

DESERTS

Speaking

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1) What makes a desert different from other ecosystems?
- 2) What challenges do plants face in the desert?
- 3) How do you think plants survive with little water?
- 4) Suggest Ukrainian equivalents to the following words: drought, succulents, xerophyte, root system, waxy, thorny, fleshy, expandable, combat, germinate, dormant, ephemeral. How might these words relate to desert plants?

Reading

2 Read and listen to the brochure. Then, choose the correct answers.

4 Deserts

PALGANG NATIONAL PARK LOCAL VEGETATION

How do plants live in the desert?

Desert regions are characterized by **drought** and harsh temperatures. Many people think of the desert as lifeless. But in fact, a number of species thrive in the desert, as you can see throughout Palgang National Park. How can this be?

The answer is evolution!

Plants in desert regions **evolved** to survive the climate. They fight drought in one of two ways. Some actively **combat** it with deep **root systems**, which draw moisture from deep below the ground. These plants often have **waxy, thorny** or **fleshy** leaves and **expandable** stems to avoid losing water to transpiration. Such plants are the **xerophytes** or the **succulents**. And you can see many of these species year-round at the park.

Other plants simply lie **dormant** until there's enough moisture for them to grow. They can remain alive yet inactive for long periods beneath the ground. Then, a heavy rainfall might **trigger** their growth mechanisms, causing them to **germinate**. These are **non-xerophytic** plants, and they're a major attraction around the park. They tend to be highly **ephemeral**, often only appearing for a few weeks each year. Are you interested in seeing a particular plant? Check our website for the best months to visit the park.

1 What is the main idea of the brochure?

- A tips for identifying plants in a region
- B the ways that plants survive in a region
- C an effort to save the plants into a region
- D the benefits of bringing particular plants into a region

2 What is NOT an evolutionary feature of xerophytes?

- A lying dormant for much of the year
- B having expandable stems
- C developing deep root systems
- D growing waxy leaves

3 What happens after a heavy rainfall in the desert?

- A Xerophytes release their moisture through transpiration.
- B Moisture triggers the growth of non-xerophytic plants.
- C The root systems of non-xerophytic plants expand.
- D Xerophytes become dormant until the next rainfall.

3 A. What is the benefit of waxy leaves in a dry climate? Fill in the blanks.

Waxy leaves are a useful adaptation for plants. The waxy coating prevents the plant from losing moisture to . As a result, the plant can retain the during periods of drought.

3 B. Answer the questions.

- 1) Why do some people think that deserts are lifeless?
- 2) What place is the brochure about?
- 3) How do xerophytes retain moisture?
- 4) How can non-xerophytic plants live in the desert?
- 5) What does it mean when a plant is ephemeral?

Vocabulary

4 Match the words with the definitions (A-G).

drought ephemeral combat expandable germinate xerophyte non-xerophytic

A living for a short period of time

B a plant that retains moisture

C an extended period of time in which little to no rain falls in a region

D able to easily increase in size

E to actively work against something

F to start growing from a seed into a plant

G not having features that retain moisture

5 Read the sentence pairs. Choose which word or phrase best fits each blank.

waxy dormant

1 A Some plants have leaves to help them retain moisture.

B A plant is alive, but stays inactive beneath the soil.

root system desert

2 A The plant looks small, but it has a large underground.

B A receives little to no precipitation throughout the year.

evolved triggered

3 A The unexpected rainfall major growth throughout the region.

B Certain vegetation over time to survive in desert climates.

Listening

6 Listen to a conversation between a park ranger and a tourist. Choose the correct answers.

1 What is the conversation mostly about?

- A the adaptations of xerophytes
- B the causes of a recent drought in a region
- C the growth cycle of non-xerophytic plants
- D the damage of human activities on desert plants

2 What will the speakers likely do next?

- A examine the root systems of several plants
- B touch the leaves of a cactus
- C learn about the geology of desert regions
- D view some non-xerophytic plants

7 Complete the conversation with the phrases given.

So, how do they know when to grow? You also said something about completing their life cycle quickly.

Do you happen to know whether all desert plants grow this way? Are these common in this region?

So, you're saying that they die off during times of drought?

A: On our left, you'll see a number of flowering plants.

B: Excuse me.

A: Yes and no. They are abundant now because we recently had a heavy rainfall. They have to complete their life cycle very quickly, while the water is available.

B:

A: Not exactly. They're still living, but they remain dormant underground.

B:

Writing

8 Use the words below to complete the geography student's journal entry.

dry

dormant

below

quickly

evolved

plagued

annuals

desert

May 10 – Visited Palgang National Park

Recently, I took a tour of Palgang National Park. The park is within a vast region. Drought conditions have the region for years. During my tour, I saw cacti and summer . The park ranger explained that the cacti were xerophytes. These are plants that actively combat drought. The xerophytes have deep root systems that can locate water well the surface. The summer annuals, on the other hand, simply remain until moisture is available. When droughts end, they complete their life cycle. In both cases, the vegetation in order to survive dry conditions.