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Animals and plants that do not need a lot of water can survive in the desert. There are deserts all over the world.

Did you know that some monsters live in the desert? The Gila monster is a lizard that lives in the deserts of the southwestern United States. It grows to be about twenty inches long. It is the only poisonous lizard found in the United States.

Like many other desert animals, the Gila monster stays in the shade during the day and hunts after dark, when it is cool. What does the Gila monster eat? It eats small rodents, other lizards, and the eggs of birds and other reptiles.

Sometimes food is hard to find, but the Gila monster can actually survive for months without eating. How does it do that? It lives off the fat that it stores in its tail!

Gila monsters are difficult to find. There aren’t many of these slow-moving, peaceful lizards left in the deserts anymore. Unfortunately, many people like to hunt them. In Arizona, there are laws against hunting Gila monsters. These laws protect the Gila monster and keep it from becoming extinct.

Are there other kinds of lizards in the desert? Yes, there are. During the day, there seem to be more lizards than any other kind of animal! One type of lizard, the collared lizard, sometimes resembles a tiny dinosaur. When it wants to move fast, it stands up on its hind legs and runs like a tyrannosaurus!
Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

1. Read this sentence from the passage.
   
   A desert is an arid, or dry, stretch of land where it seldom rains.

   Which word has the OPPOSITE meaning of the word **arid**?
   
   A  cold  
   B  rough  
   C  safe  
   D  wet

2. According to the passage, what kind of animal can survive in the desert?

   A  an animal that likes cold weather  
   B  an animal that does not have a tail  
   C  an animal that likes to hunt during the day  
   D  an animal that does not need a lot of water

3. What is the Gila monster?

   A  a bird  
   B  a plant  
   C  a lizard  
   D  a rodent

4. Why are there so few Gila monsters left in the deserts?

   A  People like to hunt them.  
   B  They are running out of food.  
   C  Deserts are getting more rain.  
   D  Other lizards are killing them.

5. What animals live in the deserts of the southwestern United States? When do most of them hunt? Write your response on another sheet of paper.