

How have the plants and animals adapted to the environment?

Hot deserts have less than 250mm of rainfall per year. Lack of water is the major limiting factor. Temperatures rise to over 40 degrees during the day but can drop to below zero at night. The ground is rocky, vegetation is sparse and has spines rather than leaves. Sandstorms are common.

Annotate the photo of the cactus to show how it has adapted to the desert environment. The first one has been done for you.



The cactus grows slowly because deserts get less than 250mm of rain a year so not enough for active growth.

Thick waxy skin so that...

Spikes instead of leaves because...

Long but shallower roots so that...

Seeds can lie dormant for many years so that...

Draw an arrow to the photo to identify each feature. Exam tip – if you are asked to use a photo in the exam you will only be able to comment on what you can see – can you see roots and seeds?

Using the photo only, explain how plants have adapted to the desert environment