

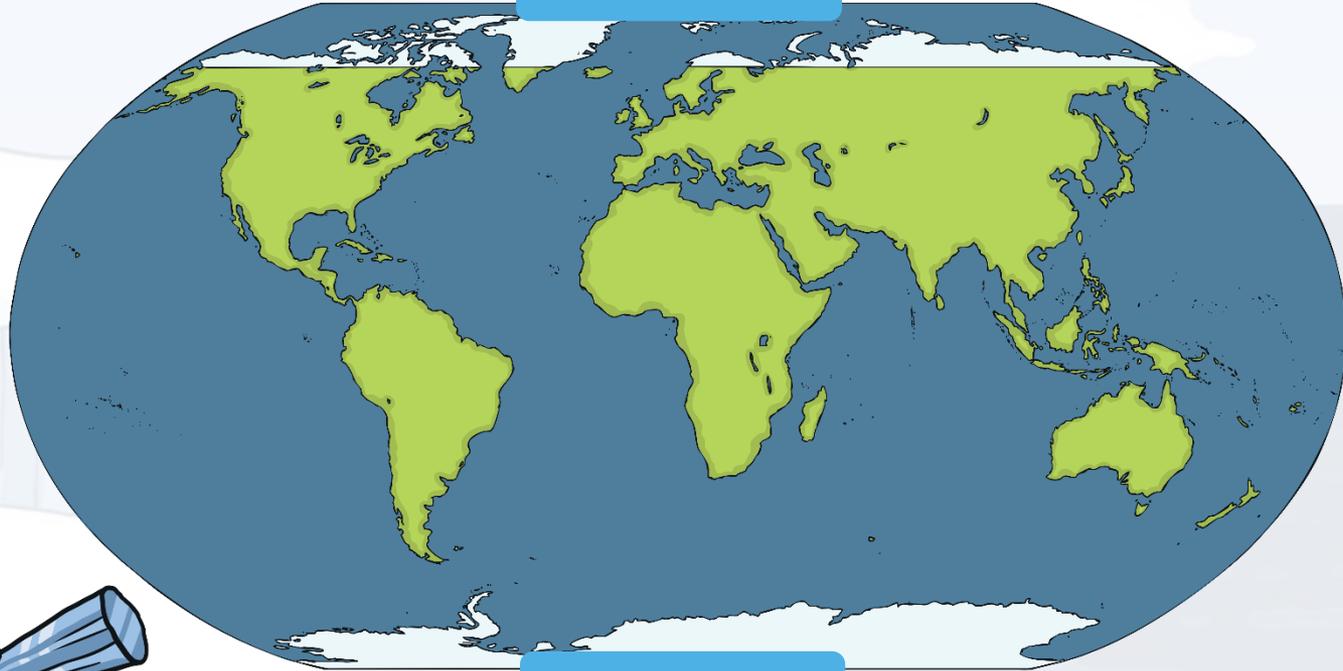
Comparing the Polar Regions

We have looked at Rainforests and today we will look at The North and South Poles, called 'The Polar Regions.'

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Where Are the Polar Regions?

The Arctic



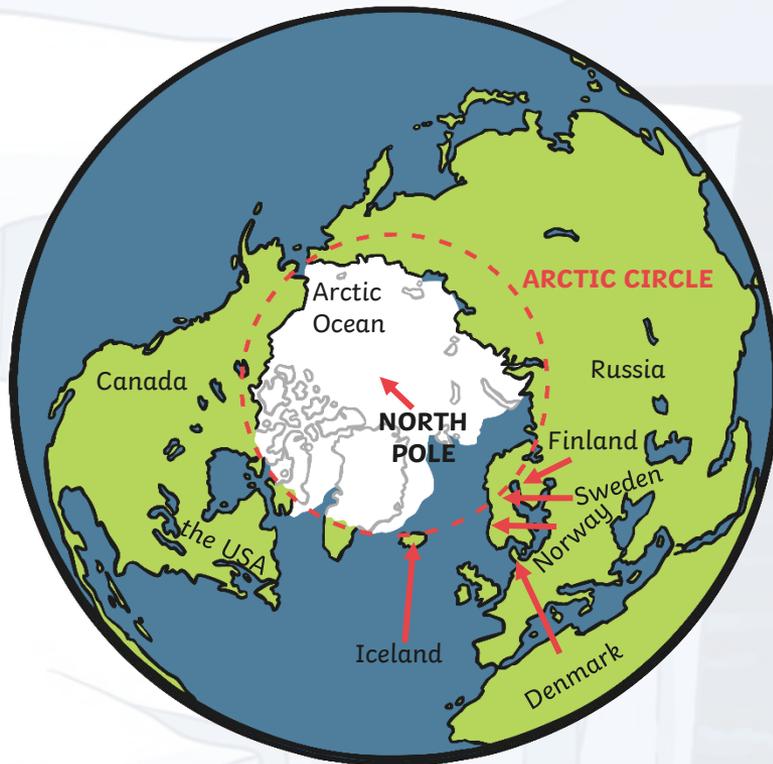
Antarctica

Do you recognise any other places on the map?



The Arctic

The Arctic is at the very top of the Earth. It includes the areas around the North Pole. The Arctic isn't a country or a continent. It is actually mostly a frozen ocean.



The Arctic includes parts of lots of different countries. These include Norway, Finland, Sweden, Russia, the USA, Canada, Denmark and Iceland. It also includes the Arctic Ocean.

This whole area is known as the **Arctic Circle**.

Antarctica

Antarctica is at the bottom of the Earth. It includes the areas around the South Pole. Unlike the Arctic, Antarctica is actually a continent. This is because Antarctica is an area of land, covered in ice.



Antarctica isn't officially owned by anyone, so it is not called a country. It has no government and no towns or cities.

Climate in the Arctic

The Arctic only has two seasons. It has long, cold winters and short, cool summers. The winters last for about 8 months.



In the winter, the sun is so far away from the Arctic that it doesn't rise at all. This means it can be cold and dark for months.



The average temperatures in the Arctic range from about 12°C in the summer to about -34°C in the winter.

What do you think it would be like if you didn't see the sun for months?

Climate in Antarctica

Antarctica is the coldest and windiest place on Earth. The lowest temperature ever recorded here was -89°C ! The average temperatures range from about 10°C in the summer to -60°C in the winter. Antarctica's winter also lasts for 8 months.



What do you think -89°C would feel like?

Physical Features in the Arctic

There are lots of different physical features in the Arctic. These include:

mountains



fjords



islands



plateaus



Physical Features in Antarctica

There are lots of different physical features in Antarctica. These include:

valleys



glaciers



seas



mountains



...and even volcanoes! There are 138 volcanoes in Antarctica. However, only two of them are currently active. The most active is called Mount Erebus and it has been active for about 1.3 million years.

Humans in the Arctic

People have lived in the Arctic for thousands of years. Only about 4 million people live and work in the Arctic at the moment (for comparison, there are 66 million in the UK).

In the winter, it can get so cold that it's too dangerous to go outside without special clothing and equipment. Strong storms and blizzards can make travel very difficult and heating a home can be expensive without trees for a fire.

Mining for oil and gas, and fishing are important activities in the Arctic.



"Sisimiut winter houses" by Greenland Travel is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)



What do you think it would be like to live in the Arctic?

Humans in Antarctica

No people permanently live in Antarctica because it is too cold for them to live there for a long time. Scientists take turns living there for short periods of time to study the ice and the animals. Tourists also sometimes visit in the summer. There are no towns or cities in Antarctica.

research stations for
scientists to work in



"Esperanza Station anta0060" by NOAA Photo Library is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

an Antarctic cruise ship



"Whalers Bay Deception Island Antarctica Fur Seal Silversea Silver Cloud 3" by Gary Bembridge is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

a weather experiment



"Iceberg B-15A weather instrument" by NSF/Josh Landis, employee 1999-2001 is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

What do you think it would be like to live in Antarctica?

Quick Facts About the Arctic

There are about 10 cities in the Arctic.

Travel in the Arctic relies on icebreakers. Icebreakers are giant powerful ships which break up miles of sea ice, sometimes metres thick.



The Arctic Ocean is larger than the continent of Europe, but it is the smallest ocean in the world.

In 1958, a submarine called the USS Nautilus sailed under the frozen ice of the Arctic Ocean. This was proof that the Arctic ice sits on water and not on land.

There are no penguins in the Arctic.

Grey whales travel 12,500 miles every year from the Arctic to Mexico during the winter.



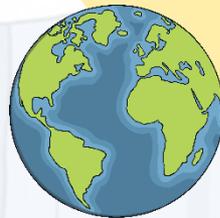
Quick Facts About Antarctica

Antarctica is the fifth-largest continent in the world and is about 50 times the size of the UK.

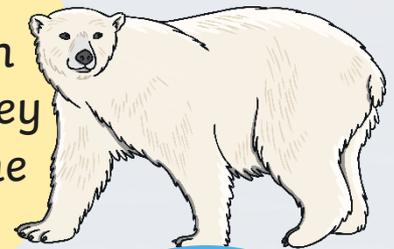
70% of Earth's freshwater and 90% of its ice is in Antarctica.



Antarctica is the only continent without any reptiles.



There are no polar bears in Antarctica. They only live in the Arctic.



The largest recorded iceberg in Antarctica was bigger than the size of Jamaica!



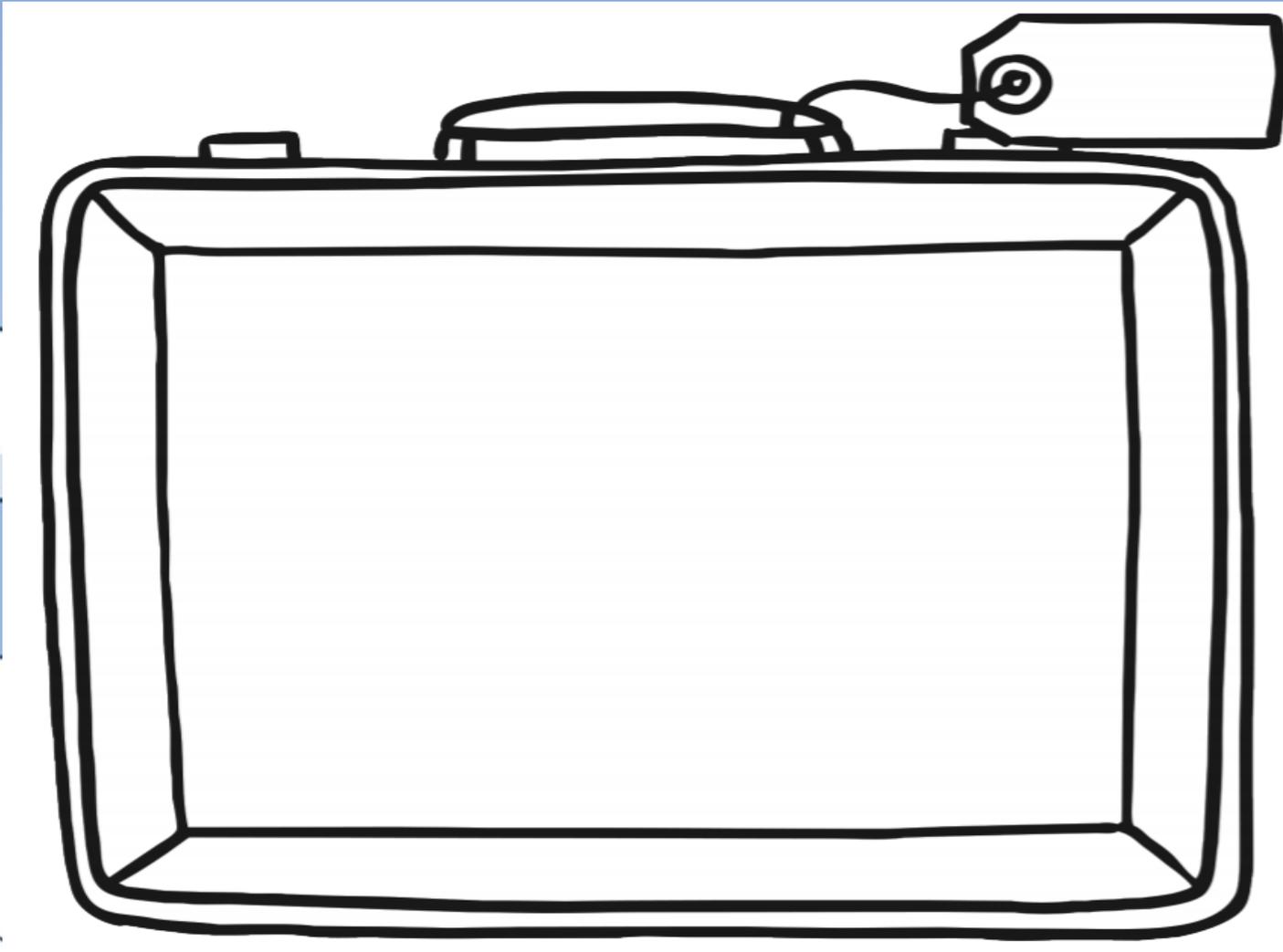
Antarctica is one of the few places on Earth where you won't find any ants.



Antarctica is called a desert. This is because it has very little rain.



What would you pack if you were going to visit the polar regions?



What do you know notice about the polars regions in comparison to the equator? Why do you think the polar regions are so cold?