

More do not sweat so
much as other



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

More than 3,000 years ago an ungainly but useful desert animal was domesticated in Arabia. It was the Arabian camel, a long-legged beast without a large hump on its back. It could cross hot deserts without needing much water, and it could carry heavy loads without tiring. The two-humped Bactrian camel of central Asia was also domesticated long ago. It is sturdier than the Arabian and can carry heavier loads.

During the winter, its brownish hair is thick and long for protection from the cold nights. It sheds its hair in patches in the spring, as the weather warms up. Camels are hornless hoofed mammals. Their hoofs are like leathery pads.

Their toes spread apart when they walk on sand or snow. Camels are called "ships of the desert" because they sway from side to side when they walk and carry loads. Some camels are trained for riding.

They kneel to allow riders to mount. A camel saddle must fit over the large single hump or between the two smaller humps. A special breed of Arabian camel, the dromedary, has been developed for riding and racing. It has longer legs and weighs less than a regular "baggage" camel. It can run at speeds up to 10 miles per hour. A camel's hump is a large deposit of fat.

The camel's body uses the fat as food when plant food is not available during long desert treks. Water is not stored in the hump. Camels do not sweat so much as other mammals. They store water in the body tissues and in pouches in the stomach, and use it very slowly. Tests have shown that a camel can lose up to a quarter of its body weight in fluids, without suffering any ill effects. Camels are still used by nomadic people of northern Africa and Asia. Camels carry loads where cars and trucks cannot go.

They are also useful for their hides, hair, bones, meat, and milk. A soft fabric can be woven from their hair. There are camel-like animals in South Africa. Relatives of the camel are important to the Indians of the Andes. The llama was domesticated long ago as a beast of burden. The Inca Indians used it to carry metal ores from mines in the mountains.

It has long white or brown hair. The dark-colored alpaca has even longer hair, which is exported all over the world and made into fabric. The wool worn by Inca kings was woven from the very soft, fine hair of the wild vicuña. The guanaco is the tallest of the South American camel-like animals. The hair of the guanaco is too stiff to be useful.