

Science

Genre

Nonfiction

Encyclopedia articles give information and facts about a topic.



Text Feature

Charts show information in an organized way. The facts appear in rows and columns.

Content Vocabulary

temperature

adapted

nocturnal

The Sonoran Desert

The Sonoran Desert is a dry area in the American Southwest. It covers about 100,000 square miles in parts of California, Arizona, and Mexico. Some parts of the Sonoran Desert may not have rain for one or two years. Other parts have sudden summer rainstorms.

Summer in the Sonoran Desert is very, very hot. The **temperature** is often more than 100 degrees during the day. Even in the winter, the temperature is usually above freezing.

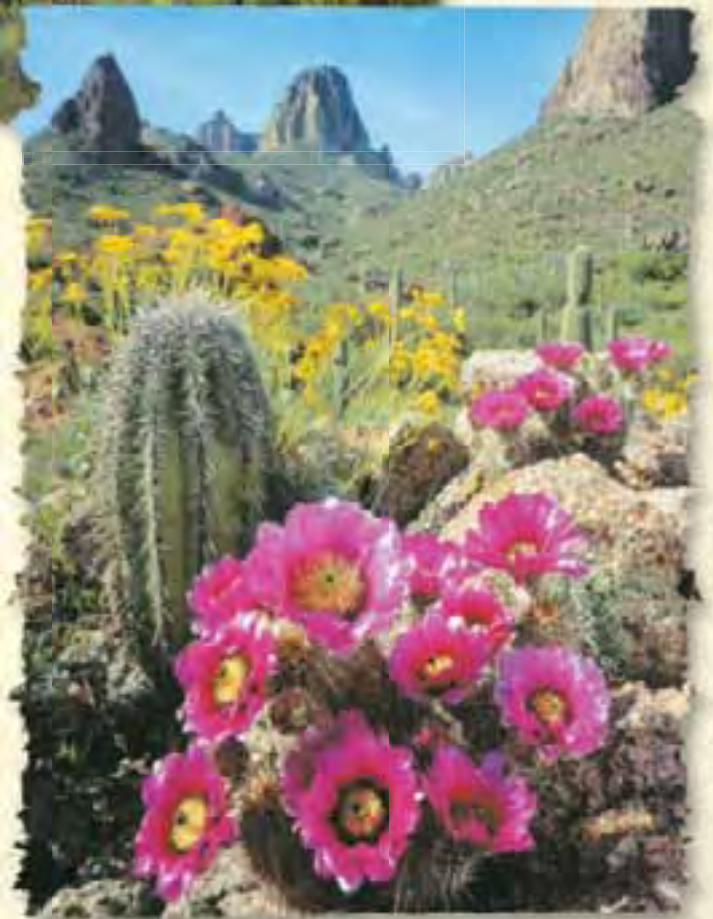
Desert plants and animals have **adapted** to life in the desert. They have special ways to survive with very little water and in very hot weather.



Plants

The Sonoran Desert has many different kinds of cactus plants. Cactus plants can live a long time without rain.

Cactus plants store water in their thick stems. They also have thick, waxy leaves that help keep in water. Cactus roots grow close to the top of the ground. When it does rain, the roots can soak up the water very quickly.



Sonoran Desert Animals

| Name | Type of Animal | What It Eats |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| black-chinned hummingbird | bird | flowers, nectar, nuts |
| coyote | mammal | small animals, insects, plants |
| ground snake | reptile | insects |
| horned toad | reptile | plants, insects |
| roadrunner | bird | insects, lizards, snakes |
| Sonoran Desert toad | amphibian | insects, mice |

The animal name is in the first column.

Information about the animal is in the row.



Animals

Like desert plants, desert animals can live without much rain. Most desert animals do not have to drink water. They get the water they need from their food.

Many desert animals are **nocturnal**. This means they only come out to find food at night, when it is cool. During the hot days, these animals hide in the shade or underground. Staying cool helps animals keep water in their bodies.

Connect and Compare



1. Which desert animals eat insects? Which desert animals only eat plants? **Chart**
2. Think about this encyclopedia article and *Dig, Wait, Listen*. How is the spadefoot toad like the other animals of the Sonoran Desert? **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Science Activity

Use an encyclopedia to research desert plants. Make a chart that gives two facts for each plant.



Find more desert facts at
www.macmillanmh.com

Write a Dialogue

Writer's Craft

Dialogue

Good writers use lively words in **dialogue** to make their characters sound interesting.



I used quotation marks to show dialogue.

I used lively words to tell a joke.

Fox Tells a Joke

by Daniela M.

Fox liked to tell jokes. Tortoise liked Fox, so he put up with Fox's silly jokes.

"Tortoise," said Fox, "why can't it rain for two days without stopping?"

"I don't know," said Tortoise. "Is it because this is the desert?"

"No!" Fox laughed. "It's because there is always a night in between!"

She laughed again. "Get it? A night is in between the two days!"

"Ha-ha. Very funny," said Tortoise. Then he pulled his head inside his shell.

Your Turn

Write your own dialogue. Make up two fictional characters. Then write the characters' words as if they were speaking. Start a new paragraph each time a new character speaks. Then use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- Voice:** Did I use lively words in **dialogue** to make my characters interesting?
- Word Choice:** Do the characters' words show what they are like?
- Sentence Fluency:** Are my sentences varied? Would they sound interesting if they were read aloud?
- Conventions:** Did I use quotation marks correctly?