

Look Who Lives in the Desert!
Adaptations 2

An adaptation can be a design, function or behavior that has developed over time to help a species better survive. Adaptations may benefit the animal in getting food, hiding, moving, protection, etc. and some animals require special adaptations to live in the desert because it is such a harsh, dry environment. Using the book, answer the following questions.

What purpose do the "pits" on the face of a rattlesnake serve? _____

What adaptation allows some geckos to walk on walls and inverted surfaces? _____

Why are a mountain lion's hind legs longer than the front legs? _____

How does a roadrunner's sharp, 2-inch beak help it get food? _____

What unique adaptation helps bats get around in the dark of night? _____

Why does a tarantula have tiny hairs on the back of its abdomen? _____

Why do owls and hawks cast "pellets"? _____

How can a kangaroo rat survive without drinking any water? _____

What adaptation helps a stink beetle discourage predators? _____

How does a scorpion's pinchers and stinger help it to eat? _____

Why are a jackrabbit's large eyes on the sides of its head instead of in the front? _____

Why does a vulture dribble urine down its legs? _____

What purpose does the scent gland on the rump of a javelina serve? _____

What body part on a Gila monster is designed to store fat? _____

Why are a tortoise's front legs flatter and covered in protective scales? _____

What adaptation helps a bobcat to see well in low light? _____

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Adaptations 2 KEY

An adaptation can be a design, function or behavior that has developed over time to help a species better survive. Adaptations may benefit the animal in getting food, hiding, moving, protection, etc. and some animals require special adaptations to live in the desert because it is such a harsh, dry environment. Using the book, answer the following questions.

What purpose do the “pits” on the face of a rattlesnake serve? *The pits detect temperature changes. A rattlesnake has poor eyesight, but can use its pits to sense warm-blooded prey like rodents nearby.*

What adaptation allows some geckos to walk on walls and even ceilings? *Certain geckos have microscopic hairs called setae on the pads of their feet that help them cling to vertical and inverted surfaces.*

Why are a mountain lion’s hind legs longer than the front legs? *Having longer hind legs makes a mountain lion a powerful jumper—some can leap 18 feet from a standstill.*

How does a roadrunner’s long, sharp beak help it get food? *The roadrunner stabs and kills prey with its beak.*

What unique adaptation helps bats get around in the dark of night? *The ability to echolocate—sending out sound waves that bounce off objects and return to the bat—gives them a 3-D sense their surroundings in the dark.*

Why does a tarantula have tiny hairs on the back of its abdomen? *These hairs can be flicked off with the spider’s hind legs and act as an irritant to an intruder’s eyes and skin.*

Why do owls and hawks cast “pellets”? *Birds of prey often eat whole animals (especially small creatures like mice) but they cannot digest the fur and bones, so they regurgitate the indigestible parts in small clumps called “pellets”.*

How can a kangaroo rat survive without drinking any water? *A kangaroo rat’s body is designed to extract all the moisture from the foods it eats, mostly seeds, grasses and grains.*

What adaptation helps a stink beetle discourage predators? *A stink beetle can squirt a repulsive-smelling liquid from the end of its abdomen.*

How does a scorpion’s pinchers and stinger help it to eat? *A scorpion uses its pinchers like hands to catch its prey and then uses its stinger to inject deadly venom. Once the prey is dead, the scorpion can eat it.*

Why are a jackrabbit’s large eyes on the sides of its head instead of in the front? *Using peripheral vision, a jackrabbit can see almost 360 degrees around itself to watch out for predators.*

Why does a vulture dribble urine down its legs? *This evaporative cooling helps the vulture cool off when it’s too hot.*

What purpose does the scent gland on the rump of a javelina serve? *Since javelina have poor eyesight, the scent gland, which produces a musky smell, helps them identify one another and keep their herd together.*

What body part on a Gila monster is designed to store fat? *The tail stores fat and can get quite plump.*

Why are a tortoise’s front legs flatter and covered in protective scales ? *A tortoise spends most of its time in underground burrows. Its front legs are designed for digging (and they sport long claws, too.)*

What adaptation helps a bobcat see well in low light? *Like other cats, a bobcat has a shiny layer of cells behind the retina called the tapetum lucidum that reflects light back through the retina to improve its night vision.*