Bedouins are nomadic people who inhabit the Middle East and North Africa. Bedouin is an Arabic word that means “desert dweller.” Like the plants and animals, the Bedouin have adapted their lifestyle to the severe desert climate. They use their extensive knowledge of the location of water and seasonal weather changes to survive.

Traditionally, the Bedouin prefer to herd animals such as camels, sheep, and goats. They generally travel in extended family units called goums. A goam is headed by a sheik, a position handed down from father to eldest son. Many Bedouins live in tents. The tents allow the Bedouins to move easily. Almost all of the Bedouins are Muslims who speak Arabic.

Severe droughts in the region have forced many Bedouins to give up herding and take traditional jobs. The oil wealth of many nations of the Middle East and North Africa has provided economic opportunities for the Bedouin. The wealth derived from oil provides social services that would not be available to people living a nomadic lifestyle. It is estimated that about 2.5 million people continue to practice the traditional Bedouin lifestyle, but the population of people following the traditional Bedouin lifestyle continues to dwindle as they are offered better opportunities.

Fill in the Blanks
Bedouins are n_________ people of the Middle East and North Africa who have a_________ to the severe c_________ of the d_________. They use their extensive k_________ of the l_________ of w_________ and s_________ weather c_________ to s_________. The Bedouin generally prefer herding c_________, sheep, and g_________ to *f_________. They generally live with their extended f_________ and are led by s_________. The Bedouin have traditionally lived in t_________ so they can m________ easily. The traditional B_________ lifestyle is slowly *d_________ as o____ wealth and strong g_________ evolve in the M_________ East and North A_________. Almost all of the B_________ are M_________ who speak A_________. The B_________ comprise a small m_________ of the people of the Middle East and North Africa, but they live across a w______ area of l______.

1. What does bedouin mean?

2. Explain how the Bedouins have adapted to the environment of the desert.

3. Why do you think the population of Bedouins following their traditional lifestyle is slowly decreasing in the Middle East and North Africa?

* A higher order learning question. I will accept any reasonable answer.

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