

ATOMIC ENERGY CENTRAL SCHOOL ,KAKRAPAR

CLASS :VI

SUB : ENGLISH

MODULE-1

HANDOUT-1

DESERT ANIMALS

DESERTS are the driest places on earth and sometimes go for months, or even years, without rain. But even the desert animals cannot survive without water, or for long periods in the scorching sun, so they have had to find different ways of coping with the harsh conditions. For example, gerbils spend the hottest part of the day in cool underground burrows. And strange insects called darkling beetles are experts at catching drops of moisture on their legs, then lifting them into the air until the drops trickle down into their mouths. Not all deserts are endless seas of rolling sand dunes. Some are rocky or pebbly and dotted with small bushes while others are sprinkled with colourful flowers during the spring. There are more than 2300 different kinds of snakes around the world, ranging from just fifteen centimetres long to more than eleven metres. 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 thirty metres away, and it can strike with lightning speed. But the rattlesnake, or ‘rattler’ as it is sometimes called, prefers to avoid people if it possibly can. It holds its tail upright and rattles the end whenever it is disturbed, in the hope that the intruder will go away. However, if its warnings are ignored—and it feels threatened—it will coil ready to bite. But the rattler itself cannot hear the noise its own tail makes. Like most snakes, it ‘hears’ things through vibrations in the ground. If a person walks nearby the snake can feel the movement. But if the same person were to shout, it would

not hear a thing. Rattlesnakes are very common and widespread animals, living right across the American continent from Canada to Argentina. They feed on a variety of prey, including mice, voles, rats, chipmunks and many others small animals. Rattlesnakes kill their prey with venom. Like all snakes, they swallow the unfortunate animals whole. Few snakes have to eat more than once a week and some, such as the larger pythons, can survive for a year or more without eating.