

## Sahara Desert Reading Comprehension

Name \_\_\_\_\_

The Sahara Desert is the largest hot desert in the world and the third largest desert in the world, following Antarctica and the Arctic—two cold deserts. It is located in North Africa and extends more than 9 million square kilometers, covering parts of ten countries.

The Sahara is the world's largest low-latitude desert; it is located closer to the equator than the poles. In this high-pressure area, air from the atmosphere sinks down to the ground, leading to warming and drying of air. The sinking air from the atmosphere prevents the evaporation of water from the ground, as well as the subsequent condensation which would lead to cloud formation and rainfall. Thus, the Sahara Desert is an environment with dry air, lots of sunlight, and a lack of clouds and rainfall, contributing to high temperatures and arid overall conditions.

Stone plateaus, known as hamadas, and large spaces populated with sand dunes, known as ergs, are common in the vast desert. Some ergs can rise to nearly 600 feet in height. Wind plays a large role in constructing the desert's appearance, shaping sand dunes, dune fields, gravel plains, and other natural structures.

Historically, the Sahara has been home to many powerful civilizations, including those of ancient Egypt and the Kingdom of Kush. Cities and farming villages formed along oases and rivers, and trade routes carrying cloth, ivory, jade, and gold across the Sahara helped establish the ancient African economy.

While the Sahara's conditions are currently extreme, the area actually switches between desert-like and savanna-like conditions every 41,000 years. The alternation is caused by changes in Earth's axis while it rotates around the sun. The Sahara is expected to become green again in 15,000 years!

### 1. Which statistic is NOT true about the Sahara Desert?

- A. It is the world's largest desert
- B. It extends more than nine million square kilometers
- C. It is the world's largest hot desert
- D. It covers parts of ten African nations

- 2. Which of the following would be unusual for the Sahara Desert?**
- A. Scorching hot temperatures
  - B. Little to no rainfall
  - C. Fluffy Clouds
  - D. Arid conditions
- 3. Which of the following is the best explanation for why the Sahara Desert is hot and dry?**
- A. Because it is a high-pressure area filled with sand
  - B. Because there is very little evaporation or condensation that occurs because of the way the air sinks in the region
  - C. Because of the region's proximity to the equator and distance from the north and south pole
  - D. Because the area has too much dry air and sunshine, which lead to unusual hot temperatures and arid conditions
- 4. How does wind affect the Sahara Desert?**
- A. It provides some relief from the scorching heat
  - B. It helps the growth of plants that can manage to survive in the desert
  - C. It shapes the landscape
  - D. It results in the formation of hamadas
- 5. Which of the following is a true statement about the Sahara Desert?**
- A. Throughout history, the extreme conditions of the Sahara Desert have proven made it impossible for civilizations to thrive in
  - B. The area that is now the Sahara Desert will soon be very different
  - C. The area that is now the Sahara Desert may one day be a rainforest
  - D. The area that is now the Sahara Desert will not always be hot and dry
- 6. Which paragraph tells about the history of the desert?**
- A. Second
  - B. Third
  - C. Fourth
  - D. Fifth
- 7. Why will the landscape of the Sahara Desert eventually change?**
- A. Because of global warming and climate change
  - B. Because of changes in the Earth's axis as it rotates around the sun
  - C. Because it will eventually change from a desert into a savanna
  - D. Because it will become green again in about 15,000 years