

Environments

(Main vegetation types)



Rainforests

Climate: Hot and humid. Average temperature 20°– 25°C. More than 2000mm of rain per year.

Plant life: Vines, palms, ferns. Great variety of plant life (two-thirds of all flowering plants). Forest floor covered in nutrient rich leaf litter called humus.

Locations: Between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn in Asia, Central Africa, South America and relatively small areas in eastern Australia.



Deciduous Forests

Climate: Warm/hot summers and cold winters. Temperatures -30°C to 30°C . Rainfall/snow 750–1,500 mm a year.

Plants: The leaves of trees and shrubs turn golden yellow or red in Autumn. The leaves fall to the ground as winter arrives. Examples include beech, elm, maple and oak.

Locations: Eastern USA, Canada, Europe, China and Japan



Coniferous Forests

Climate: Long, cold snowy winters, and warm, humid summers; well-defined seasons, at least four to six frost-free months. Temperatures from -40°C to 20°C . Rainfall/snow from 300 to 900 mm of rain per year

Plants: Cone-bearing, needle-leaved pines.

Location: Northern parts of Asia, Europe and North America. Coniferous forest make up one-third of the world's forests.



Tundra

Climate: Very cold winters (down to -40°C). Warm summers (up to 18°C). Rain/snow – 150°C to 250°C .

Plants: Low shrub-like plants, mosses and lichens. Some scattered conifers in southern parts. Shallow soil over a layer of permanently frozen ground (permafrost). Short growing season.

Locations: Mostly north of the Arctic Circle across Asia and North America.

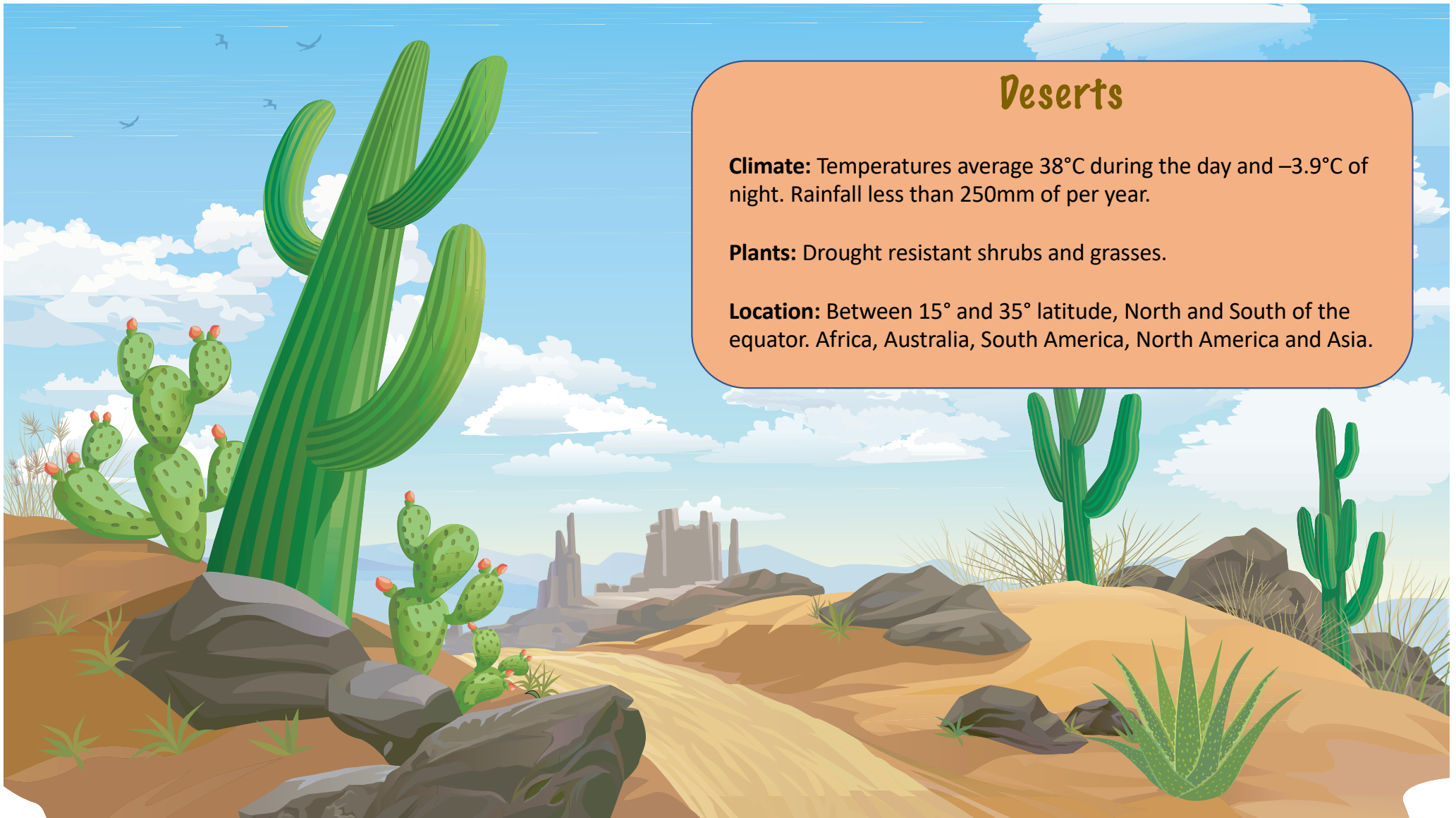


Grasslands

Climate: Annual temperatures typically range from -20°C to 30°C .
Rainfall of between 500 mm and 900 mm

Plants: Grass species dominate. Scattered trees.

Location: North of the Tropic of Cancer (23.5° degrees North) and south of the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5°S) on all continents except Antarctica. Known as prairies (Nth. America), pampas (Sth. America) and Savanna (Africa).



Deserts

Climate: Temperatures average 38°C during the day and -3.9°C of night. Rainfall less than 250mm of per year.

Plants: Drought resistant shrubs and grasses.

Location: Between 15° and 35° latitude, North and South of the equator. Africa, Australia, South America, North America and Asia.