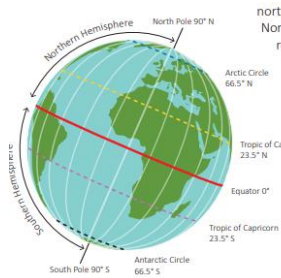


Frozen kingdoms



The Earth has two polar regions: the Arctic Circle in the Northern Hemisphere and the Antarctic Circle in the Southern Hemisphere.

Polar regions have long, cold winters and temperatures mostly below freezing. The weather can be very windy with little precipitation.

Vocabulary

Antarctic circle	An imaginary circle of latitude that lies 66.5 south of the equator. Everything south of this line is known as the Antarctic.
Arctic circle	An imaginary circle of latitude that lies 66.5 north of the equator. Everything north of this line is known as the Arctic.
Climate	The usual weather conditions that occur in a place over a long period of time.
Horizon	The line where the sky appears to meet the Earth.
Indigenous	Occurring naturally or originating in a particular phase.
Native	Referring to the animals and plants that occur naturally in a place.

Arctic

The Arctic region consists of the Arctic Ocean and the northern parts of Canada, Alaska, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Greenland and Iceland. Winter temperatures can reach -55°C and summer temperatures can reach 10°C . The Arctic region has a varied landscape including mountains, tundra and boreal forest. It is home to small populations of people and an amazing variety of plants and animals including the polar bear, Arctic fox, Arctic hare and walrus.



Much of the polar regions is covered with snow and ice all year round. Polar landscape features include **glaciers**, **ice fields** and **icebergs**.

Natural resources

Natural resources in the Arctic include oil, gas, minerals, metals, fish, wood and freshwater. They are used for fuel, food and to sell to other countries. However, many of the resources have not yet been touched as they are difficult to extract.

Antarctica

Antarctica is the world's fifth-largest continent and is covered in an ice sheet that is up to 4800m thick. It is the coldest, driest, highest and windiest continent on Earth. Temperatures can drop to -80°C , there is little precipitation, and wind speeds can reach 80km per hour. There are only two native species of flowering plants in Antarctica, but there is a rich sea life, including the emperor penguin, humpback whale and leopard seal. No people live permanently in the Antarctic. However, scientists stay for part of the year to carry out research and tourists visit in the summer months to see the landscape and wildlife.

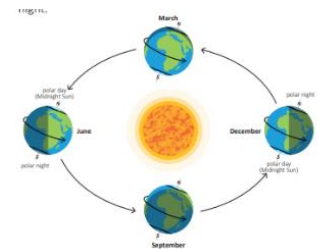


emperor penguin



humpback whale

Due to the tilt of the Earth, the poles experience nearly 24 hours of daylight during the summer months. This is called polar day, or Midnight Sun. In the winter, the poles experience nearly 24 hours of darkness. This is called polar night.



Indigenous people

The indigenous peoples of the Arctic have inhabited the area for thousands of years. In the past, they adapted to the cold, harsh conditions by hunting and eating animals native to the area, such as seals, whales and walrus, and using reindeer skins to keep warm. Today, many indigenous peoples live in permanent settlements and have a modern lifestyle, but some still follow the traditional way of life.