

Name:

Date:

Grade:

Darkness in the Desert

by Morena Sommers

For desert animals, the day
Is not a time for work or play.
There's little shade; the world is dry.
The clouds are absent from the sky.

- 5 Things sizzle in the searing heat,
The burning sands hurt creatures' feet—
And so when it turns light they creep
Beneath the ground to fall asleep.

- But late in the day the sky grows dim.
10 The sun drops past the canyon rim.
The stars peek through, and very soon
The night replaces afternoon.

- Inside their dens the creatures stir—
They like the cooler temperature.
15 By ones and twos, by fives and tens
The animals creep from their dens.

- On mountain, prairie, plain, and hill,
The night is when the world is still.
In deserts, though, the times reverse:
20 The dark is good, the light is worse.
The daytime is the time to rest.
For desert creatures, night is best.

- The desert fox, the mouse, the hare,
At night they scamper here and there.
25 Their claws scratch softly in the sand.
Their faint calls echo through the land.
From dusk to dawn, all through the night
They feed and play till morning light.

Close Reader Habits

When you reread the poem, **circle** words and phrases that tell the topic of the poem. Then **underline** details that show the speaker's reflections on the topic.

What details in the poem “Darkness in the Desert” develop its theme?

Think

Complete the chart below. Identify the poem’s topic, the details that develop the topic, and the speaker’s reflections on the topic. Use this information to determine the theme of the poem.



Look for evidence of what the speaker thinks about day and night in the desert.

What Is the Topic of the Poem?	What Are the Details About the Topic?	What Are the Speaker’s Reflections on the Topic?	What Is the Theme of the Poem?

Share your charts. Did you and your partner identify the same theme? What details did you use to support your understanding of the poem’s theme? If necessary, return to your chart to change or add details.

HINT Start your response by stating the theme in one sentence.