

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 16 Word Count: 1,226

Book Summary

Deserts Dry asks readers to think about what they already know about deserts and adds surprising new facts about three of the most unique deserts in the world: the Sahara, the Gobi, and the Atacama. The book explains that some deserts are home to expert horse herders, lakes of salt, underground oceans of oil, and ancient civilizations. It also describes different animals and plants that can be found in these inhospitable climates and explains how they survive. Photographs and captions support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of asking and answering questions to understand text
- Identify details to compare and contrast different deserts
- Identify and use hyphenated compound adjectives
- Identify the meaning of and use the suffix -est

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Deserts Dry* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- World map
- KWLS, content vocabulary, compare and contrast, hyphenated compound adjectives worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

- Content words:
 Story critical: *dormant (adj.), dunes (n.), evaporates (v.), irrigation (n.), nomads (n.), oasis (n.)*
 Enrichment: *minerals (n.), moisture (n.), resource (n.)*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the word *desert* on the board. Show students magazines and books featuring photos taken in deserts around the world, and use the world map to reference them. Ask students to describe what they see and discuss what they may already know about deserts.
- Create a KWLS chart on the board and hand out the [KWLS worksheet](#). Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for information we want to know, the *L* stands for the knowledge we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. As various topics are discussed, fill in the first section (*K*) on the board with information students know about the topic. Have students complete the same section of their KWLS chart.

- Ask students what they would like to know about deserts. Have them fill in the second section (W) of their chart. Write their questions on the class chart.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Ask students to turn to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book based on what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Discuss with students how having prior knowledge about the topic, and asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and remember the information in a book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of the information in a book and how it is organized. After previewing the table of contents, use it to model asking questions.

Think-aloud: Before I read a book, I often think of questions about the topic that I'm curious about. As I read, I try to answer some of these questions. I can use the table of contents to think of questions I would like to have answered about deserts. For example, one section is titled "The Sahara." This makes me wonder where this famous desert is located and what lives there. I'll have to read the book to find out. I'll write these questions on the chart.

- Have students look at the other section titles. Have them write any questions they have based on the covers and table of contents in the W section of their KWLS chart.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at the photographs and captions. Invite them to read through the glossary and index. Have them add any additional questions they might have on their KWLS chart. Invite students to share their questions aloud. Write shared questions on the class chart on the board.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Compare and contrast**

- Explain to students that one way to understand concepts in a book is to tell how information is alike and different.
- Model how to compare and contrast.
Think-aloud: After looking at the photos in this book, I think we will be reading about both sand and snow. I know that sand and snow have similarities and differences. They both accumulate as very tiny pieces that pile together to form large, rolling hills. However, snow melts to become water, while sand never melts. Both can be packed together to build things and both can be fun to play in. However, snow is white in color, and sand can be a multitude of colors.
- Model how to compare and contrast information using a Venn diagram. Draw a Venn diagram on the board. Label the left circle *Snow* and the right circle *Sand*. Explain that information telling how snow and sand are similar is written where the circles overlap. Information that is only true of snow is written in the left side of the left circle. Information that is only true of sand is written in the right side of the right circle.
- Have students identify other similarities and differences between snow and sand. Write this information on the Venn diagram.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to talk about what they see in the photographs. Reinforce the vocabulary words they will encounter in the text.


- Explain to students that sometimes they will not find any context clues that define an unfamiliar word. Model how students can use the glossary or a dictionary to locate a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *dormant* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 13 as you read the sentence in which the word *dormant* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Write the word *dormant* on the board. Have a volunteer explain in his or her own words what happens to *dormant* seeds in the Atacama. Ask students to give examples of other living things that may become dormant, and list them on the board.
- Have students locate each of the remaining content vocabulary words in the glossary. Read and discuss their definitions as a class.
- Have students choose two content vocabulary words from this book with which they were most unfamiliar for the following activity. Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **content vocabulary worksheet**. Allow time for discussion when they are finished.

Set the Purpose

- Have students think about what they already know about deserts as they read the book to find answers to their questions, and write what they learned in the *L* section of their KWLS chart.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 7. Remind them to look for information about deserts that will answer questions on their KWLS chart. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
 - When students have finished reading, have them circle any questions on their KWLS chart that were answered and write any new questions that were generated.
 - Model answering a question and filling in the third section (*L*) on the KWLS chart.
Think-aloud: I wanted to know where the Sahara Desert is located and what lives there. I found out that the entire top third of the continent of Africa is home to the famous Sahara Desert, making it the largest desert in the world. I read that thorn trees, shrubs, and low-growing grasses survive there, as do several kinds of antelope, rodents, birds, and reptiles. I also read that the Sahara holds the world's largest reserves of oil and that some countries have become incredibly wealthy from selling it. I noticed that the next section is titled "The Gobi." I wonder if any people live in this desert. I will write this question on my chart.
 - Have students write answers to the questions they circled in the *L* section on their KWLS chart. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book. Write shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
 - **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 11. Have them write answers they found while reading in the *L* section of their KWLS chart and additional questions they raised in the *W* section. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read about the Gobi Desert on pages 8 through 11. Write shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
 - Review with students the information about the Sahara and the Gobi. Discuss similarities and differences between these two deserts (similarities: get very little rain, have very little vegetation, crisscrossed by traders bringing goods to and from the region; differences: Sahara is in Africa, Gobi is in Asia; Sahara is very hot, Gobi is very cold). Write this information in a Venn diagram on the board.
-  Have students work with a partner to further compare and contrast the Sahara and the Gobi deserts. Have them underline the information in their book. Discuss their responses and add the information to the class Venn diagram on the board.

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their KWLS chart questions, as well as to look for information to compare and contrast. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their chart as they read.



Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know whether any people live in the Gobi Desert. I learned that the Gobi is too harsh and remote to support cities. I also read nomads inhabit the Gobi, moving from place to place in search of food. The lack of humans and dry climate in the Gobi have supported the preservation of delicate fossils for millions of years; so, today, scientists flock there for new discoveries.*
- Ask students to share questions they added to their KWLS chart while reading, and ask them what questions were answered (or not answered) in the text. Have students write answers they found while reading under the *L* section of their KWLS worksheet.
- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and enjoy what they have read.
- Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions. Invite students to fill in the final section (*S*) on their worksheet with information they would still like to know about deserts.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review with students how information is organized in a Venn diagram. Have students work with a partner to identify similarities and differences between the Gobi and the Atacama deserts. Have them write the information in a Venn diagram on a separate piece of paper.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [compare-and-contrast worksheet](#) by comparing the Sahara and the Atacama deserts. If time allows, discuss their answers.
- **Enduring understanding:** This book educates readers about several types of deserts and what makes each one unique. Now that you know this information, why is knowing about deserts important?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Hyphenated compound adjectives

- Review or explain that *adjectives* are words that describe nouns or pronouns. An adjective tells *which one, how many, or what kind*.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Rich, ancient cities survived on irrigated crops and the wealth of goods passing through.* Have individual students come to the board and circle the adjectives in the sentence (*rich, ancient, irrigated*). Then have them underline the nouns that each adjective describes (*cities, crops*).
- Tell students that some adjectives are hyphenated and that they are called *hyphenated compound adjectives*. Write the following sentence on the board: *The Nile flows along the eastern edge of the Sahara, bringing life-giving water to crops and cities along its banks.* Have a volunteer come to the board and underline the hyphenated compound adjective (*life-giving*). Have another volunteer underline the noun that the adjective describes (*water*).



Check for understanding: Have students work with a partner to circle other hyphenated compound adjectives in the book. Then have them underline the noun that each adjective describes. When they have finished, discuss their responses.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [hyphenated-compound-adjectives worksheet](#). Discuss answers aloud when students have finished working.

Word Work: Suffix **-est**

- Write the following sentence on the board: *The Sahara Desert is the largest desert in the world.* Point out the word *largest*. Discuss with students the meaning of the word.
- Erase the suffix *-est* from the end of the word to write the root word *large*. Discuss with students how the meaning of the word changed. Write the suffix *-est* on the board and discuss its meaning (*most*).
- Write the following sentence on the board: *The Atacama Desert is the driest place on Earth.* Point out the word *driest*. Ask students to explain the meaning of the word.
- Erase the suffix *-est* from the end of the word to write the root word *dry*. Ask students to explain how the meaning of the word changed. Point out that in words ending in *-y*, the *-y* is changed to an *i* before adding the suffix *-est*.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the word *long* on the board. Have students identify the meaning of the root word. Then have them add the suffix *-est* to the word (*longest*). Have students identify how the meaning of the word changed.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students compare and contrast two objects in their home and write the information in a Venn diagram.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing Connection

Have students use the Venn diagram they completed on their compare-and-contrast worksheet to write a paper about the Sahara and the Atacama deserts. Have them separate the information into three paragraphs—just as they are separated on the Venn diagram—writing one paragraph for each section. If time allows, invite them to illustrate their work and read their writing aloud in small groups.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on informational writing.

Science Connection

Review the information from the “Do You Know?” section on page 9. Supply books that give information on salt pans and the science of their formation. If time allows, have students test their local soil for salt. Allow the necessary time for observation, giving time each day for students to record what they see.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently ask relevant questions about a topic prior to and during reading; locate answers to their questions and write them on a worksheet
- compare and contrast nonfiction details within the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify hyphenated compound adjectives in text during discussion and correctly use them on a worksheet
- correctly use the suffix *-est* and identify its meaning during discussion

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**