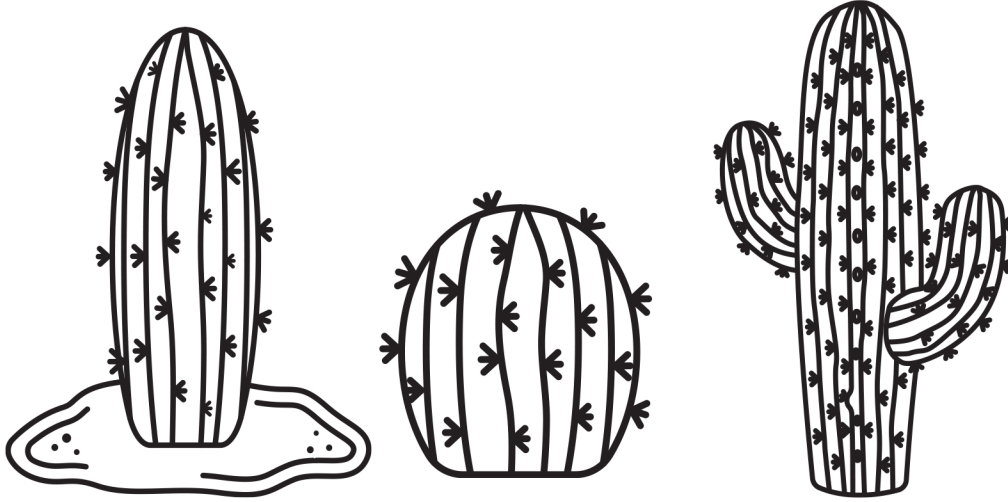


**Word Bank:**

pleats

expands

waxy

rain

How a Cactus Stores Water

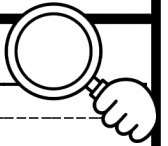
A cactus doesn't have a river or a hose, so how does it survive months without rain? A cactus's thick stem works like a water tank. When rain does fall, the cactus soaks up as much water as it can and stores it inside its stem. The folds on the outside of the stem, called pleats or ribs, work like an accordion. They let the stem expand, or swell up, as it fills with water. As the cactus slowly uses its stored water during dry weeks, the stem contracts, or shrinks back down. A waxy layer on the outside of the cactus helps keep that stored water from evaporating in the hot sun. Together, these parts let a cactus survive in one of the driest places on Earth.

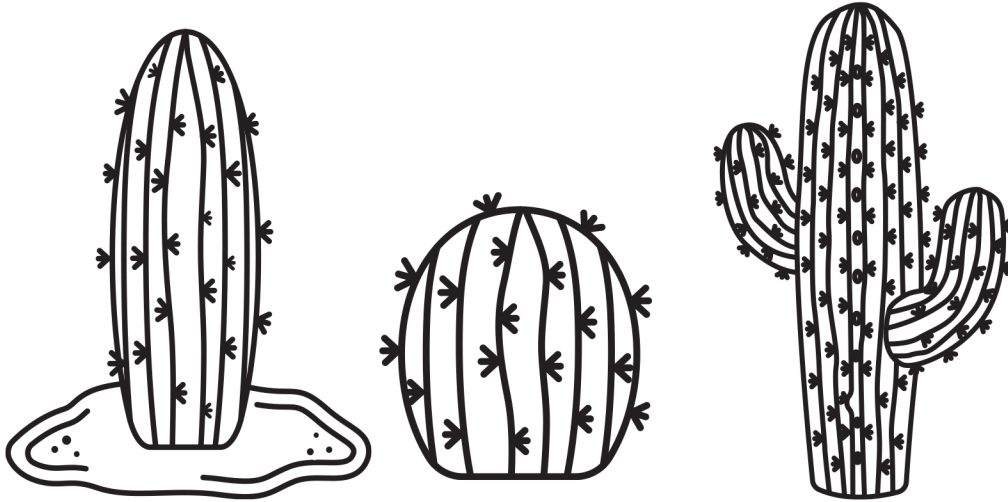
1. What does a cactus's thick stem act like?

2. What are the folds on a cactus stem called?

3. What happens to the stem when it fills with water?

4. What does the waxy layer on a cactus do?



**Word Bank:**

pleats
expands
waxy
rain

How a Cactus Stores Water

A cactus doesn't have a river or a hose, so how does it survive months without rain? A cactus's thick stem works like a water tank. When rain does fall, the cactus soaks up as much water as it can and stores it inside its stem. The folds on the outside of the stem, called pleats or ribs, work like an accordion. They let the stem expand, or swell up, as it fills with water. As the cactus slowly uses its stored water during dry weeks, the stem contracts, or shrinks back down. A waxy layer on the outside of the cactus helps keep that stored water from evaporating in the hot sun. Together, these parts let a cactus survive in one of the driest places on Earth.

1. What does a cactus's thick stem act like?

A water tank.

2. What are the folds on a cactus stem called?

Pleats or ribs.

3. What happens to the stem when it fills with water?

It expands, or swells up.

4. What does the waxy layer on a cactus do?

It keeps the stored water from evaporating in the sun.

