

# Watermelons Quench the Great Thirst

## Climate Zones of the World

Middle School Geography

**Objective:** Identify different climate zones

**Materials:**

- Political maps of Africa
- Watermelon (set in front of class)
- Reference books and Web-based research tools (optional for Extension)

**Introduction:**

Watermelon is a delicious and healthy food that many people in the U.S. enjoy. The origin of the watermelon, however, traces back to the southern part of Africa. In 1850, explorer David Livingston found wild watermelons growing in the Kalahari Desert. The Kalahari Desert is a semi-arid area that covers 70% of Botswana, parts of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.

*Kalahari is derived from the Tswana word "Kgalagadi", meaning, "the great thirst". It is the ancestral land of the Bushmen, nomadic hunter-gatherers, who are thought to be the first inhabitants of southern Africa.*

1. Locate Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, and the Kalahari Desert on your map.

**Climate means the average weather conditions of a specific area.**

*The earth has many different climate zones. Climatologists organize similar types of climates into groups, based on a region's vegetation and weather.*

2. Try to imagine the Kalahari Desert climate. Write your description below.

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*The Kalahari Desert is a semi-arid area. (Semi-arid and desert climates occur in regions that have little or no rainfall. The temperature changes drastically from morning to evening.) The Kalahari Desert has vast areas of red-brown sand and no permanent surface water. It is not really a desert though because it receives over 250 mm of rainfall annually and has vegetation in some parts.*

3. Locate Egypt on your map.

*The first recorded watermelon harvest occurred nearly 5,000 years ago in Egypt and was actually depicted in hieroglyphics.*

4. Try to describe the climate of Egypt. Write your description below.

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*Egypt is a desert climate. (Semi-arid and desert climates are similar except desert climates are drier.)*

**Extension:**

Use reference books to identify the climate of where you live. Compare and contrast with the Kalahari Desert and Egypt. Research other climate zones of the world.

