

Name: _____

Date: _____

Complete the passage by filling in the blank with the most appropriate sentence.

1. Desertification is a gradual form of land degradation that turns fertile land into arid desert through a combination of natural processes and human activities. Its immediate cause is the loss of most vegetation, driven — alone or in combination — by drought, climatic shifts, tillage for agriculture, overgrazing and deforestation for fuel or construction materials. ---- Unprotected dry soil surfaces then blow away with the wind or are washed away by flash floods, leaving infertile lower layers that bake in the sun and harden into an unproductive crust.

- A)** Methods of slowing or reversing the process are already well understood, and they include improving soil quality, managing grazing more carefully and planting trees on a large scale.
- B)** At least ninety per cent of the inhabitants of drylands live in developing countries, where they must also contend with poor economic conditions and limited access to opportunity.
- C)** Vegetation shapes the biological composition of the soil, but its protective role matters more: studies show that in many environments the rate of erosion and runoff falls sharply as plant cover increases.
- D)** Because the roots of these plants go on binding the surface long after the cover above them has disappeared, measured rates of erosion remain very largely unchanged.
- E)** The regions most severely affected nevertheless lie in the Sahel region of Africa, in the Gobi Desert and Mongolia, and in certain parts of South America.

2. Decolonization is the ending of colonialism, the latter being the process by which imperial nations establish and dominate foreign territories, often overseas. The meanings and applications of the term are disputed. ---- As a movement to win independence for colonized territories from their respective metropolises, decolonization began in 1775 with the American Revolution against the British Empire, and continued through the Napoleonic Wars, when the French, Spanish and Portuguese empires faced the Haitian Revolution, the Spanish American wars of independence and the independence of Brazil.

- A)** Historians have now largely settled the question of where the term should begin and of what exactly it ought to be taken to cover in practice.
- B)** The economic consequences of imperial rule went on shaping many of these societies for decades after formal independence had finally been granted to them.
- C)** Seventeen territories nevertheless remain on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories, and the position of each is reviewed by the organisation every year.
- D)** Some scholars of the subject focus in particular on independence movements inside the colonies themselves and on the resulting collapse of the global colonial empires.
- E)** The Napoleonic Wars of the nineteenth century weakened almost every European power that still held substantial overseas possessions at the time they broke out.