



# The Western Desert

## Get Set!

Tick (✓) what you find in a desert.

1.



Camel

2.



3.



4.



Cactus

SCAN PAGE

The land to the west of the Aravalli Hills, in Rajasthan, is rocky and sandy. This is the Great Indian Desert, also known as the Thar Desert. It stretches from the

Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat through Rajasthan to the borders of Haryana (see Map 4.1).

### The land

The Thar Desert is covered with a thick sheet of loose sand. At some places, there are small hills of sand called sand dunes. Sometimes strong winds which blow here carry a large amount of sand with them. They call



Map 4.1 Location of the Thar Desert

### FactWise

Sand dunes are also found on Mars. Wind can shift these sand dunes like the ones found in Earth's deserts.

shift the sand dunes.

There are very few streams in the Thar Desert. They mostly remain dry.

Luni is the most important river.

At some places, oases are found.

The land around an oasis is fertile.

People grow crops here. Thus, most villages are situated around an oasis.

### Climate

The Thar Desert remains **hot** and **dry** throughout the year. There is very little or no rainfall. In summer, days are very hot and nights are cool.

In winter, days are warm and nights are very cold.

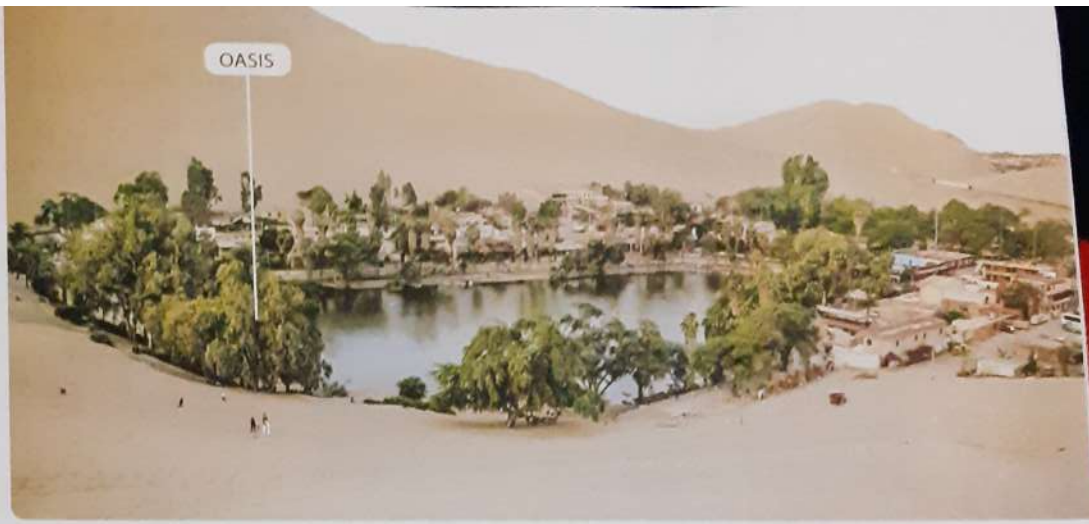
### Natural vegetation

A hot and dry climate means that

mostly scattered bushes and thorny shrubs grow here.

The khejri, kikar and babul trees grow in the eastern part of the desert.

Animals such as camels, blackbucks, chinkaras and great



A lush green area surrounding a water source in a desert is called an oasis.

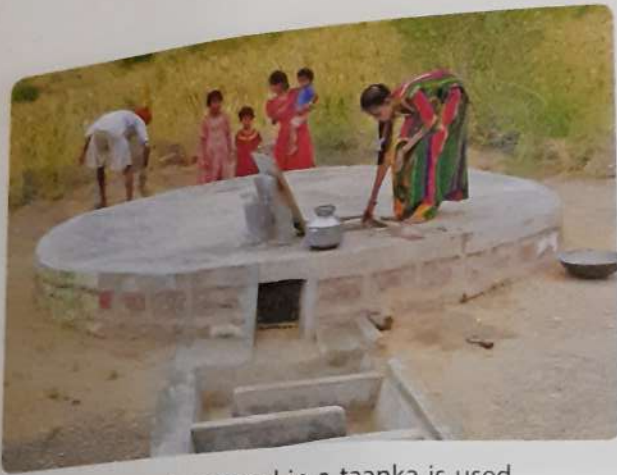
Indian bustards are found in this region. The camel is the most useful animal. Can you tell why?

### Water supply

There is always very little water. Village women walk long distances to fetch water. The state government is trying to provide water for domestic use and irrigation. Water from River Satluj has been brought to the desert through the **Indira Gandhi Canal**. Farmers can thus grow wheat, mustard and cotton.

You will find sand dunes, thorny shrubs and camels in the Thar Desert.





Rainwater stored in a taanka is used during the dry period.



## Checkpoint

Write T for True or F for False.

1. The Thar Desert is in Himachal Pradesh. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Luni river flows through the desert. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The region receives very little rainfall. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The Jawaharlal Nehru Canal is in Rajasthan. \_\_\_\_\_

## Occupations

People mostly rear sheep, goat, camel and cattle. Some of them are farmers. They grow bajra, jowar, maize, sesame and groundnut. Some people also travel from one place to another in search of food for themselves and their animals. Such people are called **banjaras**. Life in the Thar Desert is thus very hard.

The Jaisalmer Fort, also known as the Golden Fort, is a major tourist attraction.



## Houses

Most houses have a flat roof and a few small windows. The walls are thick to keep the heat out so that the houses remain cool. Some houses have underground tanks to store rainwater. Such tanks are called **taankas**.

## Lifestyle

Women in villages wear ghaghra, choli and odhni. Men wear dhoti, kurta and turban. People love to eat **dal-baati-choorma**. They celebrate **Gangaur** and **Teej**. **Ghoomar** and **Kalbeliya** are popular folk dances.



People of Rajasthan wear colourful clothes.

## Major cities

Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner are some big cities. Jaipur is called the **Pink City**. It is famous for **blue pottery**. A large number of tourists from all over the world visit Rajasthan every year.