



Year 4  
Deserts

Key vocabulary

arid	To describe a place that is extremely dry.
desert	A place that is normally dry with very little rainfall. If a place gets less than 250mm of rain a year, it is classed as a desert. Deserts are not always hot.
plummet	Fall or drop straight down at high speed.
desertification	The process of fertile, productive land turning into non-productive land.
oasis	A fertile spot in a desert where water is found.
hostile	An area that is unsafe, unfriendly or difficult to survive in.
desolate	Uninhabited or giving the impression of bleak emptiness.
drought	A prolonged period of low rainfall leading to a shortage of water.
sand dunes	When sand grains are shaped into a mound or ridge by the wind.
precipitation	Rain, snow or sleet that falls to or condenses on the ground.

How are deserts formed?

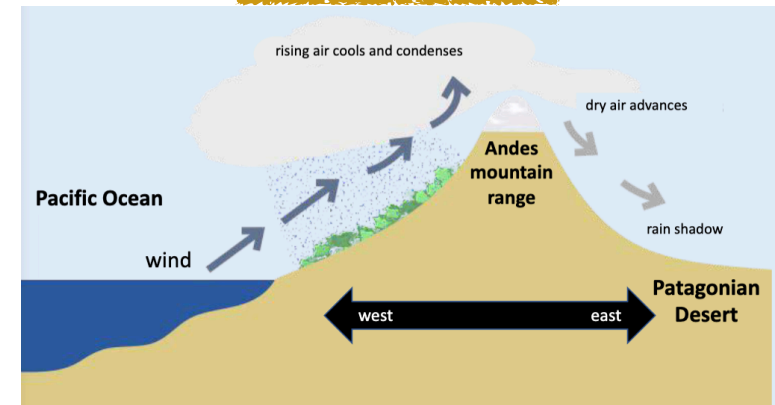
If there is more evaporation than there is rainfall, a very dry area of land is created.

If an area of land has little rainfall, vegetation begins to die and struggles to continue to grow. This is physical desertification. The land becomes non-productive.

Humans can cause desertification through overgrazing and overfarming. This is when too many crops are grown on land or too much is eaten by animals. This causes the land to dry out.



Deserts across the World



How the Patagonian Desert stays cold and dry.

The average climate in London, UK (2019)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Precipitation (mm)	133	64	104	86	48	35	55	84	104	104	122	119
Temperature (°C)	7	6	8	13	16	19	22	21	18	15	10	7

The average climate in the Gobi Desert (2019)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Precipitation (mm)	1	1	2	4	7	15	29	27	10	3	2	1
Temperature (°C)	-15	-12	-3	14	22	27	28	27	21	13	-5	-14

Differences in rainfall between London and the Gobi Desert. A desert will get less than 250mm of rain a year.