



## Let's Think

1. Have you ever been to a desert? What is it like?
2. What will happen if more places turn into deserts?

You are Thomas. You are reading an article in a Geography reference book.

### Desert

A desert refers to a large area of land that has very little water and very few plants. It is covered by sand and is very dry. Deserts can be found on every continent. 1/6 of the world's population live in different deserts.



### Desertification

Desertification means the process by which fertile land becomes arid or desert. Some typical causes of desertification include drought, deforestation, overgrazing and inappropriate agriculture. All of these can all lead to soil erosion, because when plants are removed or eaten by livestock, there are no longer roots that hold the soil and the moisture.



During the 1930s, the Americans experienced the threat brought by desertification. For eight years, a large portion of land in the United States experienced drought. And as farmers failed to farm in a sustainable way at that time, soil dried out. When winds blew the loose soil, the sky was blackened by huge dust clouds. This phenomenon known as 'dust storms' struck major cities including New York and Washington.



Dust storms are also common in Western China and some African countries. As the land is too arid, in other words, barren for farming and ranching, it brings about more worrying issues: food shortages or even famine.

### Solutions

Noticing the threat that desertification has posed to many countries, since the 1980s, the United Nations has urged many nations to take concerted measures to minimise the effect of desertification on all countries. Feasible measures include reforestation, water management and seeking economic opportunities in industries other than agriculture.



(253 words)

## Part A

Answer the following questions using the information from the article. Choose the **BEST** answer and blacken **ONE** circle only.

1. Which of the following regions were struck by dust storms?

- i) South America                      ii) New York  
iii) Western Africa                    iv) Western China
- A. i and ii                                 B. ii and iv  
 C. iii and iv                               D. all of the above

2. In line 11, what does the word 'livestock' mean?

- A. animals such as cows, sheep and chickens  
 B. drought  
 C. trees that can survive in deserts  
 D. strong wind

3. What is the purpose of the article?

- A. to blame humans for causing desertification  
 B. to ask people not to do anything that makes desertification more serious  
 C. to explain the causes, effects and solutions to desertification  
 D. to promote the United Nations' work on desertification

4. According to the article, deserts \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. are not too densely populated  
 B. give rise to dust storms  
 C. are the home of not only many animals and plants, but also more than 10% of the world's population  
 D. are where people make money from

5. Which of the following is **NOT TRUE**?

- A. Desertification is related to loose soil.  
 B. Desertification can be caused by drought.  
 C. Weak plant roots cause desertification.  
 D. The United Nations did nothing about desertification.

## Grammar Corner

We can use the **simple present tense** to talk about a state of now.

**e.g.** *Dust storms are also common in Western China and some African countries.*  
(Line 20)

Pay attention to the subheadings.

## Part B

Answer the following questions using the information from the article. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. What is desertification?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. 'I can only find deserts in Asia, Africa and America.' Is this statement true or false? Find a sentence from the text to support your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_



3. Fill in each blank with one word only.

Desertification leads to food (a) \_\_\_\_\_ and famine because less land would be (b) \_\_\_\_\_ for farming and ranching when desertification starts in a region.

4. Name three things which can help solve the problem of desertification.

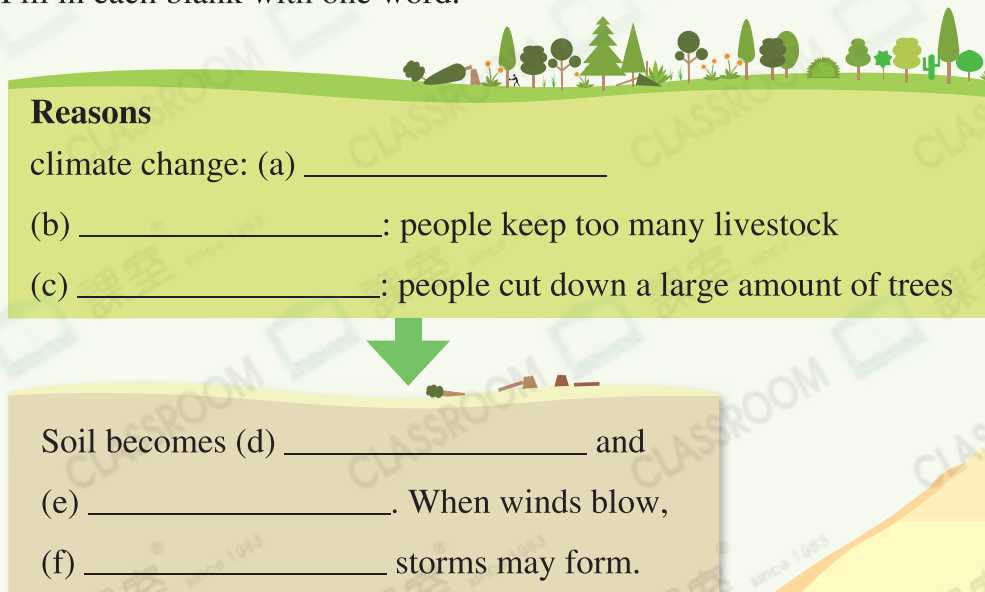
(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_



5. Use the words from the article to complete the following flow chart about desertification. Fill in each blank with one word.



# Vocabulary Bank

The following are some natural landscapes on Earth. Match them with the correct pictures. One of the words is not used.

wetland      stream      rainforest      savanna  
 mountain      tundra      grassland      waterfall      cliff



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



## Let's Discuss

1. What is the weather in deserts like?
2. How do animals and plants survive in deserts?