

DESERT HABITATS





Talk About It

What images come to mind when you think of deserts? How do animals and people survive in the desert?



Find out more about desert habitats at

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Vocabulary

brimming	parched
gushed	scrawny
landscape	gnarled
scorching	progress



Connotations

A thesaurus entry will include several different synonyms for a word. Each synonym will carry negative or positive feelings, called **Connotations**. For example, *scrawny* has a negative connotation. It would not be a positive word to describe a trim athlete.

The Best Place To Be

by Carmela Rameriz

My new friend Janine just moved here from North Carolina. She is always talking about how different Arizona is from her old home.

"I really miss the mountains," Janine said before soccer practice last week. "North Carolina is the best place to be."

"How can you say that?" I exclaimed as I closed the top of the team's ice chest. It was **brimming** with ice and so many drinks that I could hardly press it shut. "There are plenty of mountains here!"



“It’s different in North Carolina,” Janine explained. “Our mountains have tall, leafy trees,” she said as we walked to the field. “The forests are filled with raccoons, deer, and bears. My dad and I used to hike along a stream near our house. The water there **gushed** over the rocks and would splash us. The **landscape** and scenery was rocky, but what a view!”

“Arizona’s mountains are filled with wild flowers and animals,” I said. “The bighorn sheep are my favorite!”

“Don’t you mind the **scorching** sun burning your lawn?” Janine asked. “The grass around here always looks **parched** and thirsty from the lack of water.

“The ground is cracked and dry. The trees are **scrawny** and thin. Their **gnarled** and twisted branches grow so slowly.”

“Still, you won’t see mountains like these anywhere,” I said. “People think Arizona’s mountains glow from the sun,” I continued, sounding like a travel book.

All my talking paid off, though. This week at soccer practice I found that I had made **progress** convincing Janine that Arizona was a great place to live. I felt there was a definite improvement in her attitude towards her new home.

“I saw the neatest thing,” she said. “The tiniest bird flew into a hole in this huge cactus. There are so many beautiful things to see in the desert, don’t you think?”

“It’s the best place to be,” I told her, as we both ran out onto the field.

Reread for Comprehension

Make Inferences and Analyze Compare and Contrast

Making inferences and analyzing what happens in a story allows you to notice similarities and differences between characters, events, and settings. A Venn Diagram will help you to compare and contrast these similarities and differences. Use your Venn Diagram as you reread “The Best Place to Be” to compare and contrast the two states described in the story.

