

Arctic and Antarctic

Key Facts



The Arctic

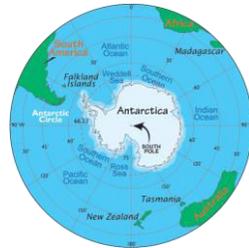
The Arctic is an area of frozen sea and land around the North Pole. It is made up of the Arctic Ocean, parts of Alaska (United States), Finland, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Northern Canada, Norway, Russia and Sweden. Fringing the top of the northern continents lies a vast, treeless plain dotted with lakes: the Arctic tundra. The Arctic region receives little sunlight.

Winters are long and dark, with little snowfall, and the soil is deep-frozen all year. Plants need to be tough and low-growing, and they include mosses and lichens. North of the tundra lies the Arctic Ocean. The waters surrounding the North Pole are covered with sea ice, which spreads and retreats with the changing seasons. Though the climate is hostile, the Arctic region is rich in insect, mammal, fish, and bird life.

The Antarctic

Antarctica is a continent surrounded by the Southern Ocean. It is the driest and coldest continent on the Earth. Antarctica is the fifth largest continent based on its size but is the smallest in population. Antarctica has no countries and has no one living there permanently. It is a protected place of scientific and environmental research. Antarctica is an icebound continent surrounding the South Pole. The ice forms glaciers that shed mighty icebergs into the Southern Ocean.

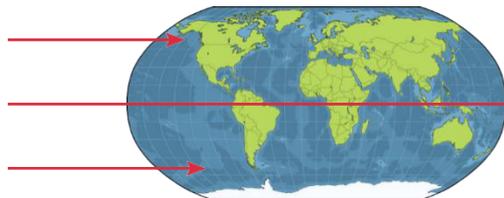
Like the Arctic, Antarctica receives little sunlight: the Sun does not rise at all between late March and September. Even in summer, 85 per cent of the Sun's heat is reflected by the ice. So little snow falls each year that the mainland is effectively a cold desert where few animals can survive. But the waters are rich in nutrients, and both the ocean and its remote island groups teem with wildlife.



Northern Hemisphere

Equator

Southern Hemisphere



By the end of the topic you will learn:

- To identify the key features of the tropics and of the Arctic and Antarctic circles
- To locate the Tropic of Cancer, Tropic of Capricorn, Arctic Circle, Antarctic Circle, the Northern and Southern Hemisphere on a world map/
- To use geographical words correctly to describe geographical features of the Arctic and Antarctic.
- To explain how time zones work and calculate time differences between the UK and the Antarctic
- To Identify the position and significance of the Prime Meridian/Greenwich mean time
- To Identify the key human and physical features of the Arctic and Antarctic circles
- To compare the key geographical features of the Arctic with those of the Antarctic.
- To discuss the Weather and Climate; Population; Settlement; Seasonal change; Animal and plant life of the Arctic and Antarctic

Key Vocabulary

Tropic of Cancer and Capricorn	The Tropic of Cancer (northern tropic) and the Tropic of Capricorn (southern tropic) mark the most northerly and southerly positions that the sun can be over head
Arctic Circle	The Arctic Circle is a line of latitude, which is an imaginary horizontal line around the Earth.
Northern and Southern Hemisphere	A half of the earth, usually divided by the equator into the northern and southern hemisphere
Tundra	A vast, flat treeless area over the Arctic
Glaciers.	A body of dense ice that moves under its own weight
Climate	The typical long-term weather conditions for a significant area.
Biodiversity	The number and variety of plants, animals and other organisms that exist in a specific area.
Arctic Tree Line	The most northerly point at which trees and plants can grow.
Permafrost	Frozen soil, rock or sediment.
Weather.	The daily conditions of the atmosphere over a local area
Prime Meridian	The Prime Meridian (PM) line divides the earth into the eastern and western hemisphere.
Greenwich Mean Time	All time zones start here
Biomes	A biome is an area of the planet that can be classified according to the plants and animals that live in it.
Vegetation Belts	Plant life as a whole within a certain area.
Population	All the inhabitants of a particular place.
Settlement	A settlement is a place where people live. Settlements can be as small as a single house in a remote area or as large as a mega city
Seasonal change	The change from winter to spring, spring to summer, etc.

