

## Discover the Desert

### Kangaroo Rat

Kangaroo rats move by hopping on their back legs. Their long tails help them balance when they hop. A kangaroo rat survives in the desert by gathering food at night. Also, a kangaroo rat does not need to drink water. It uses water from its food.

### Desert Tortoise



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*National Image Library- Desert Tortoise*

Desert tortoises stay cool in *burrows*, or holes in the ground. When a tortoise is in danger, it pulls its head and legs into its shell. Its shell helps *camouflage*, or disguise, the tortoise because its shell looks like a rock.

### Cactus

The cactus is a type of plant that can survive in the desert. A cactus has long, deep roots. Its

roots collect water. The cactus holds the water in its thick stem. Its waxy skin helps hold the water. Most cactuses have spines on their skin. The spines help protect the plant from being eaten by animals.

## Tarantula

The desert tarantula (tah-RAN-choo-lah) is a spider that survives in the desert by sleeping during the day. Once the desert is cooler, the tarantula wakes up. The tarantula lives in a hole. It walks around the desert looking for food. But it rarely wanders far from its home. A tarantula has eight legs and usually walks slowly. When a tarantula spots food, it then moves quickly to catch its prey.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How does a kangaroo rat survive in the desert?

- A. It uses camouflage to hide from predators.
- B. It gathers its food at night.
- C. It does not leave its burrow.
- D. It eats the desert sand.

2. Read this sentence from the text.

"Desert plants face the danger of being eaten by animals."

What is the cactus' solution to this problem?

- A. It collects water.
- B. It has spines.
- C. It has a hard shell.
- D. It has waxy skin.

3. The kangaroo rat and the tarantula are similar.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. Both move very slowly.
- B. The cactus is their main food source.
- C. Both find their food at night.
- D. Both find water in burrows.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"When a tortoise is in danger, it pulls its head and legs into its shell. Its shell helps camouflage, or disguise, the tortoise because its shell looks like a rock."

Based on this information, how might the tortoise's disguise help protect it?

- A. Its disguise could cause other animals to mistake the tortoise for a tarantula.
- B. Its disguise could cause other animals to mistake the tortoise for a cactus.
- C. Its disguise could cause other animals to ignore the tortoise instead of eating it.
- D. Its disguise could cause other animals to eat the tortoise instead of ignoring it.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. Plants and animals in the desert have features that help them survive.
- B. Kangaroo rats and tarantulas live in the desert.
- C. The desert is a dangerous place to live.
- D. Not many plants and animals can live in the desert.

6. A simile is a comparison of two different things that uses the word "like" or "as."

In which sentence of the text is there a simile?

- A. "Its shell helps camouflage, or disguise, the tortoise because its shell looks like a rock."
- B. "A kangaroo rat survives in the desert by gathering food at night."
- C. "Once the desert is cooler, the tarantula wakes up."
- D. "The cactus is a type of plant that can survive in the desert."

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

A tarantula usually walks slowly; \_\_\_\_\_, when it spots food it moves quickly to catch its prey.

- A. therefore
- B. including
- C. namely
- D. however

8. Which two desert creatures both live in holes in the ground?

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**9.** What is an example of a physical feature that helps a desert plant or animal survive?

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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**10.** An important part of survival is protecting oneself. How do plants and animals in the desert protect themselves?

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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