

## **ACTIVITY**

### Desert biome investigation

Students will examine the key features of an Australian desert biome – its climate, types of plants and animals, landforms and soil. Use the table below to help organise your information. Before starting this activity learn about biomes and what characterises a desert biome.


Australian desert	Research
Where in Australia can desert biomes be found? Describe its location and highlight the area on a map. How much of Australia is desert (find a percentage)?	
Describe the climate of Australia's deserts. How much rainfall does a desert biome normally receive each year?	
Describe the landforms of a desert biome. Use words like weathering, erosion, rocks, sandy, plains, oasis.	
What animals would you find in an Australian desert biome? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List and describe some of the native animals that live in the desert.</li> <li>How have these species adapted to the natural environment?</li> <li>Include photographs and/or illustrations</li> <li>How have introduced species affected the desert ecosystem?</li> </ul>	
What plants would you find in an Australian desert biome? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List and describe some of the species found in the desert.</li> <li>How have these species adapted to the natural environment?</li> <li>Include photographs and/or illustrations.</li> </ul>	
What do you think makes the Australian desert special?	
Use the information you have found to create a detailed drawing of a desert biome (the diagram needs to include weather, landforms, plants and animals and rocks and soils). Think about how it would look when viewed from above. Alternatively create a diorama of the landscape.	
Compare Australia's desert biome to another desert biome in the world.	

## ACTIVITY

### Who am I?






Students will make their own *Who Am I?* game to learn more about native Australian desert animals.

- Students will research and write 6 clues to correspond with each animal in the [Who Am I? template](#), with the first clue being the hardest and the last clue being the easiest.
- Include clues about the animal's special features, its predators and how it adapts to its environment.
- Students will test their game on a partner.



## WHO AM I?

Write 6 clues to correspond with each Australian desert animal below, with the first clue being the hardest and the last clue being the easiest. Include clues about the animal's special features, how it adapts to its environment and its predators. Cut up the cards and test a partner to see if they can match the animal to the clues.

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*Images: 1. Bilby, 2. Thorny devil, 3. Bandy bandy, 4. Spinifex hopping mouse, 5. Barking spider*



How well do you know your Australian desert animals? As a class look at this [interactive illustration](#) of a desert park found in Alice Springs NT. Hover over and then click on each of the animals to find out what animals live in this environment.

Choose one animal that calls the Australian desert their home. Investigate how they survive the harsh conditions of a desert environment. For example, to deal with the extreme heat kangaroos pant to cool down. They also lick their chests and the inside of their forearms until those areas are quite wet. When the moisture evaporates it cools the blood, which circulates close to the surface at these points. This helps keep the animal cool.



- Describe how local Aboriginal people and scientists are tracking wild animals in the Tanami Desert.
- How does the common cat survive in the Tanami Desert, one of Australia's most hostile deserts?
- According to the narrator in this story, the Mala is most at risk with fewer than 400 remaining on mainland Australia. Research the current conservation status of the Mala. Explain how people have been involved in the protection of the Mala.



In the BTN *Protecting Desert Animals* story, we learn that scientists are designing predator-proof homes for the desert's smaller creatures to hide in. The chicken wire tunnels are 50 metres long, and allow small animals to run in and out as they please. The tunnels protect native desert animals who are under stress from feral animals.

- Design your own shelter to help native desert animals hide from predators. Share your design with the class. Describe the materials used to make it, its features and how it will help protect native species.

