

# Water in the Desert

If a desert is a dry area, how can it have water? This section is about where to find water in a desert.

This section is about rivers in dry areas.

In some parts of the world, precipitation does not occur very often and there is very little rain.

A long time without rain is called a **drought**.

The driest places on Earth are called **deserts**.

Plants and animals find it hard to live in the deserts. Deserts are places with little life. They are **deserted**.

It may not rain for years in a desert, but when it does rain, it can be very heavy. At this time there are rivers in the desert. After the rain stops, the rivers dry up again. Dry river valleys in the desert are called **canyons** or **wadis**.

Not all deserts look the same. Some are sandy deserts (Photograph 1) and some are rocky deserts (Photograph 2).

Deserts are very hot during the day, but cold at night.

Look at this graph showing the climate of Bahrain City in Bahrain. It shows that there is no rain for 4 months of the year.

Photograph 1 Sand dunes at Kerzaz, Algeria

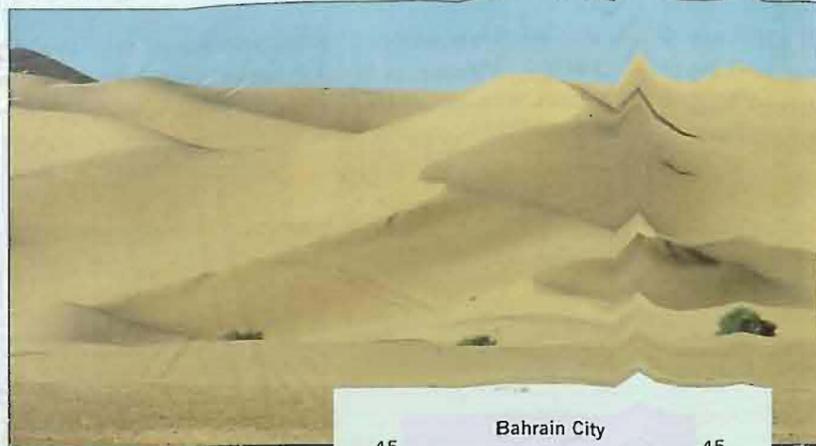


Figure 1



Photograph 2 Monument Valley, Arizona, USA



Photograph 3 Water pump, Egypt



Some rivers, like the Nile, flow through the desert even though their **source** is not in the desert area. The source of the Nile is in the mountains of Ethiopia. The River Nile does not dry up because its water comes from outside the desert.

Rivers like the Nile can be used to water the dry soil of the desert. Water is taken from the river to the land so that crops can be grown. This is called **irrigation** (Photograph 3).

There may also be water deep under the ground. If a well is dug, this water can also be used to irrigate the land. Irrigation is one way to make up for not having much rainfall.

If crops are grown when the soil is too dry, the soil breaks up. The wind can then blow it away. This is called **wind erosion**. The land may turn into a man-made desert.

## Activity A

Copy and complete these sentences.

- 1 A long time without rain is called a (drought / desert).
- 2 A wadi is a (wet / dry) river valley.
- 3 A desert is a (wet / dry) area.
- 4 Deserts are very (hot / cold) at night.

## Activity B

Look at Figure 1.

- 1 Name the months that have no rainfall.
- 2 Name the months that have rainfall.
- 3 What is the highest temperature?
- 4 What is the lowest temperature?
- 5 What is the total rainfall?

## Activity C

- 1 Draw a graph of this data for Cairo, Egypt.

Cairo, Egypt	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Rainfall (mm)	4	4	3	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	3	>
Temperature (°C)	19	21	24	28	32	35	35	35	33	30	26	21

- 2 Write five sentences about the graph you have drawn.

## Activity D

Look at the graph you have drawn for Cairo.

- 1 Write down two things that are the same about the climate of Cairo and Bahrain City.
- 2 Write down two things that are different about the climate of Cairo and Bahrain City.

## Activity E

Match these words with their meanings below.

Wind erosion / Irrigation / The source / A desert / A well

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ means watering the land.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ is a dry place where it may not rain for years.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ is a deep hole in the ground where there is water.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ is when the soil is blown away.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ is where a river begins.

## Activity F

Look at Photograph 3 and match the letters with these words.

river / river bank / farm workers / irrigated land / trees

## Activity G

Look at Photographs 1 and 2.

- 1 Write down three things that are the same about the deserts in these two photographs.
- 2 Write down three things that are different about the deserts in these two photographs.

## Activity H

Copy and complete these sentences.

- 1 Photograph 1 shows a (rocky / sandy) desert.
- 2 Photograph 2 shows a (rocky / sandy) desert.
- 3 Photograph 3 shows an (irrigated / dry) desert.

## Activity I

Choose one of the photographs and draw a labelled sketch of the desert.