

Chapter 20 Vocabulary

Essential Question: How do people adapt to living in a desert region?

1. desert: a geographic region with too little rainfall to support much plant life; also a vegetation zone
2. arid: dry or lacking rainfall; also a climate or climate zone that is hot and dry all year with very little rain
3. oasis: an isolated spot in the desert where water is found
4. drought: an unusually long period in which little or no rain falls
5. physical features: any natural characteristic of the Earth's surface, such as landforms and bodies of water
6. trade winds: steady winds in tropical latitudes that blow toward the equator from both the north and the south
7. marginal land: land that is not well suited for growing crops
8. pastoral nomads: groups of herders who move with their animals from place to place in search of pasture and water
9. desertification: the process by which land becomes more and more dry until it turns into a desert; may be caused by climate change, human activities, or both
10. landscape: a large area with a particular kind of scenery, such as a desert landscape
11. ergs: a great sea of sand with tall sand dunes in the Sahara
12. reg: a gravel-covered desert plain
13. hammadas: a high, rock-covered flatland in the Sahara
14. wadis: the usually dry bed of a river or stream in a desert or semiarid area
15. technology: the creation and use of tools to meet practical needs; also refers to the tools themselves

16. cash crops: a crop that is grown to be sold rather than to be consumed by the farmers and their families
17. windbreaks: a wall or hedge that breaks the force of the wind
18. vegetation: all the plants and trees in an area
19. adaptation: a change in a way of life to suit new conditions
20. shifting agriculture: the practice of clearing one area for farming for a few years and then moving on to another area when the first has lost its fertility
21. deforestation: removing or clearing away the trees from a forest. Deforestation is often done to clear land for farming or ranching.
22. erosion: the gradual wearing away Earth's surface by the action of wind, water, ice, and gravity