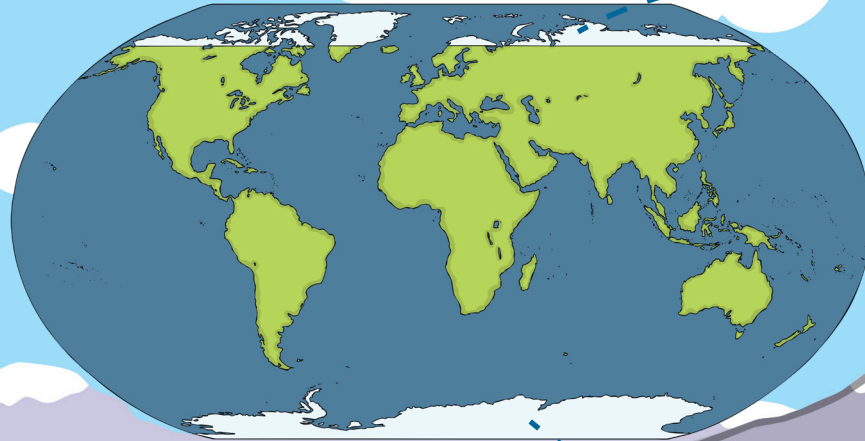


What Are the Polar Regions?

The polar regions are the areas around the North Pole and the South Pole.



The area around the North Pole is called the Arctic.

The area around the South Pole is called Antarctica.

This ship is sailing through the frozen ocean.



The weather in the polar regions is usually very cold and dry. The land and sea are often covered by ice caps, as well as large areas of frozen ground.

The Arctic

The Arctic is located at the very top of Earth. The area is known as the Arctic Circle.

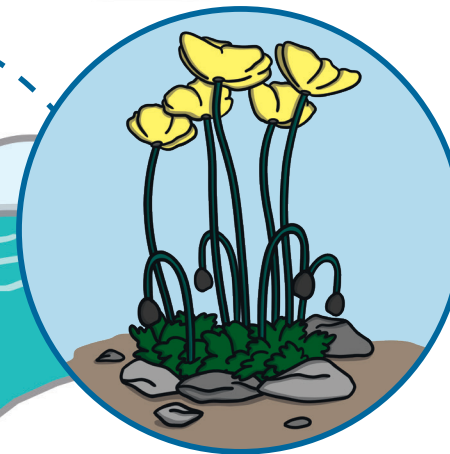


Most of the Arctic is a frozen ocean.

At least one day a year, the Arctic has a whole day of darkness.

The Arctic has two seasons – winter and summer.

During the summer, some parts of the Arctic grow small, brightly coloured plants. They have short stems so they can stay close to the ground to protect themselves from the strong, cold wind.



Antarctica

You can find Antarctica at the bottom of the Earth. This is the area around the South Pole. Antarctica is a continent because it is an area of land, covered in ice.

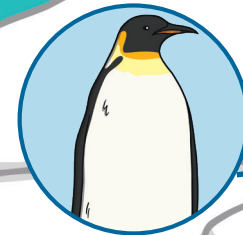
No one lives in Antarctica because it is too cold. It has no towns or cities.

Scientists visit there for short amounts of time to study the ice and the animals.

Antarctica is known as the coldest and windiest place on Earth. Over 98% of Antarctica is permanently covered in ice because it is so cold!

There are 138 volcanoes in Antarctica but only 2 are active.

Mountains in Antarctica



Animals in the Arctic

The Arctic is home to many interesting animals.

Arctic Fox

Arctic foxes have white fur in the winter so that they are camouflaged against the snow.



They make burrows underground to help them to keep warm.

Polar Bear



A polar bear has thick fur. It even has fur on its paws to help to keep them warm and grip the ice.

Polar bears can swim a long way for many hours.

Snowy Owl

Snowy owls have mainly white feathers.

They have excellent eyesight and hearing. This helps them to catch their prey.



Unlike other owls, snowy owls are most active at dawn and dusk.

Animals in Antarctica

There are lots of different animals that live in Antarctica.

Emperor Penguin

Emperor penguins are the largest of all penguins.

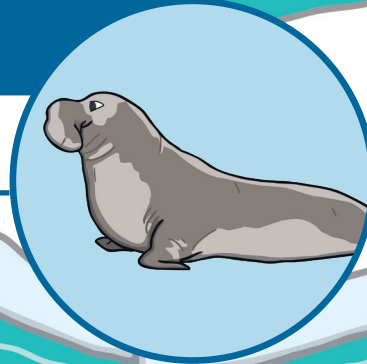


You can often see groups of up to 5,000 emperor penguins huddled together to keep warm.

Elephant Seal

Elephant seals are the largest of all the seals.

They can swim over 60 miles a day and dive over 1,500 metres.



Elephant seals spend most of their time in the ocean.

Orca

Orcas are often referred to as 'Killer Whales'.

Orcas live and hunt together in groups called 'pods'.



They eat fish, squid, seals, sea birds and whale species that are even bigger than themselves!