

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: Read the passage. Then use the information from the passage to answer questions 1–5.*

## Camels of the Plant World

The cactus is the camel of the plant world. Like camels, cactuses (or cacti) live in the desert and can survive a long time on little water. Camels can be “prickly” animals, as cacti are prickly, and they are ugly.

Some people think that cacti are ugly, too, but others keep them in their homes. That is partly because cacti are easy to care for. But they can also be quite beautiful. They have flowers of all shapes and colors. These flowers can be white, red, purple, orange, or copper.

Cacti may be flowery, but they are not wimps like other houseplants. Cacti know how to take care of themselves. Your dog may knock over some plants. Your cat might try to eat others. But if they try anything with a cactus, they’ll get a pawful of needles.

The cactus is as American as apple pie. Many kinds of cacti grow only in the United States. But some can be found as far south as Chile. Others grow as far north as Canada. One kind can be found in Africa.

Cacti come in all shapes and sizes. The saguaro cacti found in Arizona, California, and Mexico can grow as tall as fifty feet. In the dark, they look like giant men with their arms held up.

Cacti can look like many things. One kind is like a big pincushion with pins sticking out. The fishhook cactus looks like a pile of fishhooks. Another group of cacti look like hedgehogs, or porcupines, covered with quills. Three kinds of cacti look like prickly pears.

Some cacti are very rare, and scientists worry that they may disappear. It is against the law to collect cacti in the wild. It is also against the law to harm them.

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**1. The passage says, “Cacti are not wimps like other houseplants.”**

**What does this mean?**

- Ⓐ Cacti are not good to eat.
- Ⓑ Cacti are not really houseplants.
- Ⓒ Cacti have beautiful flowers that people like.
- Ⓓ Cacti have needles to protect themselves.

**2. According to the passage, “The cactus is as American as apple pie” because \_\_\_\_\_.**

- Ⓐ many cacti grow only in the United States.
- Ⓑ many cacti have the same shape and color as apples
- Ⓒ cacti are sometimes used in pies
- Ⓓ cactus flowers are mostly red, white, and blue

**3. The author of this passage compares saguaro cacti to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- Ⓐ trees
- Ⓑ large men
- Ⓒ camels
- Ⓓ pincushions

**4. Why does the author of this passage say that the cactus is “the camel of the plant world”?**

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**5. Write a sentence from the passage that uses figurative language and tell what is being compared in the sentence.**

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