

CHAPTER – 9

Desert Animals

❖WORKING WITH THE TEXT

Q. 1 A

Talk to your partner and say whether the following statements are true or false.

- (i) No animal 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) Camels store water in their humps.

Answer:

- (i) No animal can survive without water: True

Water is the major life support system for nature and all its elements.

However, the needs of various such elements differ. Some animals need more water while some need less of it.

Example: Camels

- (ii) Deserts are endless sand dunes: False

Deserts are not only endless seas of sand dunes but consist of rocky or pebbly, dotted with small bushes while

some are sprinkled with colourful flowers during the spring.

(iii) Most snakes are harmless: True

As mentioned in the text, most of the snakes are harmless while there are a few which are so poisonous that they can kill a human being with just a single bite.

(iv) Snakes cannot hear, but they can feel vibrations through the ground: True

Snakes sense the presence of things near them through the vibrations coming from their movement on the ground.

Example - Although it can sense the movement of a human being through the vibrations on the ground, if the same human being shouts, the snake would not hear it.

(v) Camels store water in their humps: False

The hump on a Camel's body acts as a storage container which is full of fat and not water. This fat helps in the nourishment of the Camel when food is scarcely available.

Q. 1 B

Answer the following questions.

(i) How do desert animals survive without water? (1)

(ii) How do mongooses kill snakes? (6)

(iii) How does the hump of the camels help them to survive when there is no water? (9)

Answer:

(i) Deserts are among the driest places on earth but desert animals cannot survive without water.

They find alternate ways to survive in the scorching sun for long periods. For example – the Gerbils spend the hottest part of the day in cool underground burrows. The darkling beetles are experts at catching drops of moisture on their legs, then lifting them in their air until the drops trickle down their mouths. The Camel, also a desert animal can drink thirty gallons of water at once and can survive for nearly up to ten months without drinking water.

(ii) The mongooses are very smart in killing snakes without getting hurt themselves.

They can dodge each time the snake strikes because of their fast reactions. Acting in a very smart manner, they continually make a nuisance of themselves until the snake gets tired. In search of the right moment, they quickly dive in for killing the snake.

(iii) The Dromedary, with a single hump and the Bactrian Camel, with two humps, are the two different kinds of Camels found in the deserts. The humps of these animals

help them in surviving by acting as storage containers that store a lot of fat. This fat nourishes the Camels when food is scarcely available. In addition to this, their mouths are so tough that even the sharp thorn cannot pierce through.

Q. 2

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.

Answer:

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

Q. 1

Look at these sentences.

- Deserts are the driest places on 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 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 earth?
7. Which is the _____ (old) living animal?

Can you add some questions of your own?

Answer:

1. Which animal is the tallest?

Giraffe

2. Which animal runs the fastest?

Cheetah

3. Which place on earth is the hottest or the coldest?

Hottest – Al Aziziyah, Libya

Coldest - Oymyakon, Russia

4. Which animal is the largest?

The Blue Whale

5. Which is the tallest mountain in the world?

The Mount Everest

6. Which is the rainiest place on earth?

Mawsynram, Meghalaya

7. Which is the oldest living animal?

Belonging to different climatic conditions, there are some oldest living animals on earth. Example – Adwaita, an Aldabra giant tortoise, the jellyfish, the horseshoe crab etc.

Students can find facts related to different aspects covering many facts such as historical monuments.

❖ THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

Q. 1

Look at these sentences.

- Most snakes are quite harmless, but a few are poisonous.
- Most snakes lay eggs, but the rattlesnake 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. _____

Answer:

1. Most of the people are honest, but around ten percent 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 has lots of ‘empty calories’.
4. Most of the films are romances, but a few are on other topics.
5. Most of the people agree that he is a good leader, only a few disagree.

Q. 2

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 judgment.

Answer:

1. You cannot reach the island by land or air; you have to go by boat.

2. We cannot see bacteria with our eyes; we have to look at them through a microscope.

3. He cannot have a new bicycle now; he has to wait till next year.

4. Old people often cannot hear very well; they have to use a hearing aid.

5. Road users cannot do what they wish; they have to follow the traffic rules.

6. She cannot accept this decision; she has to question it.

7. You cannot believe everything you hear; you have to use your own judgment.

❖ WRITING

Q. 1

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

Answer:

A Golden Opportunity to visit the Thar!

The Great Indian Desert situated in the state of Rajasthan is a large area full of sand. Being a natural border between India and Pakistan, it is located in the Northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent.

A desert full of sand dunes in all the four corners has its own beauty altogether. Full of Cactus plants and Camels, it is a place worth visiting which is the most densely populated desert in the world (83%).

Although reading in books and on the internet is quite interesting to know, the challenging life in such a scarce place with limited resources is very difficult. Watching the women carrying ‘matkas’ on their head in search of water as well as the kind of arid atmosphere of the entire

place shows the beauty as well as the difficulties people living there encounter in their everyday chores.

NOTE – The above-given account of the Thar Desert is just an example. Students can make their piece of writing much more interesting by adding in their personal experiences of the same place or some other desert they have visited.

❖ WHAT IF – WORKING WITH THE POEM

Q. 1 A

Who is the speaker in the poem?

Answer:

The speaker in the poem is a child who is a school-going student. The different kinds of doubts in the form of “What ifs” mentioned in the poem reflect the small fears and worries the child is thinking about during his childhood days.

Q. 1 B

With your partner list out the happenings the speaker is worried about.

Answer:

The speaker is worried about the following happenings, as mentioned in the poem:

- If he/she gets dumb in school
- If they closed the swimming pool
- If he/she got beaten up
- If there was poison in his/her cup
- If he/she began to cry
- If he/she got sick and died
- If he/she flunked in that test
- If green hair grew on his/her chest
- If nobody liked him/her
- If a bolt of lightning struck him/her
- If he/she did not grow taller
- If his/her head started getting smaller
- If the fish stopped biting
- If the wind tore his/her kite
- If they started a war
- If his/her parents get divorced

- If the bus gets late
- If his/her teeth don't grow in straight
- If he/she tore his/her own pants
- If he/she never learned to dance

Q. 1 C

Why do you think she/he has these worries? Can you think of ways to get rid of such Worries?

Answer:

The speaker, a school-going student experiences these small worries like every small child of his/her age.

Lying alone in bed during the night time, the child wonders about the worst things and situations that can happen along with some unrealistic situations as well. As it has been rightly said, “An empty mind is a devil’s workshop; the child’s mind tends to bend towards such fears.

In order to get rid of such worries, the child can occupy himself/herself in

studying or playing with friends. As long as one remains occupied with different things, the place for fears and worries gets filled up with constructive energy to do something beneficial.

Q. 2

Read the following line.

‘Some What ifs *crawled inside my ear*’

Can words crawl into your ear? This is an image The poet is trying to make an image of what she/he experiences.

Now with your partner try and list out some more images from the poem.

Answer:

Images mentioned in the poem are:

- And pranced and partied all night long
- And sang their same old What if song
- What if green hair grows on my chest?
- What if a bolt of lightning strikes me?

Q. 3

In groups of four discuss some more ‘whatifs’ that you experience in your day to day life and list them out.

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)
- (vii)
- (viii)

And now write a poem of five or six lines with the ‘What ifs’ that you have listed.

Answer:

Some of the ‘What ifs’ are as follows:

- What if my mother doesn’t give me lunch
- What if my friends stop talking to me
- What if my teacher gives me bad grades
- What if I lose all my notebooks and textbooks
- What if I am punished the whole day at school

NOTE – This is a fun activity. Students can perform in groups and make many such creative and interesting “What ifs” and then compile all of them to form a poem.

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