

Year 4 Polar Regions- Autumn Term

VOCABULARY

glacier	A large body of ice
Inuit	The people who have always lived in the Arctic regions
Arctic	The regions around the North Pole
Antarctic	The regions around the South Pole
iceberg	A large floating mass of ice that has broken away from a glacier
ice sheet	A thick sheet of ice covering a large area
ice cap	An ice sheet that covers less than 50,000 km ² of land
sea ice	A thin layer of frozen sea water
tundra	An area where the ground is nearly always frozen
global warming	A gradual increase of the earth's temperature
pole	The North and South Poles are the most North and South points of the Earth.
expedition	An exploratory journey undertaken by a group of people.
continent	The main continuous expanses of land in the world
climate	The usual weather conditions of a place
biomes	An area providing a specific habitat

The Arctic and the Antarctic

The Arctic region is found in the Northern Hemisphere. It includes parts of Alaska, Russia, Finland, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Greenland and Iceland. It is one of the coldest places on Earth, reaching -68°C!

The Antarctic region is found in the Southern Hemisphere. It is the fifth largest continent in the world and it is the coldest, driest, highest and windiest continent. Temperatures reach -89°C!

Tundra

The tundra is a biome covering the coldest areas of the world, where the ground is made up of permanently frozen soil. It is very hard for trees to grow (as the roots cannot reach down into the ground), but grasses, lichen and small shrubs can grow as the very top of the soil thaws in the summer.

Day and Night

Both the Arctic and Antarctic have long nights in the winter and long days in the summer. They both also experience a polar night (a period where night lasts more than 24 hours) and polar day (a period where the Sun remains above the horizon for longer than 24 hours).

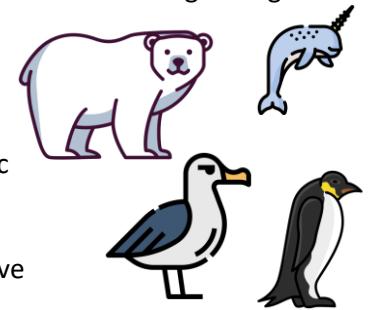


Fun fact! The narwhal is known as the 'unicorn of the sea', as it has a straight tusk projecting from the front of its head that can be over 3m long!

Animals in the Arctic and Antarctic

Animals must adapt to stay warm, These adaptations include having a thick layer of fat, burrowing into the ground and hibernating during the coldest months.

Animals such as polar bears, arctic foxes and narwhals live in the Arctic region.



There are fewer living things in the Antarctic as the conditions are much harsher due to climate change. Animals such as penguins, whales and albatrosses live here.

Inuit People

Despite the cold, around four million people live in the Arctic. Many of these are Inuit, who are indigenous to the Arctic. Many indigenous people rely on local wildlife, such as fish and reindeer, as the main part of their diet.



Shackleton

Ernest Shackleton is considered to be one of the most inspirational explorers of the 20th Century. He is best known for leading the 'Endurance' expedition to the Antarctic in 1914-16.



Key Questions

Where are the polar regions and what makes them special?

How do animals and people survive in such extreme environments?

How are the polar regions changing and why does it matter?

Who has explored the polar regions and what did they discover?