks in the following passage with the above words/phrases.

All animals in forests and deserts struggle to _____ in _____. Though most of the animals are _____, some are dangerous when _____. If an _____ is noticed, they attack or bite to save themselves. They struggle _____ for food and water. Some animals are called _____ because they _____ on other animals.

Ans. All animals in forests and deserts struggle to survive in harsh conditions. Though most of the animals are harmless, some are dangerous when threatened. If an intruder is noticed, they attack or bite to save themselves. They struggle continually for food and water. Some animals are called predators because they prey on other animals.



Speaking and Reading

Look at these sentences.

- Deserts are the driest places on the Earth.
- Gerbils spend the hottest part of the day in cool underground burrows.

Now form pairs. Ask questions using a suitable form of the word in brackets. Try to answer the questions too.

Do you know

1. Which animal is the _____ (tall)?
2. Which animal runs the _____ (fast)?
3. Which place on the Earth is the _____ (hot) or the _____ (cold)
4. Which animal is the _____ (large)
5. Which is the _____ (tall) mountain in the world?
6. Which is the _____ (rainy) place on the Earth?
7. Which is the _____ (old) living animal?

Can you add some questions of your own?

Ans.

1. Giraffe is the tallest animals.
2. Cheetah runs the fastest.
3. Al Aziziyah, Libya is the hottest and Soviet Vostok Station in Antarctica is the coolest on the Earth.
4. Blue whale is the largest animal.
5. Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world.
6. Mawsynram in Meghalaya is the rainiest place on the Earth.
7. Giant tortoise is the oldest living animal.

Thinking about Language

A. Look at these sentences.

- Most snakes are quite harmless, but a few are poisonous.
- Most snakes lay eggs, but the rattle snake gives birth to its young.

Now write five sentences like these using 'most' and the clues below.



1. (90% of) people are honest (10%) are dishonest.

2. (Lots of) fruit have plenty of sugar, (some) citrus fruit are low in sugar.

3. (Every soft drink except this one) has lots of 'empty calories'.

4. (The majority of) films are romances; (a few) are on other topics.

5. (A majority of) people agree that he is a good leader; (just a few) disagree.

Ans.

1. Most of the people are honest, but a few are dishonest.
2. Most of the fruits have plenty of sugar, but some citrus fruits are low in sugar.
3. Most of the soft drinks except this one have lots of empty calories.
4. Most of the films are romances, only a few are on other topics.
5. Most of the people agree that he is a good leader, just a few disagree.

B. Look at these sentences.

- Animals *cannot* survive for long without water.
- So desert animals *have to* find different ways of coping.

The first sentence says what *cannot* happen or be done; the second tells us what must, therefore, be done, what it is *necessary* to do. Complete these sentences using *cannot* and *have to/has to*.

1. You _____ reach the Island by land or air; you _____ go by boat.
2. We _____ see bacteria with our eyes; we _____ look at them through a microscope.
3. He _____ have a new bicycle now; he _____ wait till next year.
4. Old people often _____ hear very well; they _____ use a hearing aid.
5. Road users _____ do what they wish; they _____ follow the traffic rules.
6. She _____ accept this decision; she _____ question it.
7. You _____ believe everything you hear; you _____ use your own judgement.



Ans.

1. cannot, have to
2. cannot, have to
3. cannot, has to
4. cannot, have to
5. cannot, have to
6. cannot, has to
7. cannot, have to

Writing

1. **imagine you are journeying through a desert. Write a couple of paragraphs describing what you see and hear.**

A desert is not a place to live. I visited the Thar Desert in Rajasthan and did not like it. It was very hot there with endless sand and sand dunes. There was scarcity of water and trees. One could only find thorny bushes in the area. Life was very tough with less number of birds and animals. Camels can be found everywhere. One can also see mongooses and jackals in the area. There were small villages around oases. I wanted to return to my own fertile lands.

Chapter Practice

Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. **What are the two different kinds of camels?**

The two different kinds of camel are: the Dromedary with a single hump and the Bactrian camel with two humps.

2. **Where are the rattlesnakes found in the world?**

The rattlesnakes are very dangerous and found across the American continent from Canada to Argentina.

3. **How much water can a thirsty camel drink?**



A thirsty camel can drink as much as thirty gallons of water in just 10 minutes. It is about five hundred full glasses of water.

4. What is the purpose of hump in camels?

The humps help the camels to survive in the desert by acting as storage containers. They store fats and nourish them when food is scarce.

5. How do the mongooses warn one another?

The mongooses warn one another with a special alarm call if they spot anything suspicious.

6. What is the mode of reproduction in snakes?

Most snakes lay eggs, but there are many which give birth to their young on.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Do the snakes hear? Give reasons in support of your answer.

No, they do not hear anything. They feel vibrations in the ground. If a person walks nearby, the snake can feel the movement. But if the same person will shout, it would not hear anything.

2. How do the mongooses hunt together?

The mongooses like to hunt together and keep looking for dangerous predators near them. They travel in groups and keep in touch with one another by twittering and calling.

3. What are rattlesnakes?

Rattlesnakes are very dangerous. Their frightening rattle can be heard as far as 30 m away and they can strike with lightning speed. They hold their tails upright and rattle the end whenever it is disturbed.

4. How do the snakes eat? What do they eat?

The snakes swallow their prey as a whole. They feed on a variety of prey, including mice, voles, rats, chipmunks and other small animals. There are few snakes that eat more than once a week.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. What is a desert? How do animals survive in deserts?

Deserts are the driest places on Earth and they remain without rain sometimes for months or even years. The animals living in deserts have found ways to cope with the harsh conditions. Gerbils spend the hottest part of the day in cool underground burrows.

Beetles catch drops of moisture on their legs and consume them. Camels get moisture from desert plants and can survive for up to 10 months without drinking water. Their humps help them to survive in deserts.

2. Write about the habits of mongooses?

Mongooses are very amusing animals to watch. They like to hunt together, keeping in touch with one another whenever they go out of sight by twittering and calling.

They warn one another with a special alarm call if they spot anything suspicious. The children of mongooses are raised by the whole group.

They are famous for being able to kill snakes without getting hurt. Their reactions are so fast that they can fight back with snakes. They make continuous attempts to fight snakes and kill when they get tired.

Extract Based Question

Extracts 1

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

There are more than 2300 different kinds of snakes around the world, ranging from just 15 cm long to more than 11 m. Most snakes are quite harmless-but there are a few that are so poisonous they can kill a human being with just one bite. Most snakes lay eggs, but there are many which give birth to their young. In the dry, rocky deserts of America lives a rather evil-



looking snake with a very bad reputation. Its frightening rattle can be heard as far as 30 m away and it can strike with lightning speed.

1. How many different kinds of snakes are being found in the world?

There are more than 2300 different kinds of snakes being found in the world.

2. Write an important feature of the rattlesnakes?

The rattlesnakes can be heard as far as 30 m away and they can strike with lightning speed.

3. Do you think snakes are harmless?

Yes, most of the snakes are quite harmless but a few of them are very poisonous and can kill human being.

4. Give antonym for the word 'poisonous'.

- (a) Lethal (b) Venom (c) Evil (d) Non-poisonous
(d) Non-poisonous

5. Who can lay eggs and give birth to young ones?

- (a) Rattlesnakes (b) Snakes (c) Camels (d) Mongooses
(b) Snakes

6. Find synonym for the word 'strike'.

- (a) Hit (b) Smooth (c) Harmless (d) Speed
(a) Hit

Extracts 2

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

Another animal which lives in the desert is the camel. Camels were first domesticated by people many thousands years ago.

In the wild, camels usually live in small groups of up to thirty animals. Camels have long, shaggy winter coats to keep warm and shorter, tidier coats in the summer to keep cool.

A thirsty camel can drink as much as thirty gallons of water - that's about five hundred full glasses - in just 10 minutes. Normally, however, it gets all the moisture it needs from desert plants and can survive for up to 10 months without drinking any water at all.



1. Which animals was the first to be domesticated?

Camel was the first animals to be domesticated many thousands years ago.

2. How do camels protect themselves from harsh climate?

Camels have long, shaggy winter coats to keep warm and shorter, tidier coat in the summer to keep cool.

3. What is the source of moisture for camels?

The desert plants are the source of moisture for camels.

4. Find synonym for the word 'wild'.

- (a) Moisture (b) Desert (c) Domestic (d) Untamed
(d) Untamed

5. Give superlative degree of the word 'shorter'.

- (a) Short (b) Shortest (c) Shot (d) Shoot
(b) Shortest

6. Write antonym for the word 'survive'

- (a) Live (b) Drink (c) Thirsty (d) Cool
(a) Live



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