

An Alien Hand: Textbook in English for class VII

Chapter: The Desert

Introduction: The chapter “The Desert” is very simple and informative in nature. The chapter describes the salient features of the desert and expects the young learners to understand the complex interrelationship between human and their natural environment.

Key ideas in the chapter The Desert:

1) Popular belief is that a desert is an endless stretch of sand where no rain falls. Therefore no vegetation grows there. But the chapter pictures the desert and how people, plants and animals survive there.

2) A desert may be hot like the THAR or cold Like the LADAKH. (**Refer Slide 4: Cold Desert LADAKH**)

3) Oasis is a very beautiful place in the desert. An Oasis is a place in a desert where water comes up to the surface from deep underground. It is like a green island in the middle of the desert. Desert plants grow around it. Animals also come to drink water and, eat the plants and find shade. We can call it the Heaven in the desert. (**Refer slide 8: Oasis**)

4) All know that the camel is called as the “Ship of the Desert”. The camel has large, flat feet which helps him in walking, running in desert. Camel is also blessed with double eye lashes which protect him from sandstorms. The Camel can survive longer period of time without water. The Physical features of the camel are well adapted to the conditions of the desert. (**Refer slide 7: The Ship of the Desert: The camel**)

5) All the animals need water in order to survive. The Camel can survive longer period without water because his body stand a high body temperature.

They don't need to sweat. Therefore they retain water they drink for longer periods. It is absolutely wrong that they store water in their hump.

6) The Desert has a different Flora and Fauna. The desert animals and plants have adapted to such harsh conditions. (**Slide 6: Hot Desert**) To avoid high temperatures in the desert, some animals go into burrows where temperature is relatively low.

7) Some animals eat plants and seeds and get water they need from plant juices.

8) Plants like Cactus store water in their stems to adapt with the environment. Their roots are closer to the ground and therefore they absorb the moisture from the ground.

9) The major feature of all the deserts is dryness and variation in temperatures. Since there is no moisture in the air, the desert heats up rapidly during the day and also cools off rapidly at night.

10) The Deserts are an important part of nature's great plan. They are not useless parts of the mother earth.

11) The Deserts are beautiful with desert plants and flowers and the sight can be as pleasant as that of any tropical garden whenever it rains.

Vocabulary:

Sight – scenery

Rewarding – pleasant

Flat- level

Mounds – big heaps Dense- thick

Oasis – a green island in the desert

Stretch – expanse

Wasteland- barren land

Adapt – to adjust

Retain – keep

Burrow- a hole in the earth

Moisture – dampness

Dense- thick

Oasis – a green island in the desert

Stretch – expanse

Wasteland- barren land

“If you spend enough time in the desert, you will hear it speak.”