Farming in the Australian desert.

It can be difficult to make a living from farming in the Australian desert. As soils are infertile and poor, the grazing of livestock is very important in the semi-arid grasslands around the Australian desert. Water is only available in a few places and the grass can be thin, this means that only low densities of cattle or sheep can be kept. Huge international/multinational companies run vast cattle stations (farms) in Australia; some of these stations are the size of Wales! Recent droughts in the Australian desert have prompted many to wonder whether farming here is sustainable.

Think about:

- Are there jobs for local people?
- Where does money made by farms go?
- Do cattle thrive here?
Mining in the Australian desert.

Mining in the Australian desert began as early as the 1860s. The world’s largest reserves of quality iron ore, silver, and gems are found here. Most people in the Australian desert work in mining. Cooper Pedy is the world’s leading producer of mined opals (an opal is a precious gemstone). Most of Australia’s iron ore is sold to China. The world’s three largest mining companies control 80% of the iron ore mining. Some of the mining operations have a negative impact on the environment, but mining provides many jobs for local people and supports Australia’s economy.

Think about:

- Are there jobs for local people?
- What are the impacts on the Australian economy?
- What are the consequences of mining on the environment?

The Kanowna Belle gold mine.
Tourism in the Australian desert.

Tourism in Australia is worth $94.8 million a day to the Australian economy. The desert environments fascinate visitors and they come to see the geology, wildflowers, ancient vegetation, the indigenous inhabitants, oases and the protected areas. Many visitors go on organised desert treks to see the sights. A famous attraction is Uluru, a huge red sandstone rock in the desert, which is of great significance to the indigenous people. The area around Uluru is very fragile but the numbers of tourists have risen from 5000 in 1961 to 400000 in 2005, which puts further pressure on the environment. More recently though, numbers of tourists have fallen. Tourism brings benefits to local people when they buy aboriginal crafts and art. However, tourism also brings problems. The aboriginal culture is often exploited and adapted to provide entertainment. The local Anangu people have no role in the managing and development of the main tourist resort near to Uluru.

Think about:

- What attracts tourists to the desert areas?
- What impact do the tourists have on the desert environment and people who live in these areas?

Uluru
Retirement in the Australian desert.

There are some retirement villages in the Australian desert. The warmth, the lack of rain and the open spaces attracts older people to live here. Warm dry climates provide a welcome relief from aching bones and joints due to arthritis (which is what many old people suffer from). Also, the clean, unpolluted air of the big Australian desert is good for old people with respiratory diseases. However, retiring to one of these resorts can be relatively expensive and so it is not an option for all.

Think about:

- How do these elderly people contribute to the local economy?
- Do they have any impacts on the environment or people living in the area?
Hunting and gathering in the Australian desert.

Australia’s aboriginal people have traditionally survived by hunting and gathering. This means finding edible plants and animals in the desert.

They created the conditions in which the edible grubs live and breed, and they built dams across rivers to catch fish and to make pools where birds would gather. They also used fire to drive out animals for hunting, to clear wood, and to allow grass to grow. As a result, fire-tolerant plants (eucalyptus trees) came to dominate the landscape. The aboriginal people lived in harmony with their environment for many thousands of years. Australia now has a growing ‘native food’ industry, based on traditional aboriginal knowledge of what is edible in the outback.

Think about:

- How does hunting and gathering affect the desert environment?
- What impact does it have on the environment/other local people/economy?
- How has it been affected by more modern developments/people in the desert areas?
### Development opportunities in the Australian desert

#### Farming

**Details:**

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**Your opinions:**

Is farming in the Australian desert a good thing?

**Justify your view:**
Development opportunities in the Australian desert

### Mining

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**Your opinions:**

Is mining in the Australian desert a good thing?

**Justify your view:**
## Tourism

### Details:

### Positives:  

### Negatives:

### Your opinions:

Is tourism in the Australian desert a good thing?

### Justify your view:
## Retirement

### Details:

### Positives:  |  Negatives:

### Your opinions:

Is retirement to the Australian desert a good thing?

### Justify your view:
## Hunting and gathering

**Details:**

**Positives:**

**Negatives:**

**Your opinions:**

Is hunting and gathering in the Australian desert a good thing?

**Justify your view:**
### Development opportunities in the Australian desert

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