

Life in Sharqiya

Adaptations - Ruppell's Fox

A sand coloured coat...	... to allow it to blend in with its surroundings and avoid predation.
Large ears...	... allow blood to cool in the hot desert environment.
Anal glands that can spray scent...	... repels their predators.
Fur on the pads of its paws...	... allows it to grip on shifting sands.
Nocturnal behaviour pattern...	... allows it to avoid activity in the heat of the day.
Ability to travel up to 9km a night...	... allows them more opportunities to forage.
Omnivorous diet...	... means they have a greater chance of finding food in drought conditions.
Large pads on paws...	... means they do not get burnt by the hot sand.

Life in Sharqiya

Adaptations - Prosopis Tree

Self-propagating (creates new shoots from parent roots)...	... means that it does not rely on seed dispersal in times of drought.
Deep (up to 35m) tap roots...	... allow the tree to reach deep groundwater reserves.
Thorny outer stems...	... make the tree less attractive for animals to eat.
Slow growing...	... means the tree does not need a constant water supply.
Nitrogen fixing bacteria at root nodules...	... increases the soil fertility for the tree.
Well developed and spread roots...	... allow greater anchorage in shifting sands.
Greater reproductivity in drought conditions (more fruits and flowers)...	... increases the chance of the plant species surviving in a certain area.
Tolerant to high soil pH...	... means the tree can cope with additional salt in the soil during drought conditions.

Life in Sharqiya

Bedouin Agony Aunt

Dear Friend,

As-salaam 'alaykum! My name is Hassan and I'm 17 years old. I live in a small settlement outside Al Mintarib in the North West of the Sharqiya Sands. My family has a long history of farming dates here. Although here we are relatively close to Muscat (about two and a half hours away by the new road), I feel a strong sense of place and attachment to the Sands because of my family's history here.

Which brings me to why I need your advice. I was the first person in my family to complete schooling. My mother and father were very proud, and I am still proud of them for all the sacrifices they made to allow this to happen. My sister will soon complete her certificate too, so I am determined to be a good example to her. My dream is to attend the Sultan Qaboos University, inshallah. However, this would mean me moving away from the Sands and the Bedouin traditions. There is no doubt in my mind - I will always BE Bedouin - but my father's friends have already started to see me as a Muscatian with big ideas and aspirations. With their traditional views this is no good thing. I just can't see myself being a date farmer for the rest of my life.

In the last few years it has been harder and harder to make money from the harvest. People are willing to pay less at the suq for our dates as the imported, packaged ones from Egypt are so much cheaper. Of course, with water shortages and the increased salt in the soil it is taking longer for the newer palms to grow. Not to say we haven't tried to adapt. When father bought the Landcruiser to help him shepherd the goats we all became more optimistic! Yet he is not getting any younger and I am becoming more and more conscious of all those times when he has said he is looking forward to passing the farm onto me and my future family.

I guess I feel completely torn - on the one hand I see my future lying in Muscat, away from a hard life in the Sands. Yet on the other hand, moving away would remove me from my traditions, cause heartache for my family and make life so much harder for them.

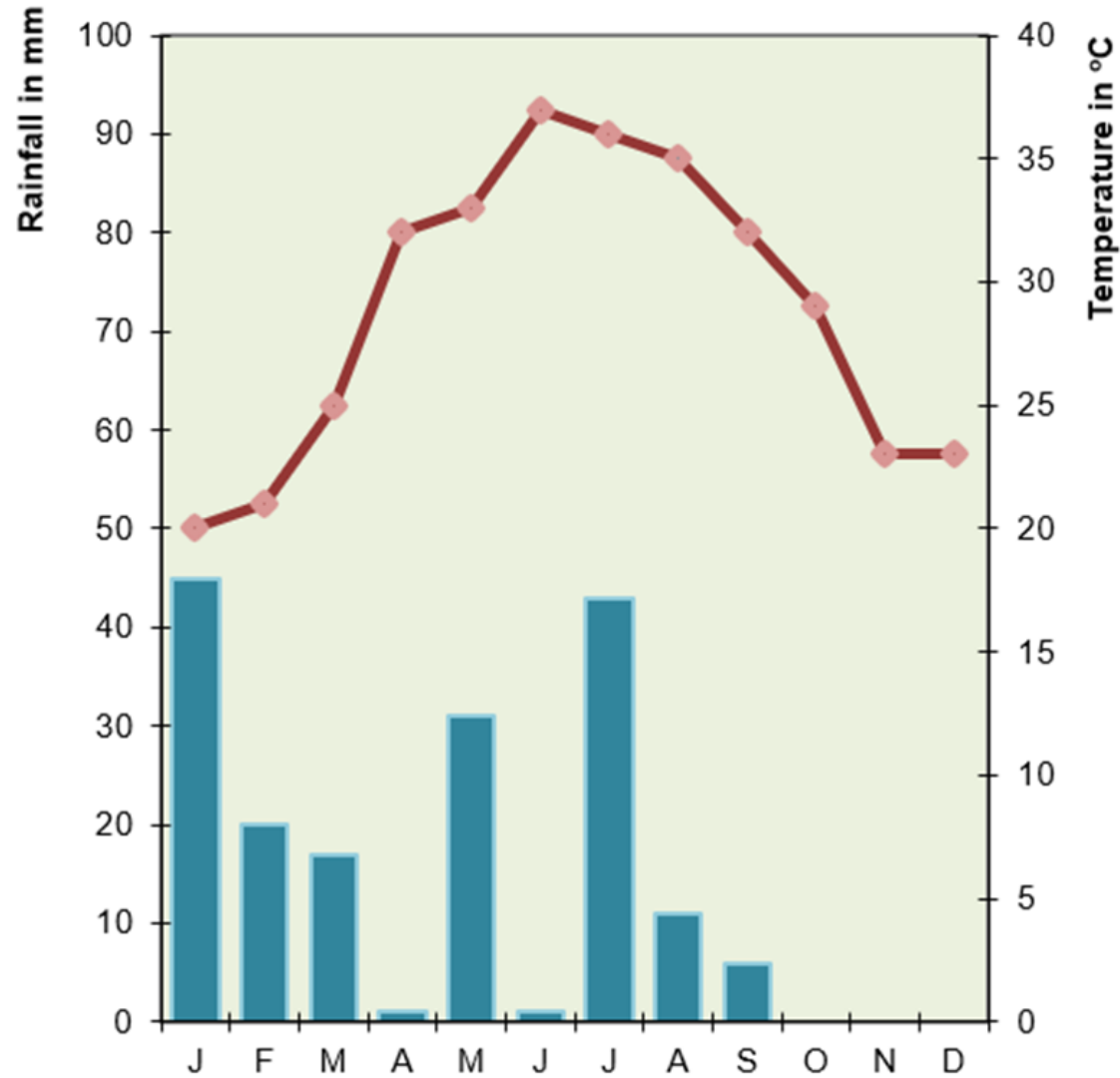
What would you do if you were me?

Read Hassan's letter carefully. You might like to use a highlighter to note the key problems he is facing.

What advice would you give him?

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Desert Environment Gallery



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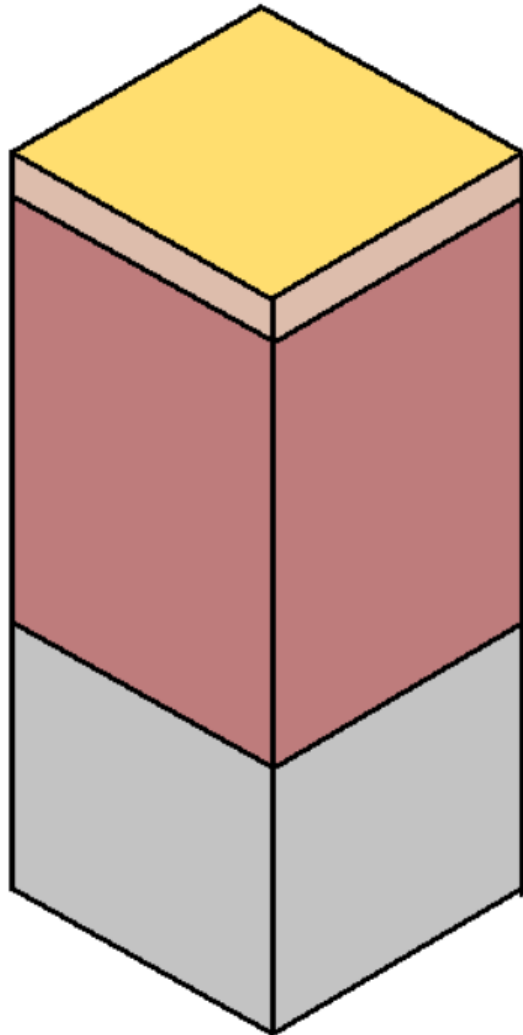
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Desert soil profile

 Surface layer

 Topsoil

 Subsoil

 Parent material

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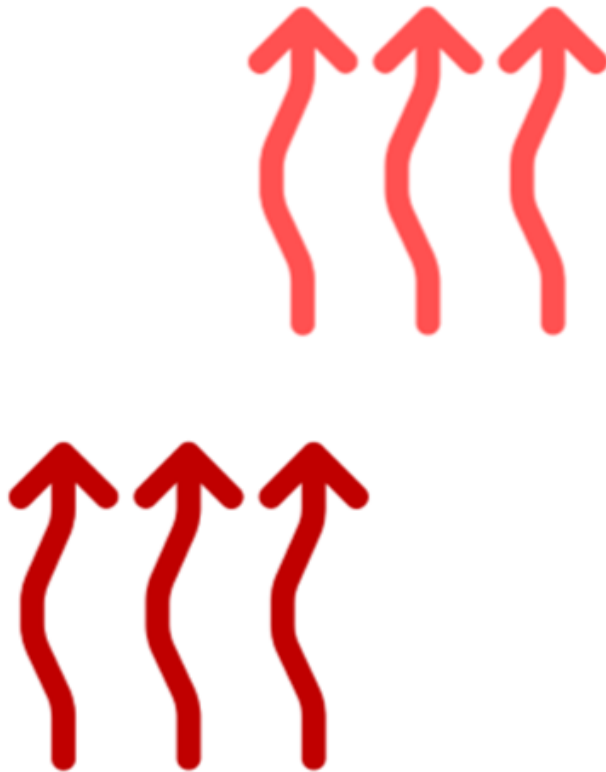
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Life in Sharqiya

Human Life in Sharqiya

How do Wahiba Bedouin move around the Sharqiya Sands?

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How do the Wahiba Bedouin make a living?

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What is the Wahiba Bedouin home like?

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How have the Wahiba Bedouin adapted their lives for living in a desert?

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How are the Wahiba Bedouin different to us?

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How are the Wahiba Bedouin similar to us?

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The Ruppell's Fox

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The Prosopis Tree



Source: Fabio Achilli (CC-BY-2.0)



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Wahiba Bedouin People

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