Africa: Location, Area, Political & Physical Features

THINK AND ANSWER

Why did Africa remain unexplored for a long time ?
Answer:
The equator passes through the middle of the continent and most of Africa lies within the tropics. It is, therefore, the hottest continent.
People faced many difficulties while exploring Africa. In the north, the Sahara, the world's largest desert, was impenetrable due to severe heat and dry conditions. Most of Africa consists of undulating plateaus, so it was difficult to reach the interior from the coastal areas. The rivers of Africa have many rapids and waterfalls, and are not fit for navigation. The extensive equatorial forests and swampy lands teeming with dangerous tsetse flies and poisonous insects discouraged explorers from entering the heart of the continent.

Discuss

Deforestation rate in Africa is twice the average for the rest of the world with more than four million hectares of primary forest disappearing every year. What could be the reasons for this.
Answer:
The reasons would be :

1. Conversion of forests for subsistenance and commercial agriculture.
2. Deforestation done because of commercial logging
3. Other activities such as cattle rattling, cash crop plantations, and the construction of dams, roads and mines.

VALUES AND LIFE SKILLS

The Sahara Desert forms a large part of Africa. This desert extends from the Atlantic in the west to the Red Sea in the east.
Suppose you were going to the Sahara Desert. List the things you would take with you. What kind of problems are you likely to face ?
How would you cope with them ?
Answer:
The things one should carry and the problems we can face are discussed below :
1. Preparing for Desert Emergencies —
(a) Wear clothing that minimizes sweat loss : Most of your body's water loss happens through perspiration. Cover as much skin as possible with loose, light-weight clothing. This will trap the sweat against your skin, slowing evaporation and therefore water loss.

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(b) Bring lots of extra water : Whenever you enter a desert, bring more water than you expect. While walking in sunshine and 40°C (104°F) heat, the average person loses 900 mL (30 oz) of sweat every hour. In an emergency situation, you'll be thankful for any water you carried.

1. Divide the water you' re carrying among several containers. This minimizes the amount of water you can lose to one leak.
2. Store the excess in a cool spot in your vehicle, away from direct sunlight.

(c) Bring food that packs the most nutrition in the least size and weight: Energy bars, pemmican, jerky, and trail mix are popular choices. Do your research, experiment beforehand, and be prepared. When wheeled vehicles break down, it's just your two legs and the path to the next town, and you don't want to be carrying anything nonessential.

(d) Pack survival equipment: Here are the bare essentials for a survival kit:

1. Sturdy emergency blankets
2. Cords or rope
3. Water purification tablets
4. First aid kit
5. Fire starters
6. Powerful flashlight or headlamp. LEDs last longest.
7. Knife
8. Compass
9. Signal mirror
10. Goggles and a dust mask or bandana (for dust storms)

2. Survival Tactics :

(a) Become nocturnal: In a desert survival situation, you do not want to be moving around during the day. The cooler night air enables you to travel farther and faster with minimum danger of heat exhaustion. In hot climates, this single decision will save your body about three liters (three quarts) of water per day.

(b) Stay in a shelter during the day: If you don't have a shaded car to stay in, string cords between a pair of objects in a place that gets shade most of the day. Drape a sturdy emergency blanket over the cords. Place a few pieces of brush on top of the blanket, then cover it with another emergency blanket (this one can be a thin Mylar sheet). The gap of air between the two blankets insulates the shelter, keeping it cooler.

(c) Signal for help : Building a fire is a great way to make a signal, creating smoke during the day and light at night. While in transit, keep a signal mirror in reach to reflect light at passing aircraft or distant cars.

(d) Decide whether to stay in place : If you have a supply of water and someone knows where you are, staying in one place may be your best chance of rescue. Traveling to find help will exhaust you much faster than staying in place, and water loss will cut your survival time way down if you can't find another supply. That said, if your water supplies are low, you will need to look for more. You cannot expect to survive more than a couple of days if you run out of water.

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(e) Find water sources : If there's been a rainstorm recently, you may find pockets of water in rock outcrops or flat stone surfaces. More often, you'll need to search for areas with possible groundwater:

1. Follow animal tracks leading downhill, birds circling around something, or even flying insects.
2. Walk to the greenest vegetation you can see, especially large plants with wide leaves.

3. Recognizing Dangers
(a) Watch out for signs of dehydration : Many people make their journey much harder by underestimating their water needs. Trying to ration your supply is a mistake that can cost your life. If you notice any of the following symptoms, drink more water:

1. Urine with a dark color or a noticeable smell.
2. Dry skin
3. Dizziness
4. Fainting

(b) Rest if you experience heat exhaustion : If you feel lightheaded or nauseous, or if your skin feels cool and clammy, seek shade immediately. Rest and treat yourself as follows:

1. Remove or loosen your clothing
2. Sip a sports drink or slightly salty water (about 5 mL salt per liter water /1 tsp per quart).
3. Apply wet cloth on your skin to aid cooling evaporation.

(c) Stay away from dangerous animals : Most mammals and reptiles will stay away from you, especially if they are alone. Follow the same practice and be aware of your surroundings to avoid accidentally cornering something.

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EXERCISES

A. Choose the correct answer :

1. The strait that separates Europe from Africa is the

1. Palk Srait
2. Bering Strait
3. **Strait of Gibraltar**
4. trait of Magellan

2. A large portion of Africa lies in the

1. desert
2. **tropics**
3. temperate region
4. marshy land

3. The area in a desert where water can be found is called a/an

1. pond
2. well
3. depression
4. **oasis**

4. The Sudd is a

1. lake
2. **swamp**
3. gulf
4. cape

5. The largest lake in Africa is

1. Lake Chad
2. Lake Tana
3. **Lake Victoria**
4. Lake Tanganyika

B. Identify who I am

1. i am a country through which the Tropic of Capricorn passes: **Namibia.**
2. I am the southernmost tip of Africa: **Cape of Good Hope.**
3. I am a snow-capped mountain near the equator: **Mt. Kilimanjaro.**
4. I am the longest river of Africa: **Nile.**
5. I am a river that flows into Lake Chad: **The Chari.**
6. I am a lake that does not lie in the Great Rift Valley of Africa: **Lake Victoria.**
7. I am a river that flows through the Namib Desert: **Okavango**

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C. Match the following:

A	B
1. Egypt	(i) Accra
2. Kenya	(ii) Tripoli
3. South Africa	(iii) Addis Ababa
4. Ethiopia	(iv) Cairo
5. Ghana	(v) Nairobi
6. Libya	(vi) Pretoria

Answer:

A	B
1. Egypt	(iv) Cairo
2. Kenya	(v) Nairobi
3. South Africa	(vi) Pretoria
4. Ethiopia	(iii) Addis Ababa
5. Ghana	(i) Accra
6. Libya	(ii) Tripoli

D. Give geographical reasons

Question 1.
People faced many difficulties while exploring Africa.
Answer:
It was difficult to explore Africa because of deserts like Sahara which have severe heat and dry conditions, the undulating plateaux, non-navigable rivers, extensive equatorial forests, swampy lands and poisonous insects.

Question 2.
The rivers of Africa are not very suitable for navigation in their lower course.
Answer:
The rivers have many rapids and waterfalls making them unfit for navigation.

Question 3.
The river Nile flows through a desert and yet has water throughout the year.
Answer:

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River Nile has water throughout the year because its source is Lake Victoria which lies in the rainy equatorial region.

E. Answer the following questions briefly.

Question 1.
Give the latitudinal extent of Africa and explain why it is mostly a tropical continent.
Answer:
Latitudinal extent of Africa is 37°N to 35°S. Africa is known as mostly tropical continent because a large portion of Africa lies in the Tropics, the Tropic of cancer (23 1/2° N) in the North and the Tropic of Capricorn (23 1/2° S) in the South.

Question 2.
Name three great explorers connected with the African continent.
Answer:
David Livingstone, who discovered Victoria Falls in 1855. Mungo Park followed the course of the river Niger. Henry Morton Stanley traced the course of the river Congo from Lake Tanganyika to its mouth.

Question 3.
Name the major mountain ranges of Africa.
Answer:
The Atlas Mountains lie in north-western Africa. They are young fold mountains consisting of three parallel ranges—the Tell Atlas in the north, the High Atlas in the middle, and the Sahara Atlas in the south. The highest peak in the Atlas Mountains is Mt Toublkal, which remains snow-capped most of the year.

Question 4.
Name the lakes found in the Great Rift Valley.
Answer:
The lakes found in the Great Rift Valley are Lake Malawi, Lake Mobutu, Lake Edward and Lake Turkana.

Question 5.
How much time does it take the cocoa tree to yield cocoa pods ?
Answer:
An evergreen tropical plant, the cocoa tree grows to a height of 4 to 9 m. It begins to yield cocoa pods after about 5-7 years. Cocoa pods grow on the trunk and main branches. Each pod is about 18-25 cm long and contains pulp with beans.

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F. Answer the following questions in one or two paragraphs

Question 1.
Elaborate on the achievements of the great explorers in opening up the continent of Africa.
Answer:
Explorers like David Livingstone discovered Victoria Falls. Mungo Park discovered the course of river Niger. Henry Morton Stanley traced the source of river Congo from Lake Tanganyika to its mouth.

Question 2.
Name the major physical divisions of Africa. Describe any one.
Answer:
Africa can be divided into the following physical divisions: the Atlas Mountains, the low central plateau, the high plateau of the south, the Great Rift Valley, the Nile and Congo-Zaire Basins, and the coastal plains.

1. The Atlas Mountains lie in north-western Africa. They are young fold mountains.
2. There are three parallel ranges – the Tell Atlas in the north, the High Atlas in the middle, and the Sahara Atlas in the south. The highest peak in the Atlas Mountains is Mt Toubkal, which remains snow-capped most of the year.
3. The low central plateau extends from the Atlantic Coast in the west to the Nile Valley in the east. The Sahara Desert forms a part of this plateau. This desert extends from the Atlantic in the west to the Red Sea in the east, and covers an area of 8.6 million sq.km.
4. The Great Rift Valley of Africa is a special physical feature of the southern plateau. It is a long narrow valley formed as a
result of vertical cracks that developed because of the movements within the earth. It extends for a total distance of 5,000 km from Lake Malawi to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba to the Dead Sea in Jordan.

Question 3.
Describe the three important deserts found in Africa.
Answer:
The three important deserts are Sahara, The Namib, The Kalahari.
Sahara is part of the low Central Plateau. It is the largest desert in the world covering the area of 8.6 million square km.
The Namib, desert runs along the Western Coast in South-West Africa.
Kalahari desert lies in the Southern part of Africa forming part of High Plateau of South Africa.

Question 4.
What is a rift valley? How is it formed?
Answer:
The Great Rift Valley is a long narrow valley formed as a result of vertical cracks that

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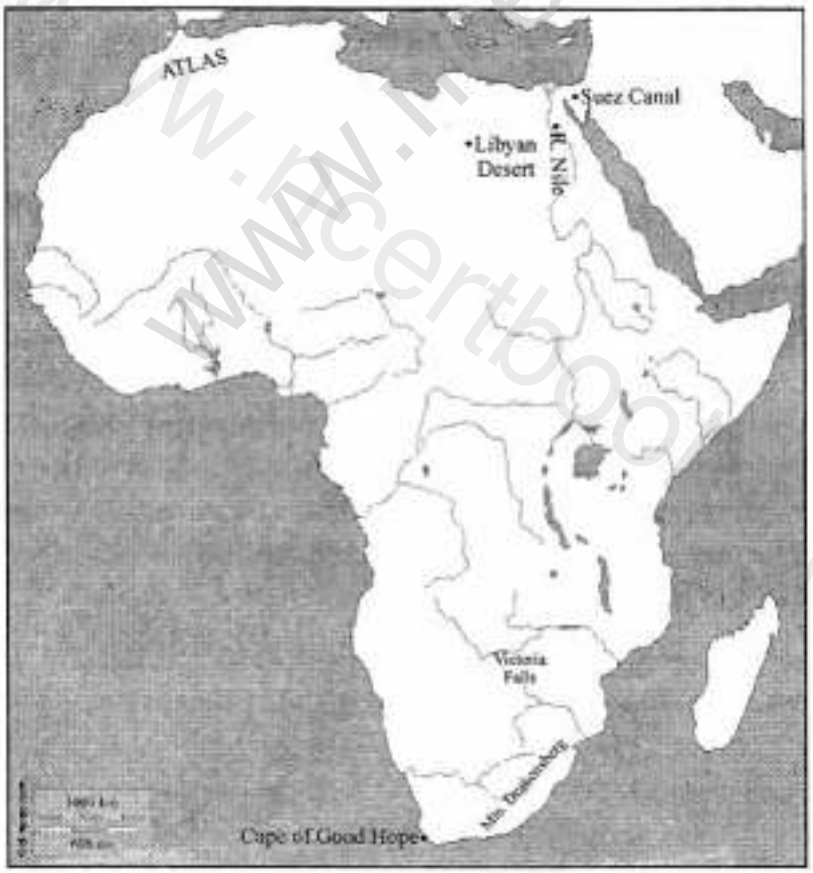
developed because of movements within the earth. It extends for a total distance of5,000 km from Lake Malawi to Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba to Dead Sea in Jordan. Many freshwater lakes, such as Malawi, Tanganyika, and Turkana are found here.

Question 5.
Give an account of the major lakes of Africa.
Answer:
Lake Victoria is the largest lake of Africa. The river Chari flows into Lake Chad. Lake Tanganyika is one of the longest freshwater lake in the world. Other large lakes in Great Rift Valley are Malawi, Mobutu, Edward and Turkana.

G. Map work:
On a blank outline map of Africa, mark the following:

1. The Cape of Good Hope
2. The Drakensberg Mountains
3. The Victoria Falls
4. The Atlas Mountains
5. The Nile River
6. The Libyan Desert
7. The Suez Canal

Answer:



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H. Picture Study

This is a photograph of Victoria Falls.

Question 1.
Name the explorer who discovered it.
Answer:
David Livingstone discovered Victoria Falls in 1855.

Question 2.
On which river is this fall located ?
Answer:
Victoria Fall is located on Zambezi River.

LET'S DO SOMETHING

On a blank outline map of Africa

(a) Mark with brown lines the Atlas and the Drakensberg Mountains.
(b) Shade with yellow and label the Sahara Desert and the Kalahari Desert.
(c) Shade with light brown the plateau region of Africa, the Ethiopian and Adamawa Highlands.
(d) Colour with blue and label neatly all the surrounding water bodies, oceans, seas, bays, gulfs, and straits.

Answer:
Do it Yourself.

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