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THE DRIEST PLACE ON EARTH ATACAMA DESERT

The Driest Place on Earth

Atacama Desert

Daydreaming is fun, but sometimes there is a price to pay for it, like mopping up spilled milk. Next time, Tara decided to be more aware of her surroundings or else face the music. She heaved a sigh of relief and continued with her favorite pastime. She wondered if there were other

Hi!
I am Tara



planets similar to Earth or even slightly similar?

Suddenly, she

remembered the Atacama Desert, the driest place on Earth, located in northern Chile, South America. It is a strip of land stretching 1600 km on the Pacific coast, west of the Andes Mountains. This desert is similar to the planet Mars as

both have extremely arid and highly saline soil, as well as high ultra-violet radiation.

Therefore, new techniques, instruments,

and space rovers are tested in the

Atacama Desert before

being sent to Mars.

However, since 2015,

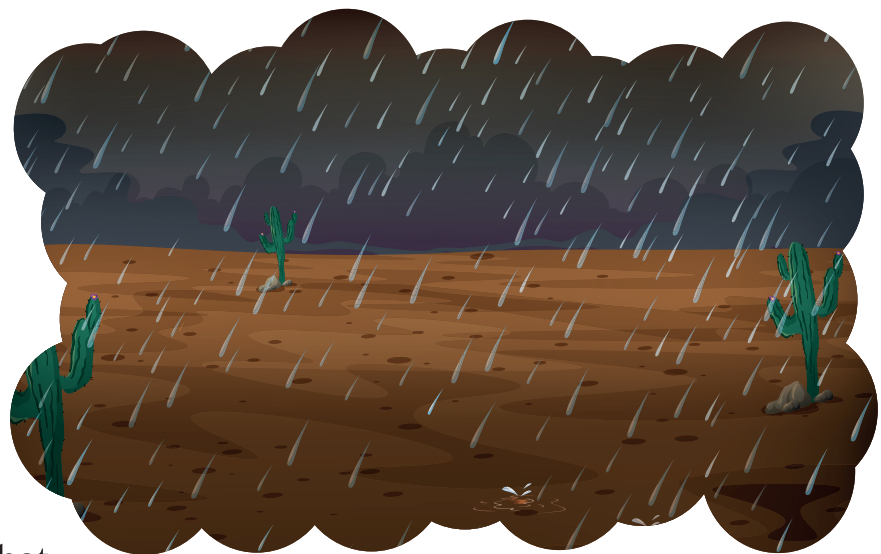


several climatic changes have affected the Atacama. These climatic events have never happened before. In July 2011, an unusual event happened, it snowed! In 2019, it rained so heavily that a dry spring came to life. Although annual rainfall, just 15mm happens only once in 2 to 12 years, an unusual spell of rain happened in 2017, and heavy rains lashed the region four years before the



usual time. The rainfall was more than 700% of the annual average, killing the microorganisms that thrived in extremely dry conditions. Tara looked

pensive at the thought of the loss of so many varieties of flora and fauna, including microorganisms. However, scientists are working hard to alleviate the effects of global warming that have led to the rise in the temperature over the Pacific Ocean, which, in turn, has caused unusual rains in the Atacama Desert.



New Words

1. **Pensive**- Thinking deeply.
2. **Arid**- (of land or a climate) having little or no rain
3. **Saline**- Containing salt

Find other new and interesting words for each other, and write their meanings in your notebooks.

Comprehension

1. What did Tara have to mop?
2. What is the name of the desert in the south of Chile?
3. What type of soil does the Atacama Desert have?
4. What unusual event took place in 2019?
5. In which year did it snow?
6. What is causing the untimely and heavy rains in the desert?

Take turns to make more questions like these above for each other and answer them.

Prompts Pair up

1. What kind of plants can be found in a desert environment? Discuss and write in your notebooks.
2. **Desert Animal Race**
Pretend to be animals living in the Atacama Desert. Do a little bit of research and then choose an animal and take turns acting out how it moves or finds water. Talk about how these animals live in the desert and how changes in the weather might affect them.

Watch the video on the driest place on earth using the QR code.



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