

Death Valley

Before you listen to this podcard, check the meaning of these words in your dictionary: **altitude, floods, absorb, slippery, gusts.**

Activity 1

Are these statements true or false? Correct the false statements.

1. Death Valley is more than 300 feet below the level of the sea.

2. In the winter the temperature is sometimes less than 0° centigrade.

3. Rome has more rain than New York.

4. London is wetter than Peking.

5. There is a golf course.

6. Furnace Creek has a natural water supply.

7. Racetrack Playa is a dry river.

Activity 2

What do these numbers refer to?:

* 86

* 57

* 1200

* 48

* 200



Activity 3

Listen and complete the gaps

Where is the lowest point in the _____ of North America? The place where the temperatures can get so high and where there is so little rain that it's extremely difficult for people to live? Why, Death Valley in California, of course!

This _____ place is 86 metres below sea level, or 282 feet if you prefer. Its low altitude means that the temperatures in the summer are often around 50° centigrade (130° Fahrenheit) during the day - certainly hot _____ to be very uncomfortable! However, in the winter the temperatures often go below _____. The highest temperature ever recorded in North America was in the valley at Furnace Creek - _____ is another word for 'oven' - you can understand how it got its name. In July 1913 the thermometer _____ 57°.

To give you some idea of how much rain falls here during the year, here are some _____ about other places in the world. The annual _____ in London is 750mm, in New York 1200mm, Baghdad 145mm, Rome 1000mm and Peking 620mm. Death Valley gets 48mm. That's not to say that the area doesn't have problems with _____ - when it does rain the ground is so hard and dry that it can't absorb the water so causing _____ flash-floods.

So, is it _____ visiting Death Valley? Yes, for sure. There are some really interesting things to see. Firstly you can visit the Devil's Golf Course. Obviously this isn't literal but if the Devil did play golf and had some _____ time at the weekend he would probably play here. It's an area of mud that has dried in such a way to create an incredibly _____ surface - impossible to play golf on. Next you can visit Furnace Creek - there's a spring here and a holiday _____ built around it. It's one of the few areas in the Death Valley area that supports plant life and attracts a lot of wild animals who come to drink.

To the north of the valley are the incredible Mesquite sand _____ which are over 200 metres high in some places. Anybody who has seen the Star Wars films will recognize these dunes - some of the scenes were filmed here. However, probably the most _____ thing to see is the Racetrack Playa. It's a dry lake which is famous for the stones which move, on their own, across the ground. Yes, you heard correctly. The stones sit on the ground and have _____ behind them which are left when they move. How does this happen? Well, experts have studied this strange event and seem to think that when it rains the ground becomes very _____. Then, if there are strong winds, the gusts can give the stones enough momentum to start moving. It happens only every few years but the trails they leave stay for some years too - it's really unusual to see.

Transcript

Where is the lowest point in the whole of North America? The place where the temperatures can get so high and where there is so little rain that it's extremely difficult for people to live? Why, Death Valley in California, of course!

This amazing place is 86 metres below sea level, or 282 feet if you prefer. Its low altitude means that the temperatures in the summer are often around 50° centigrade (130° Fahrenheit) during the day - certainly hot enough to be very uncomfortable! However, in the winter the temperatures often go below freezing. The highest temperature ever recorded in North America was in the valley at Furnace Creek - furnace is another word for 'oven' - you can understand how it got its name. In July 1913 the thermometer showed 57°.



To give you some idea of how much rain falls here during the year, here are some statistics about other places in the world. The annual rainfall in London is 750mm, in New York 1200mm, Baghdad 145mm, Rome 1000mm and Peking 620mm. Death Valley gets 48mm. That's not to say that the area doesn't have problems with floods - when it does rain the ground is so hard and dry that it can't absorb the water so causing dangerous flash-floods.

So, is it worth visiting Death Valley? Yes, for sure. There are some really interesting things to see. Firstly you can visit the Devil's Golf Course. Obviously this isn't literal but if the Devil did play golf and had some spare time at the weekend he would probably play here. It's an area of mud that has dried in such a way to create an incredibly uneven surface - impossible to play golf on. Next you can visit Furnace Creek - there's a spring here and a holiday village built around it. It's one of the few areas in the Death Valley area that supports plant life and attracts a lot of wild animals who come to drink.

To the north of the valley are the incredible Mesquite sand dunes which are over 200 metres high in some places. Anybody who has seen the Star Wars films will recognize these dunes - some of the scenes were filmed here. However, probably the most fascinating thing to see is the Racetrack Playa. It's a dry lake which is famous for the stones which move, on their own, across the ground. Yes, you heard correctly. The stones sit on the ground and have trails behind them which are left when they move. How does this happen? Well, experts have studied this strange event and seem to think that when it rains the ground becomes very slippery. Then, if there are strong winds, the gusts can give the stones enough momentum to start moving. It happens only every few years but the trails they leave stay for some years too - it's really unusual to see.