THE LIVING WORLD

read

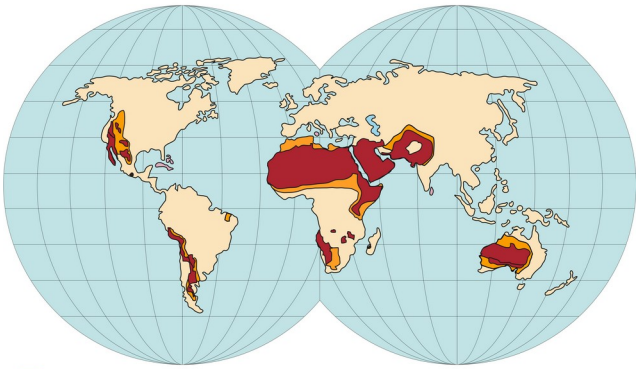
Desertification

quiz

The Big Picture

- The Living World
  - *ecosystems*
  - *rainforests*
  - *cold environments* or *hot deserts**

Location



Desert
Risk of desertification

About

Deserts are increasing in size daily due to desertification. Desertification is the process of land turning into desert. Areas on the edge of hot deserts are especially at risk.

Causes of Desertification

Climate Change – hotter and drier conditions are increasing the risk of land turning to desert.

Population growth – Increasing population raises the demand for food leading to vegetation destruction and soil erosion.

Removal of fuelwood – Deforestation leave the soil exposed and vulnerable to erosion.

Overgrazing – The soil becomes bare as the result of vegetation being removed by grazing animals.

Over-cultivation – Farming is becoming more intensive which means the land has less chance to recover causing it to become infertile.

Soil erosion – Exposed soil is baked in the sun. When it rains it washes over the surface removing topsoil exposing infertile sub-soil.

Reducing the Risk

Water and soil management

Addresses the problem of intense rainfall events washing away loose soil and causing soil erosion e.g. bunds in the Sahel. It also involves water storage and controlling surface flow.

Appropriate technology

The use of technology or techniques that can be easily used or replaced by local people. Examples include bunds and planting pits (zai).

Tree planting

Effective in reducing soil erosion. Roots bind the soil and canopies act like umbrellas. The Great Green Wall is a plan to plant trees across the southern edge of the Sahara desert.

Key Terms

Bunds – Low rock walls that follow contours, designed to disrupt surface flow.

Desertification – Land turning to desert over time.

Great Green Wall – A plant to plant trees in the Sahel to reduce desertification.

Over-cultivation – Exhausting the soil by over-cropping the land.

Overgrazing – Grazing too many livestock for too long on the land.

Soil erosion – Removal of topsoil faster than it can be replaced.