

Deserts can be hostile and dangerous places, especially for those who are unfamiliar with them. Here the narrator is writing to a friend. He is describing his journey across the Sahara Desert.

We camped the first night twenty miles south. The next morning we woke and came out of our tents at five. Too cold to sleep ... Above us were the last stars. There would be no sunrise for another two hours. We passed round hot glasses of tea. The camels were being fed, half asleep, chewing the **dates** along with date stones. We ate breakfast and then drank three more glasses of tea.

Hours later we were in the sandstorm that hit us out of a clear morning, coming from nowhere. The breeze that had been **refreshing** had **gradually strengthened**. Eventually we looked down, and the surface of the desert was changed. Pass me the book ... here. This is **Hassanein Bey**'s wonderful account of such storms:

It is as though the surface were **underlaid** with steam-pipes, with thousands of **orifices** through which tiny jets of steam are puffing out. The sand leaps in little spurts and whirls. Inch by inch the disturbance rises as the wind increases its force. It seems as though the whole surface of the desert were rising in obedience to some **upthrusting** force beneath. Larger pebbles strike against the shins, the knees, the thighs. The sand-grains climb the body till it strikes the face and goes over the head. The sky is shut out, all but the nearest objects **fade from view**, **the universe is filled**.

We had to keep moving. If you pause sand builds up as it would around anything **stationary**, and locks you in. You are lost forever. A sandstorm can last five hours. Even when we were in trucks in later years we would have to keep driving with no **vision**.

The worst terrors came at night. Once, north of Kifra, we were hit by a storm in the darkness. Three a.m. The gale swept the tents from their **moorings** and we rolled with them, taking in sand like a sinking boat takes in water, weighed down, **suffocating**, till we were cut free by a camel driver.

We travelled through three storms during nine days. We missed small desert towns where we expected to **locate** more supplies. The horse vanished. Three camels died. For the last two days there was no food, only tea ... After the third night we gave up talking. All that mattered was the fire and the **minimal** brown liquid.

Only by luck did we **stumble on** the desert town of El Taj.

From *The English Patient*  
by Michael Ondaatje



Glossary

**dates** sweet brown fruits with a single stone

**Hassanein Bey** famous explorer and writer

**underlaid** built with something underneath it

**orifices** openings

**upthrusting** pushing upwards

**moorings** pegs that hold the tents in place

Word Check

A Find each word in the story. Choose the correct meaning.

- |               |                          |                               |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 refreshing  | a making them feel tired | b making them feel less tired |
| 2 stationary  | a not moving             | b moving                      |
| 3 vision      | a sight                  | b map                         |
| 4 suffocating | a unable to breathe      | b breathing                   |
| 5 locate      | a grow                   | b find                        |
| 6 minimal     | a small amount of        | b large amount of             |

B Find these phrases in the story. Discuss what they mean.

- |                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1 gradually strengthened | 2 fade from view |
| 3 the universe is filled | 4 stumble on     |

Use a dictionary to help you.



# Comprehension

- A** Copy and complete each sentence, using one or more words from the extract on **pages 62 and 63**.
- 1 The writer was travelling across the \_\_\_\_\_ Desert.
  - 2 They travelled a distance of \_\_\_\_\_ on the first day.
  - 3 \_\_\_\_\_ was their main drink throughout the journey.
  - 4 It is important to keep \_\_\_\_\_ in a sandstorm.
  - 5 They travelled through \_\_\_\_\_ sandstorms in \_\_\_\_\_ days.

- B** Write sentences to answer each question.
- 1 How do you know that this was not the last time the narrator travelled across a desert?
  - 2 In what way is a sandstorm at night worse than one during the day?
  - 3 What similarity does the narrator suggest between being in a sandstorm and being at sea?
  - 4 Why do you think 'all that mattered was the fire and the minimal brown liquid'?
  - 5 Why did they miss 'small desert towns'?

- C** Carefully read Hassanein Bey's account of what it is like being in a sandstorm on **pages 62 and 63**.
- Write a few sentences to explain whether you think his description is a good one, giving your reasons.



# Vocabulary

## Hyperbole

Hyperbole can be used in similes, metaphors and idioms.



**Hyperbole** means exaggeration. For example, it would be hyperbole to say:

I was so thirsty **I could have drunk the river dry**.

It can be fun to use hyperbole occasionally but you should avoid overusing it in your writing.

- A** Rewrite these statements so that they are less exaggerated.
- 1 The sun is scorching today.
  - 2 I haven't seen you in ages.
  - 3 It was so cold, I thought I would turn to ice.
  - 4 I didn't close my eyes all night.



- B** Copy the **hyperboles** below, and match each one with a less exaggerated phrase from the box.

is very small	felt tired	went very fast
have lots to do	were expensive	is very light

- 1 I couldn't keep my eyes open.
- 2 It went faster than the speed of light.
- 3 The tickets cost a fortune.
- 4 My new bike is as light as a feather.
- 5 She's as small as a mouse.
- 6 I have a million things to do.



## Punctuation

### Apostrophe of possession

Remember, **possessive nouns** tell you who or what **owns** something.

**Singular possessive nouns** have an **apostrophe** and an **s** at the end.

Hassanein Bey's wonderful account = the wonderful account belonging to Hassanein Bey

**Plural possessive nouns** that end in **s** have an **apostrophe** at the end.

the camels' breakfast = the breakfast belonging to the camels

**Plural possessive nouns** that do not end in **s** have an **apostrophe** and an **s** at the end.

the people's journey = the journey belonging to the people

**A** Write each **singular possessive noun** with an **apostrophe**.

- 1 the tent belonging to the writer
- 2 the strength belonging to the sandstorm
- 3 the coolness belonging to the breeze
- 4 the sails belonging to the boat
- 5 the ferocity belonging to the gale

**B** Write each **plural possessive noun** with an **apostrophe**.

- 1 the camp belonging to the travellers
- 2 the wheels belonging to the trucks
- 3 the glasses belonging to the men
- 4 the saddles belonging to the horses
- 5 the hooves belonging to the camels



**C** Use these **possessive nouns** in sentences of your own.

- 1 the desert's surface
- 2 the stars' light
- 3 the fire's heat

## Spelling

### ant, ent, ance and ence word endings

**Abstract nouns** name things that we cannot see or touch.



Many adjectives end with **ent** or **ant**.

obedi**ent**

These words can be made into abstract nouns by changing the **ent** endings to **ence**, and **ant** endings to **ance**.

It seems as though the whole surface of the desert were rising in **obedience** to some upthrusting force beneath.

**A** Add **ant** or **ent** to each of these words.

- |              |                |              |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 evid_____  | 2 import_____  | 3 relev_____ |
| 4 obedi_____ | 5 suffici_____ | 6 ignor_____ |
| 7 sil_____   | 8 dist_____    | 9 abs_____   |

**B** Copy these sentences, filling the gap with a word you have made from **Activity A**.

- 1 It is \_\_\_\_\_ to keep walking through a desert sandstorm.
- 2 I was \_\_\_\_\_ of the danger of sleeping through a sandstorm.
- 3 We hadn't packed \_\_\_\_\_ food for the journey.
- 4 We fell \_\_\_\_\_ as we became tired and hungry.
- 5 The nearest town was \_\_\_\_\_ and difficult to locate.

Check any spellings you are unsure of in a dictionary.



**C** Write the abstract noun associated with each of these adjectives.

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1 distant   | 2 abundant   |
| 3 different | 4 convenient |
| 5 absent    | 6 elegant    |



## Grammar

### Subject and object

Simple sentences have a **subject**, a **verb** and an **object**.

**Subjects** and **objects** can be nouns or pronouns.

**We** passed round **hot glasses of tea**.

**subject** **object**

**Pronouns** are words that can take the place of nouns.



The **subject** tells you who or what performs the **verb**.

**We** are passing round the tea.

The **object** tells you who or what is having something done to it.

The **hot glasses of tea** are being passed round.



**A** Find the **subject** in each sentence.

- 1 The travellers drank the tea.
- 2 Hassanein Bey wrote a book.
- 3 The camels ate dates.
- 4 The wind blew the sand about.
- 5 The storm destroyed the tents.

**B** Find the **object** in each sentence.

- 1 We came out of our tents.
- 2 The drivers looked after the camels.
- 3 Large pebbles struck the weary travellers.
- 4 The sandstorm hit the camp.
- 5 We had eaten all the food.

**C** Copy and finish each sentence by adding an **object** of your choice to each one.

- 1 The travellers put up \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The camels had \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The drivers drank \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Hassanein Bey wrote about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 The sand blew around \_\_\_\_\_.

## Writing

### Autobiography

An **autobiography** is someone's written account of his/her experiences. An autobiography is written in the first person.

In the extract on **pages 62 and 63**, the writer has imagined a journey across the Sahara Desert. He has written this account using an autobiographical style.

You are going to write an **autobiographical account** of a journey, real or imagined. Choose **one** of the activities.

1 Write an account of a real journey.

**a** Make notes about a real journey you have been on.

This could be:

- your journey to school
- a visit to a friend or relative
- travelling to live in a new area
- a school trip.

**b** Use your notes to write an autobiographical account of your journey. Tell the reader:

- what the journey was like
- how you felt on the journey.

Remember, you need to write in the first person using **I** or **We**.



2 Write an account of an imaginary journey.

**a** Imagine that you are a traveller in an exotic place.

This could be:



the Himalayas



the Amazon Rainforest



the Antarctic

Or you may have your own ideas!

**b** Use reference books or the Internet to research the place you have chosen. Make notes on the landscape and other details such as the weather and wildlife.

**c** Use your notes to write an account of your journey. Write in an autobiographical style so the reader can imagine exactly what it was like and how you felt.

Vocabulary

Hyperbole

**Hyperbole** means exaggeration. For example, it would be hyperbole to say:

I was so thirsty I could have drunk the river dry.

- A** Use each of these phrases in sentences of your own.

  - couldn't keep my eyes open
  - faster than the speed of light
  - cost a fortune

Punctuation

Apostrophe of possession

Remember **possessive nouns** tell you who or what **owns** something.

**Singular possessive nouns** have an **apostrophe** and an **s** at the end.

Hassanein Bey's wonderful account = the wonderful account belonging to Hassanein Bey

**Plural possessive nouns** that end in **s** have an **apostrophe** at the end.

the camels' breakfast = the breakfast belonging to the camels

**Plural possessive nouns** that do not end in **s**, have an **apostrophe** and an **s** at the end.

the people's journey = the journey belonging to the people



- A** Rewrite each phrase using an apostrophe. Then use each new phrase in a sentence.

  - the journey belonging to the traveller
  - the driver belonging to the truck

Spelling

ant ent ance and ence word endings

Many adjectives end with **ent** or **ant**.

obedient

These words can be made into abstract nouns by changing the **ent** endings to **ence**, and **ant** endings to **ance**.

obedience

- A** Complete this table with the correct **abstract nouns** and **adjectives**.

Adjectives	Abstract nouns
	independence
	evidence
ignorant	
absent	
	fragrance
	difference
elegant	
	assistance
innocent	
extravagant	
	obedience
	intelligence
consequent	

- B** Write a sentence using the words **assistant** and **assistance**.

**C** Write a sentence using the words **evident** and **evidence**.

## Grammar

### Subject and object

Simple sentences have a **subject**, a **verb** and an **object**.  
The subject tells you who or what performs the verb.  
The objects tells you who or what is having something done to it.  
Subjects and objects can be nouns or pronouns.

**Pronouns** are words that can take the place of nouns.



**subject**                      **object**

We passed round **hot glasses of tea**.



**A** Underline the **subject** of each sentence. Circle the **object**.

- 1 The sandstorm destroyed the camp.
- 2 My friends travelled across the desert.
- 3 The camels crunched the date stones.

**B** Use each of these words as a **subject** in a sentence of your own.

- 1 the sand \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 the camels \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 the storm \_\_\_\_\_

**C** Use each of the words in **Activity B** as the **object** in a sentence of your own.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing

### Autobiography

You are going to write an **autobiographical account** of a journey you have been on, real or imagined.

1 Decide which journey you want to write about.

This could be real:

- your journey to school ☐
- a visit to a friend or relative ☐
- travelling to live in a new area ☐
- a school trip ☐

Or imagined:

- space ☐
- the Amazon River and rainforest ☐
- the Antarctic ☐
- your own idea ☐

2 Make notes about the journey.

What journey did you make? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you travel from? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you travel to? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was with you? \_\_\_\_\_

How were you feeling at the beginning of your journey? Did you want to go?  
Were you worried about it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What happened on your journey? You could make something up. Did you get lost?  
Did the car/bus/train break down? Did you lose something?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How were you feeling during the journey? Were you interested in the scenery?  
Were you bored/tired/worried?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 Use your notes to write your **autobiographical account** in your exercise book.





Pupil Book Answers

Word Check

- A**
- |               |                               |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 refreshing  | b making them feel less tired |
| 2 stationary  | a not moving                  |
| 3 vision      | a sight                       |
| 4 suffocating | a unable to breathe           |
| 5 locate      | b find                        |
| 6 minimal     | a small amount of             |

- B**
- gradually strengthened: *slowly got stronger*
  - fade from view: *disappear/can no longer been seen*
  - the universe is filled: *the sand blocks out everything*
  - stumble on: *move forward slipping and falling*

Comprehension

- A**
- The writer was travelling across the **Sahara** Desert.
  - They travelled a distance of **twenty miles** on the first day.
  - Tea** was their main drink throughout the journey.
  - It is important to keep **moving** in a sandstorm.
  - They travelled through **three** sandstorms in **nine** days.

- B**
- The writer mentions that: 'Even when we were in trucks in later years, we would have to keep driving with no vision', indicating that he returned to the desert and travelled by truck.
  - Answers that suggest the sandstorms were worse at night because the travellers were taken by surprise and were often asleep when they hit.
  - Answers that suggest that sand and water are alike because both can weigh you down, and cover you and both can pose a risk to your safety.
  - Answers that suggest that to survive, the travellers needed to stay warm at night ('the fire') and to have something to drink ('the tea') so they were the only things that mattered.
  - Answers that suggest the sandstorms made it impossible for them to see anything and impossible to know exactly where they were.

- C**
- Individual answers.

Vocabulary

- A**
- Possible answers:
- The sun is very hot today.
  - I haven't seen you in a very long time.
  - I felt extremely cold.
  - I found it difficult to sleep.

- B**
- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 felt tired     | 2 went very fast  |
| 3 were expensive | 4 is very light   |
| 5 is very small  | 6 have lots to do |

Punctuation

- A**
- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 the writer's tent     | 2 the sandstorm's strength |
| 3 the breeze's coolness | 4 the boat's sails         |
| 5 the gale's ferocity   |                            |

- B**
- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 the travellers' camp | 2 the trucks' wheels  |
| 3 the men's glasses    | 4 the horses' saddles |
| 5 the camels' hooves   |                       |

- C**
- Possible answers:
- The desert's surface** moved as the wind blew.
  - The stars' light** helped us to see our way.
  - The fire's heat** kept us warm.

Spelling

- A**
- |            |              |            |
|------------|--------------|------------|
| 1 evident  | 2 important  | 3 relevant |
| 4 obedient | 5 sufficient | 6 ignorant |
| 7 silent   | 8 distant    | 9 absent   |

- B**
- It is **important** to keep walking through a desert sandstorm.
  - I was **ignorant** of the danger of sleeping through a sandstorm.
  - We hadn't packed **sufficient** food for the journey.
  - We fell **silent** as we became tired and hungry.
  - The nearest town was **distant** and difficult to locate.

- C**
- |               |             |              |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 distance    | 2 abundance | 3 difference |
| 4 convenience | 5 absence   | 6 elegance   |

Workbook Answers

Vocabulary

- A**
- Example answers:
- I was so tired after the flight that I **couldn't keep my eyes open**.
  - The winner in the track race **went faster than the speed of light**.
  - The new furniture **cost a fortune**.

Punctuation

- A**
- phrase:** the traveller's journey  
**possible sentence:** The traveller's journey was long and difficult.
  - phrase:** the truck's driver  
**possible sentence:** The truck's driver was cheerful in spite of the difficulties.

Spelling

Adjectives	Abstract nouns
independent	independence
evident	evidence
ignorant	ignorance
absent	absence
fragrant	fragrance
different	difference
elegant	elegance
assistant	assistance
innocent	innocence
extravagant	extravagance
obedient	obedience
intelligent	intelligence
consequent	consequence

- B**
- Example answer:  
The **assistant** at the shop gave the lady some **assistance** with her bags.
- C**
- Example answer:  
It soon became **evident** that all of the **evidence** had been lost.

Grammar

- A**
- The sandstorm destroyed the camp.
  - My friends travelled across the desert.
  - The camels crunched the date stones.

- B**
- Possible answers.
- The sand** covered the truck.
  - The camels** carried our bags.
  - The storm** swept away the tents.

- C**
- Possible answers.
- We were slowed down by **the sand**.
  - The driver guided **the camels**.
  - We took shelter from **the storm**.