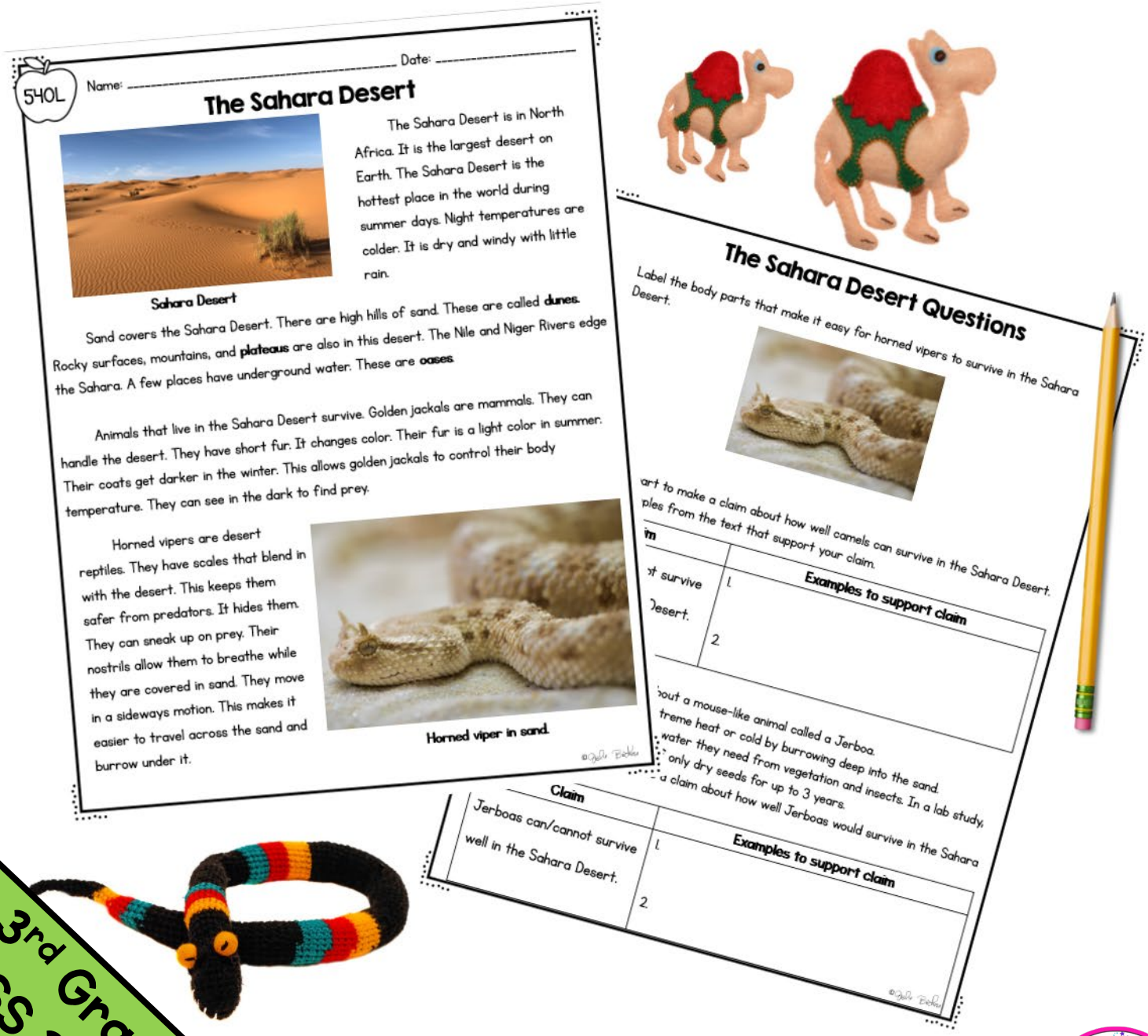
Habitats and Organism Survival

Differentiated Passages

LEXILE®



540L

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Sahara Desert

The Sahara Desert is in North Africa. It is the largest desert on Earth. The Sahara Desert is the hottest place in the world during summer days. Night temperatures are colder. It is dry and windy with little rain.

Sahara Desert

Sand covers the Sahara Desert. There are high hills of sand. These are called **dunes**. Rocky surfaces, mountains, and **plateaus** are also in this desert. The Nile and Niger Rivers edge the Sahara. A few places have underground water. These are **oases**.

Animals that live in the Sahara Desert survive. Golden jackals are mammals. They can handle the desert. They have short fur. It changes color. Their fur is a light color in summer. Their coats get darker in the winter. This allows golden jackals to control their body temperature. They can see in the dark to find prey.

Horned vipers are desert reptiles. They have scales that blend in with the desert. This keeps them safer from predators. It hides them. They can sneak up on prey. Their nostrils allow them to breathe while they are covered in sand. They move in a sideways motion. This makes it easier to travel across the sand and burrow under it.

Horned viper in sand.

The Sahara Desert Questions

Label the body parts that make it easy for horned vipers to survive in the Sahara Desert.

art to make a claim about how well camels can survive in the Sahara Desert.
ples from the text that support your claim.

Claim	Examples to support claim
st survive Desert.	1. 2.

bout a mouse-like animal called a Jerboa.
treme heat or cold by burrowing deep into the sand.
water they need from vegetation and insects. In a lab study,
only dry seeds for up to 3 years.
a claim about how well Jerboas would survive in the Sahara

Claim	Examples to support claim
Jerboas can/cannot survive well in the Sahara Desert.	1. 2.

3rd Grade
NGSS 3-LS4-3

Magi CORE

ABOUT LEXILE LEVELS

MagiCore is a certified Lexile® Partner. These texts are officially measured and approved by Lexile and MetaMetrics® to ensure appropriate rigor and differentiation for students.

The Lexile Framework® for Reading measures are scientific, quantitative text levels. When the Lexile of a text is measured, specific, measurable attributes of the text are considered, including, but not limited to, word frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion. These are difficult attributes for humans to evaluate, so a computer measures them.

Common Core State Standards uses Lexile level bands as one measure of text complexity. Text complexity ranges ensure students are college and career ready by the end of 12th grade. Lexile measures help educators scaffold and differentiate instruction as well as monitor reading growth.

Grade Band	Lexile® Bands Aligned to Common Core Expectations
K-1	N/A
2-3	420L-820L
4-5	740L-1010L
6-8	1185L-1385L

Keep in mind when using any leveled text that many students will need scaffolding and support to reach text at the high end of their grade band. According to Appendix A of the Common Core Standards, "It is important to recognize that scaffolding often is entirely appropriate. The expectation that scaffolding will occur with particularly challenging texts is built into the Standards' grade-by-grade text complexity expectations, for example. The general movement, however, should be toward decreasing scaffolding and increasing independence both within and across the text complexity bands defined in the Standards."

Habitats and Organism Survival

3rd grade

Table of Contents

Each passage set includes two differentiated passages on a third-grade level (one at the beginning of the band, one towards the end) and a question set geared towards comprehension and science mastery. The first question is differentiated to include a fill-in-the-blank diagram (lower complexity) or an open-ended diagram (higher complexity).

How to Use This Resource

This resource was created with the NGSS Science Standards in mind. It includes seven differentiated passages aligned to the following standard:

3-LS4-3: Habitats and Organism Survival

Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all. (Cause and Effect)

Clarification Statement: Examples of evidence could include the needs and characteristics of the organisms and habitats involved. The organisms and their habitat make up a system in which the parts depend on each other.

Assessment Boundary: None

Here are some suggestions for using these passages:

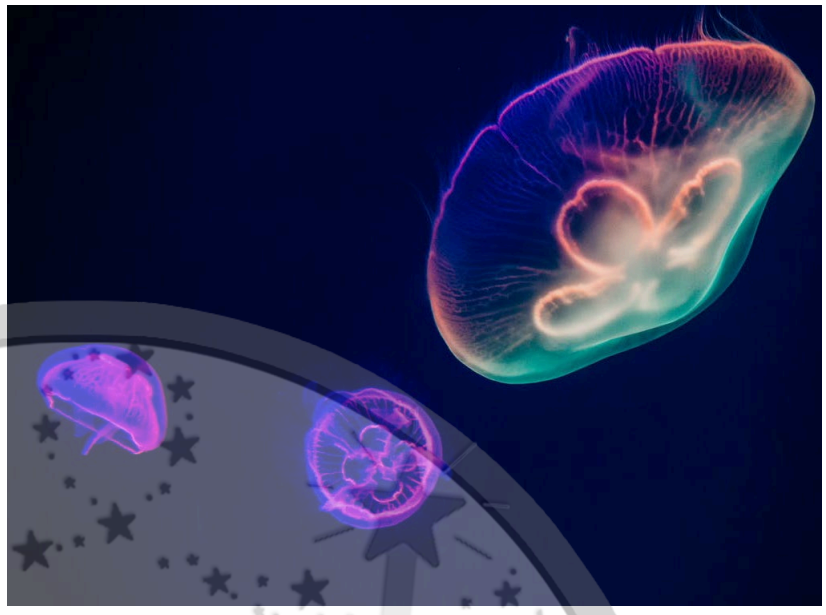
- Use as independent work after you have taught an overview of this standard. Assign the different levels based on the passage students can read and comprehend independently.
- Use as a reading center to reinforce key comprehension and science concepts at the same time!
- Use as a homework or review packet.
- Use as an intervention for students who need to revisit science concepts.

560L

Name: _____ Date: _____

Into the Deep Ocean

The deep ocean is a cold, dark place. Scientists believed no life could survive there. This belief was untrue. The deep ocean has many different species. The **organisms** that live there have special features. These features allow them to make the deep ocean their home.

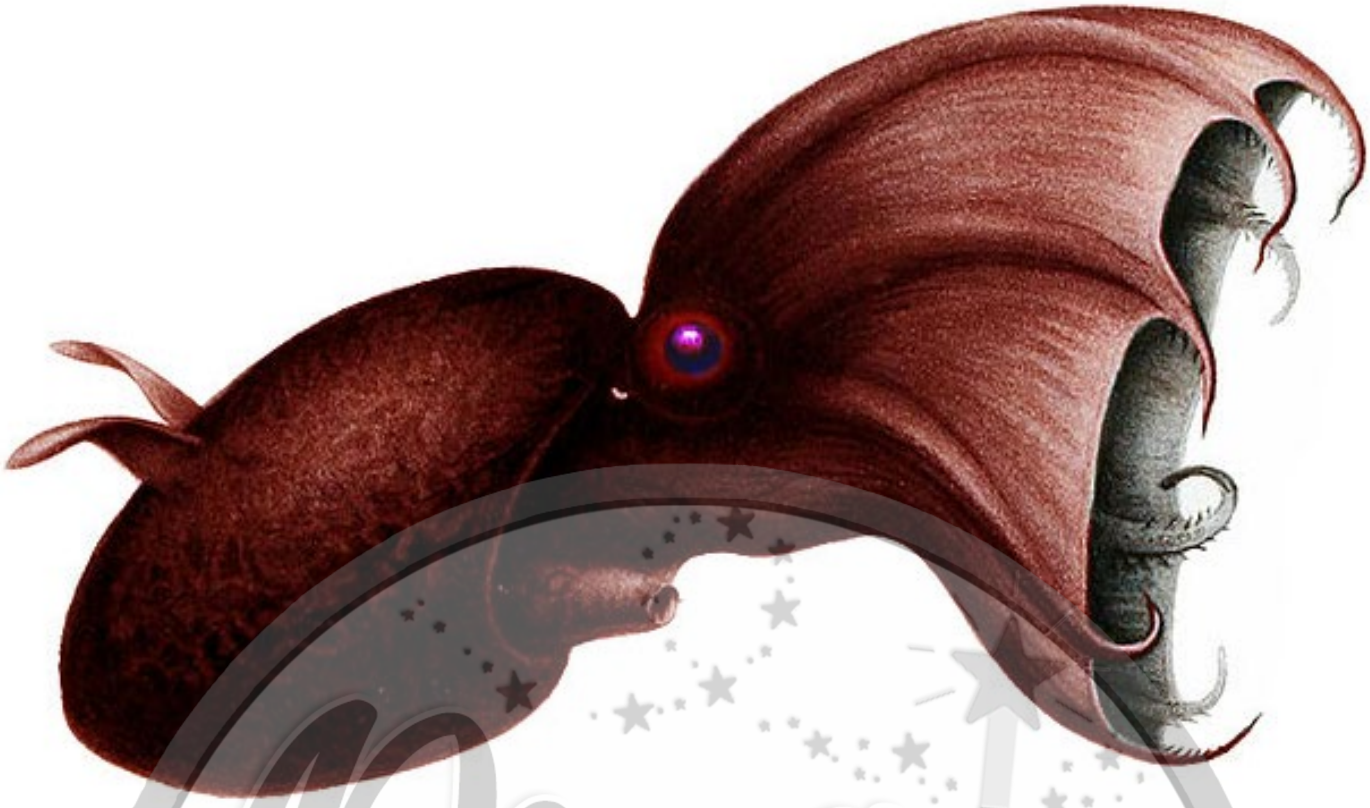


Bioluminescent jelly fish.

The deep sea is a tough **environment**. The creatures have **adapted**. The shape and size of deep-sea organisms help them move in this **habitat**. Camouflage also makes life easier. Black skin makes some fish invisible in the darkness. **Bioluminescence** is the ability to create their own light. This allows them to attract mates. Prey is also fooled by the light. Predators are confused.

Anglerfish

The anglerfish lives in the deep ocean. They have plump bodies and large heads. Their huge mouths are full of sharp teeth. The **characteristic** that is most helpful to them is a rod that comes from the top of their head. At the end of the rod is a glowing lure. This attracts prey in the darkness. Anglerfish don't have to use energy swimming around to get food. The food comes to them.



Vampire squid

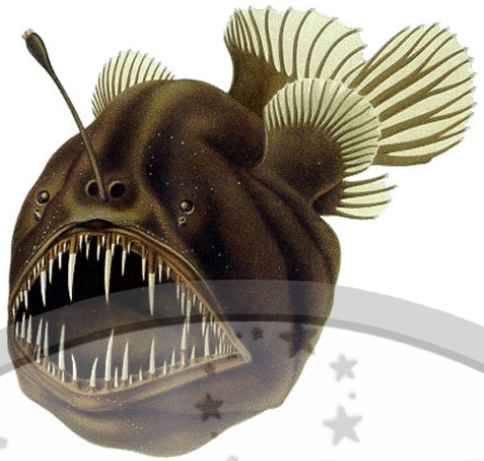
The vampire squid is another deep-sea creature. It is a **scavenger**. It eats debris in the water. It has large eyes. These eyes are good for spotting food. Its arms give off a blue light for lighting its way. It also has tentacles. These are handy for moving in the dark depths. The vampire squid has large gills. This allows it to absorb more oxygen.

Johnson's sea cucumbers are also found deep in the ocean. They have soft bodies. They can fit through small spaces. They use tube feet to crawl along the ocean floor. Their sticky tentacles grab tiny pieces of food. Johnson's sea cucumbers get oxygen through branched organs. They shed their internal organs. This helps them escape predators.

Many deep-sea creatures look strange. Special ways of moving, getting food, and escaping predators make life in deep waters possible.

Into the Deep Ocean Questions

1. Label the body parts that make it easy for anglerfish to survive in the deep ocean habitat.



2. Use the chart to make a claim about how well vampire squids can survive in the deep ocean. Give 2 examples from the text that support your claim.

Claim	Examples to support claim
Vampire squids can/cannot survive well in the deep ocean.	1. 2.

3. Read the information about dolphins.
   - Dolphins are mammals and must come to the surface to breathe air.
   - Dolphins feed on fish and squid and have sharp teeth to catch prey.

Based on the information, make a claim about how well dolphins would survive in the deep ocean.

Claim	Examples to support claim
Dolphins can/cannot survive well in the deep ocean.	1. 2.

540L

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Sahara Desert

Sahara Desert

The Sahara Desert is in North Africa. It is the largest desert on Earth. The Sahara Desert is the hottest place in the world during summer days. Night temperatures are colder. It is dry and windy with little rain.

Sand covers the Sahara Desert. There are high hills of sand. These are called **dunes.** Rocky surfaces, mountains, and **plateaus** are also in this desert. The Nile and Niger Rivers edge the Sahara. A few places have underground water. These are **oases**.

Animals that live in the Sahara Desert survive. Golden jackals are mammals. They can handle the desert. They have short fur. It changes color. Their fur is a light color in summer. Their coats get darker in the winter. This allows golden jackals to control their body temperature. They can see in the dark to find prey.

Horned vipers are desert reptiles. They have scales that blend in with the desert. This keeps them safer from predators. It hides them. They can sneak up on prey. Their nostrils allow them to breathe while they are covered in sand. They move in a sideways motion. This makes it easier to travel across the sand and burrow under it.

Horned viper in sand.

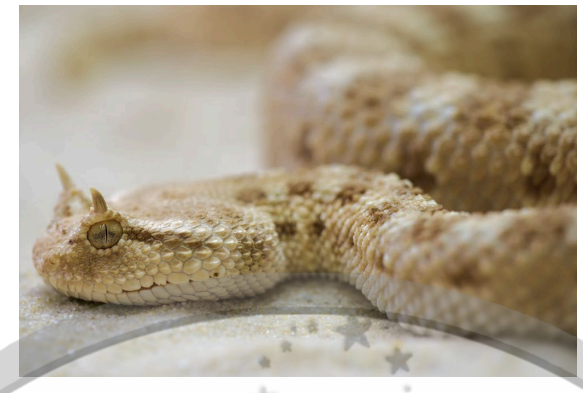
Camel in the Sahara Desert.

Another animal that lives in the desert is the camel. Camels store fat in their humps. They break down that fat. That supplies them with energy and water. Camels can take hot weather, too. Their fur coats protect them. Camels have pads on their feet, knees, and chests. These pads keep them from getting burned. Wide feet with two toes stop camels from sinking into the sand. Long eyelashes protect camels' eyes from blowing sand. A third eyelid does this, too. Tough tongues allow camels to eat prickly desert plants.

Many animals are fit to live in the Sahara Desert. They have **traits** that allow them to meet their needs.

The Sahara Desert Questions

1. Label the body parts that make it easy for horned vipers to survive in the Sahara Desert.



2. Use the chart to make a claim about how well camels can survive in the Sahara Desert. Give 2 examples from the text that support your claim.

Claim	Examples to support claim
Camels can/cannot survive well in the Sahara Desert.	1. 2.

3. Read the information about a mouse-like animal called a Jerboa.
   - Jerboas escape extreme heat or cold by burrowing deep into the sand.
   - Jerboas get all the water they need from vegetation and insects. In a lab study, jerboas have lived off only dry seeds for up to 3 years.

Based on the information, make a claim about how well Jerboas would survive in the Sahara desert.

Claim	Examples to support claim
Jerboas can/cannot survive well in the Sahara Desert.	1. 2.

760L

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Amazon Rainforest

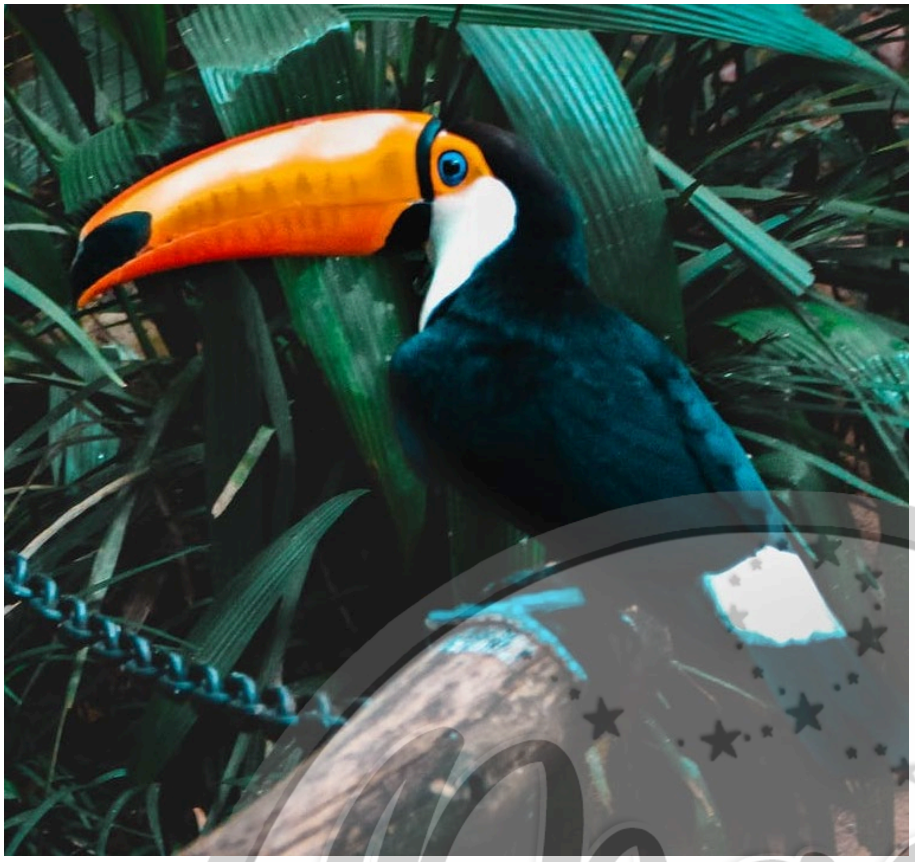
The world's largest tropical rainforest is the Amazon rainforest. This rainforest is in northern South America. The Amazon River stretches for nearly 4,000 miles through it. The rainforest doesn't have seasons. It is hot all year round with an average annual temperature of 80°F. It is humid and rainy with frequent downpours.

The Samaúma tree in the Amazon Rainforest

The Amazon rainforest is an amazing **ecosystem**. It contains different species of plants and animals. These **organisms** have ways of making life in the rainforest possible for them. Many trees in the rainforest have thin bark. They don't need to conserve water because it is always wet in the rainforest. These trees don't waste energy on growing thick bark. The bark is also smooth. This keeps other plants from growing on these trees.

Other trees in the rainforest have an **adaptation** that allows them to grow in soil that doesn't have enough nutrients. Their roots grow near the surface instead of deep in the ground. This allows them to get the nutrients they need. It also makes the trees less stable as they grow taller. To help keep these trees upright, they have **buttress roots**. These are roots that grow from the trunk and support the tree. Buttress roots can grow tall and long. They also help with getting nutrients.

Animals in the Amazon rainforest have special features that help them survive, too. The leaf-tailed gecko uses **camouflage**. Its skin looks like rough bark to blend in with the trees. They also have fringed flaps on their jaws and sides. This allows them to flatten their bodies on a surface and look like a leaf. Their ability to hide keeps them safe from predators.



Toucan

Other animals use a limited diet to survive in the rainforest. While the Amazon is full of resources, many animals are competing for them. Some animals have adaptations that make them better **competitors**. The toucan has a large, lightweight beak. This allows it to get fruits on branches that other animals can't reach or are too heavy to land on. These brightly-colored beaks also attract mates. Toucan feet have two toes pointing to the front and two pointing to the back. This design gives toucans better balance when moving among the rainforest trees.

Poison dart frogs protect themselves in the rainforest. They have **toxins** in their skin that can paralyze or kill predators. Their bright coloring is a warning to other animals not to eat these frogs. Excellent vision and sticky tongues also help poison dart frogs catch food. They eat spiders and insects which are plentiful in their habitat.

The Amazon rainforest is full of interesting animals and plants. These organisms have developed ways of living in this tropical environment.

The Amazon Rainforest Questions

1. Label the body parts that make it easy for leaf-tailed geckos to survive in the Amazon rainforest.

2. Use the chart to make a claim about how well toucans can survive in the Amazon rainforest. Give 2 examples from the text that support your claim.

Claim	Examples to support claim
	1. 2.

3. Read the information about rattlesnakes.
   - Rattlesnakes reside in rocky environments to help them find cover and food.
   - Rattlesnakes eat small prey like mice, rats, and other rodents.

Based on the information, make a claim about how well rattlesnakes would survive in the Amazon rainforest.

Claim	Examples to support claim
	1. 2.

650L

Name: _____ Date: _____

Australian Outback

Landscape in the outback.

The "Outback" generally refers to the inland areas of Australia. These areas tend to be far from cities. Bodies of water are scattered. The land is typically dry, but floods are also possible. The outback has three different climates. They are called the semi-arid tropics, the arid zone, and the desert zone. Each zone receives less rainfall than the one before it. Summers are hot, but winters are mild and sometimes freezing. Plants and animals exist in the Australian Outback. They are able to survive thanks to **adaptations**.

Kangaroos are found in the Australian Outback. They are **marsupials**. They have large, powerful hind legs that are good for leaping through the **terrain**. Their long, muscular tails provide balance when jumping. Kangaroos can move quickly. This helps them travel long distances when searching for food. A pouch on female kangaroos protects babies. Hot, dry environments are no problem for kangaroos. They use their saliva to cool themselves. Licking their forearms lowers their body temperature. Kangaroos also know to go searching for food or water when the sun isn't beaming at full power. Their ears are constantly twitching to detect where sounds are coming from. This allows them to be on alert for danger.

The perentie is the largest lizard in Australia. It has a slender body, and its flattened head rests atop a long neck. They have forked tongues that detect scents. Their sharp teeth are thin and face backward. These teeth are good for holding prey. Perenties swallow mouthfuls of food whole. They make loud hissing sounds when threatened. Strong tails can be used to whip attackers.

Perentie lying on a rock.

Eucalyptus trees in Australia.

Their powerful front limbs and claws can dig impressive burrows with several exits. Basking in the hot sun on large rocks allows perenties to absorb heat and warm their bodies. The sides of their necks are able to pump large amounts of air into the lungs. This makes perenties fast runners.

Eucalyptus grows in the Australian Outback. It can survive drought for long periods because the roots reach deep into the ground in search of water. Eucalyptus trees have special **substances** inside them that protect them from disease. These trees are also able to recover quickly if insects eat their leaves. When soils dry out, eucalyptus trees shed their leaves. This lowers their demand for water and keeps them from wilting. New leaves grow after the rains come. These leaves are also thin and long. This prevents water loss.

The Australian Outback can be a tough environment. Many plants and animals, however, are ready for the challenge of living there.

Australian Outback Questions

1. Label the body parts that make it easy for perenties to survive in the outback.

2. Use the chart to make a claim about how well kangaroos can survive in the Outback. Give 2 examples from the text that support your claim.

Claim	Examples to support claim
	1. 2.

3. Read the information about poison dart frogs.
   - Poison dart frogs do not drink water, they absorb all of their water from the air and ground.
   - Poison dart frogs are insectivores, the only things they eat are insects.

Based on the information, make a claim about how well poison dart frogs would survive in the Outback.

Claim	Examples to support claim
	1. 2.

Terms of Use

How Can I Use This Resource?

Thank you for trusting MagiCore. Our mission is to create resources that support teachers and promote student success. Please note that this resource is licensed for use by a single teacher in a classroom setting. If you need to use this resource with more than one teacher and/or across multiple classrooms, additional licenses are available at a discount. You can purchase additional licenses by visiting your TPT "Purchases" page and then selecting "Download Additional Licenses" or by contacting me at julie@magicorelearning.com.

Good to Go

- Use this resource personally or with your own children.
- Use this resource in your own classroom with your students.
- Provide this resource to your students to use at your instruction.
- Print and/or copy for use in your own classroom.
- Provide printed pages to a substitute teacher with the sole purpose of instructing your students.
- Share with your students via a secure document portal or electronic learning platform that requires individual user verification and limits access to only the students in your own classroom (e.g. Google Classroom).
- Review this resource with others with the sole purpose of recommending it to others for purchase, provided you share one of the links below:

https://magicorelearning.com/

https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Magicore

Not O.K.

- Share with others to use personally.
- Share with others to use in another classroom.
- Print or copy any page(s) and distribute them to other teachers or other classrooms.
- Publish or host online in a manner where any of the material is accessible to anyone who is not a student in your own classroom., including but not limited to personal, classroom, or district websites that are accessible to the general public.
- Use this resource commercially (e.g. Outschool).
- Publish, sell, or otherwise distribute this product to anyone in manner inconsistent with these terms of use.

Let's Connect!

www.magicorelearning.com

https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/magicore

https://www.facebook.com/MagiCoreLearning/

https://www.instagram.com/magicorelearning/

https://www.pinterest.com/cckingdom/pins/

Julie@magicorelearning.com

Looking for more?

Membership Opportunity!

If you love these resources and want access to more, check out my membership opportunity with the Core Kingdom Club.

Join my MagiCore Club waitlist!

MagiCore Club opens its membership doors twice a year to offer teachers all the resources you love, with a membership discount. You can also find support through my custom learning plan.

Find out more https://magicorelearning.com/membership

CREDITS