

Amazing Antarctica

Where Is Antarctica?



Antarctica is a continent in the southern hemisphere. It is surrounded by the Southern Ocean.

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

Antarctic Animals

There are lots of different animals that live in Antarctica. They all have special adaptations (skills or features they have developed) which allow them to live in such cold temperatures. Many of these animals, such as seals and penguins, have a special layer of fat under their skin, called blubber. This helps to insulate their bodies and keep the heat in. Birds in Antarctica have to take special care of their eggs to prevent them from freezing before they hatch. Emperor penguins have a special flap of skin above their feet. Their egg (and then their chick, once it is hatched) sits under this flap, on top of their feet, to keep it off the cold ground.



A Cold Climate



Antarctica is the coldest place on Earth. The lowest temperature ever recorded here was -89°C but the average temperatures range from about 10°C to -60°C . Because it is so cold, over 98% of Antarctica is permanently covered in ice. The average thickness of this ice is about one mile!

People 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.

Fascinating Features

There are lots of different physical features in Antarctica. These include seas, mountains, valleys, islands, glaciers and even volcanoes. In fact, 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.



Did You Know?

Antarctica is home to the driest place on Earth. There are places in Antarctica which haven't had rain or snow in over 2 million years!

Questions

1. Which ocean is Antarctica surrounded by? Tick one.

- the Southern Ocean
- the Pacific Ocean
- the Atlantic Ocean

2. What do seals and penguins have that helps to insulate their bodies?

3. In your own words, explain what an animal **adaptation** is.

4. Draw a line to match the word to its meaning.

continent	•	•	a large solid area of land
insulate	•	•	remains unchanged for all time
permanently	•	•	prevents the loss of heat

5. Why aren't there any people living permanently in Antarctica?

6. Do you think it is easy to visit Antarctica? Why?
